

# *The Evangelization of Culture and the Inculturation of Faith: An Opportunity or a Challenge in Contemporary China?*<sup>1</sup>

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## **I. “Go make disciples of all nations” and the inculturation of faith**

### **1.1 Evangelization and the inculturation of faith**

Evangelization is rooted in the very nature of Christian identity. The early Christians had a very clear and strong sense of evangelization as their own mission. When Christians began to spread the Gospel out of the Jewish world and start their first contact with the Greco-Roman world, the first issue they came across was that of heterogeneous cultures, namely, the challenges accompanying the encounters with Greco and Roman cultures. The Catholic Church has been grappling with the issue of how Christianity can take root in non-Jewish cultures ever since. That is the problem of the inculturation of the faith. Faith is never merely abstract, but is a living way and closely integrated with people’s culture.

Whether it be the person who evangelizes or the Gospel that he/she professes, faith is always to be understood, narrated, recorded, inherited and lived through culture, and it is further re-interpreted, re-articulated, continually. The Gospel and culture are constantly interwoven.

Pope John Paul II emphasized: “A faith without entering into culture is a faith not well-received, not fully investigated or not

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, the term “culture” specially points to “language” and “scholarship”; but at the same time, it has a broader meaning, which refers to people’s lives, their way of thinking, and all the elements contained in it.

truly lived.”<sup>2</sup> From the Second Vatican Council’s rethinking of the issue of “localization” to Pope John Paul II’s first use of the concept of “*inculturation*” in an official Church document<sup>3</sup>, and subsequent reflections and practices by the Universal Church, all point to the contemporary Church’s engagement with evangelization and new evangelization. They show the Church’s dedication to its own mission of evangelization.

## **1.2 The question of interculturality in evangelization**

When the Gospel of Christ spreads from one culture to another, it is like a “mutual examination” and an “exchange of greetings” between the foreign culture (carrying the seed of the Gospel brought by missionaries) and the local culture. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger brought up the question of “interculturality” at a conference in Hong Kong in 1993. He supplemented the concept of “inculturation” by saying: Christianity and the Gospel are not something abstract or isolated; it can be transmitted from one culture to the other. The message of the Gospel in fact exists in the evangelizer’s culture; and in the process of evangelization, the Gospel will reach two cultures: the evangelizer’s culture and the listener’s culture.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the Gospel of Christ exists in the evangelizer’s culture (the first culture); and is to be understood and accepted by the listener, through the listener’s culture (the second culture). In this process, the two cultures will inevitably meet, collide and fuse. We must pay attention to this integration process. Otherwise, the course of evangelization will be impeded, leaving the Gospel to hover on the edge of both society and culture.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a citation from Pope John Paul II’s “Letter to the Inauguration of the Pontifical Council for Culture” (May 20, 1982) which emphasizes the importance of the inculturation of the faith.

<sup>3</sup> This is a quotation from Pope John Paul II’s speech delivered to the Pontifical Biblical Commission, titled “Inculturation of Faith in the light of the Bible,” on April 29, 1979.

<sup>4</sup> cf Joseph Ratzinger, “Non esiste Fede che non sia Cultura,” in *Mondo e Missione*, n. 10 (1993), pp. 657-665.

### **1.3 Evangelizing in context**

We also have to consider the times and contexts of today's humanistic society. On the one hand, we should convey Christ's message to contemporary peoples in ways they can comprehend. On the other hand, the Gospel is never an abstract theory devoid of life, so the Church's theological interpretation of the Gospel must help to resolve contemporary problems; to provide love and fidelity—the Gospel's spirit and core values—to today's culture; to help people take a more positive approach to face the challenges of nihilism, for example.

### **1.4 Inculturation of faith in the West**

Without a doubt, people living in any epoch will come across problems different from other times; people shaped by a specific culture may meet challenges uncommon to other cultural systems. People of different epochs, cultures or cultural regions will be looking at problems from different perspectives, or adopting different models to cope with the same challenge. In terms of theology, the Catholic tradition is the revelation of Christ in the historical development of Western human societies. Such a theological system is based on Western cultural resources, the Westerners' individual or societal experiences in history, and life experiences in God-human encounters. Its outcome shows that theology not only provides the Christians living in a specific spatial-temporal epoch with concrete and appropriate guidance for a spiritual life (therefore, theology and spiritual studies were created and developed). It also gives clear and powerful responses to the challenges posed by the spirit and ideology of societies in specific spatial-temporal contexts (therefore, apologetics emerged and developed). In short, it can be said that the emergence and development of traditional theology was, first, a result of Western Christians' reflections on their own individual or community's life experiences and specific practices of the faith.

### **1.5 The question of interculturality in the work of evangelization in China**

What happens when theological thoughts and faith traditions tinged with Western cultural colors meet with Chinese culture and its traditional thinking? That is precisely the question of 1) the inculturation (localization) of faith, and 2) “interculturality” in the process of evangelization. In theory and by nature, faith has qualities beyond culture. But in the actual practice of evangelization, faith and culture are inseparable. Likewise, the Pontifical Biblical Commission says in its paper “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church” (1993):

Inculturation of the Bible has been carried out from the first centuries, both in the Christian East and in the Christian West, and it has proved very fruitful. However, one can never consider it a task achieved. It must be taken up again and again, in relationship to the way in which cultures continue to evolve. In countries where evangelization is more recent, the problem arises in somewhat different terms. Missionaries, in fact, cannot help bring the word of God in the form in which it has been inculturated in their own country of origin. New local churches have to make every effort to convert this foreign form of biblical inculturation into another form more closely corresponding to the culture of their own land.<sup>5</sup>

According to the Commission’s analysis, in the case of evangelizing in China, it is important for Christians to understand and precisely grasp the Chinese culture. Otherwise it is like “sowing seeds among thorns.” It takes twice the effort, but yields half the result.

The process of evangelization is actually a process of the inculturation of faith and a contextualization of the faith; the “evangelization of culture” is a process that allows the Gospel to take root in the local culture. If evangelization ignores the cultural dimension, it will hinder the Word of Christ from becoming

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<sup>5</sup> Pontifical Biblical Commission, “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church” (1993).

“incarnated” in flesh and blood and “being able to grow” in the context of a local humanistic society.<sup>6</sup>

## II. Evangelization of culture and culture of evangelization

Pope John Paul II offered this insight on the evangelization of culture:

The cultural context permeates the living of Christian faith, which contributes in turn little by little to shaping that context. To every culture Christians bring the unchanging truth of God, which He reveals in the history and culture of a people.... This in no way creates division, because the community of the baptized is marked by a universality which can embrace every culture and help to foster whatever is implicit in them to the point where it will be fully explicit in the light of truth.<sup>7</sup>

Faith and culture influence each other. The evangelization of culture is constantly proclaiming the message of Christ to the local people through their culture.<sup>8</sup> In the process of the Gospel proclamation, individual conversions are certainly important (because the individual experience of Christ is the premise and foundation of the theology of inculturation), but the entire process of the inculturation of faith is even more critical. This is because when the Gospel permeates and enters into the blood of the nation, it will on its own accord, in wide-ranging, profound and endurable ways affect all the peoples of that place. As Pope John Paul II said, the process of bringing the faith into a culture is to have the Gospel truly be accepted, lived and experienced by the local people.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Jing Baolu, “Catholicism and Chinese Culture: Rethinking of Catholic Theology of Inculturation,” published in *Catholic Thought and Culture*, Volume 1 (2012), pp 21-60.

<sup>7</sup> Pope John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio*, (1988), No. 71.

<sup>8</sup> Hebrews, 1:1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Pope John Paul II’s “Letter to the Pontifical Council for Culture” on its inauguration, May 20, 1982, stresses the importance of inculturation of the faith.

Although the ultimate goal of the evangelization of a culture is to bring Christ's salvation—which is for the benefit of all, and transcends all cultures—to each person, the immediate goal, however, is to cultivate a “culture of evangelization,” that is, a culture that has a capacity for evangelizing. It is a kind of inspiration that flows in the blood of individuals and society, spontaneously spreading love and influencing society to build a culture of love. In short, the evangelization of culture is fostering a culture of love, honesty and harmony, through the revelation of Christ's Gospel of love. It is a culture that constantly emanates the positive energy of love.

### **III. Challenges faced by the Church in China in the process of evangelization**

Let us first examine the series of challenges faced by the present-day Church in China. The problems of the Church in China can be discussed from its internal and external aspects.

#### **3.1 The external problems**

These problems can be identified as: the impact of globalization and secularization; the challenge posed by today's humanistic society in China; a demand for dialogue by Chinese intellectuals; and a “new cultural shaping” in contemporary China. All Chinese face these problems, and as do the Christians among them. Given the mission of evangelization, Christians must embrace a spirit of openness and commitment, a drive to go out of the churches, and venture into society, to build and serve society with love (this spirit of commitment is like Christ on the Cross who sacrificed himself for the whole world).

Now, the question is: does the Church in China have the capacity to know, comprehend and respond to such external challenges? If yes, then it should map out concrete strategies and proposals for evangelization. If it cannot adopt a unified mode of operation, such as the Western Church's model of “a bishops' conference,” at least it can use a diocesan model, like the relatively successful Hong Kong Diocese. Currently in China, only a few dioceses have the capacity to institute, and implement forward-

looking, concrete plans. The Church in China has to cultivate and empower themselves through more study (both spiritual and intellectual knowledge). Awareness must come first, before any improvements can be made. Those who do not recognize the severity of the problems might be overwhelmed by the problems.

### **3.2 The internal problems**

First, the Church's own structure is imperfect. Since the Church organizations are not sound, its evangelization work can hardly be systematically launched or carried out normally. Let us study the situation closely. How many dioceses in China have established their own "curia" or "council of priests" in accord with the normal procedure? Not to mention a "liturgy commission," a "pastoral council," a "procuration" (and/or finance committee), or a "marriage and family committee." However, if dioceses do not have such structures, it does not mean that they have no problems in those fields. Matters are often handled by non-professionals, some even acting in an impromptu fashion. This is a major reason why the internal affairs in many dioceses in China are in a mess. Some of the problems have historical roots; they are compounded by the poorly managed development structure of the present-day Chinese Church. No wonder there is a sense of helplessness in the face of the challenges posed by specific humanistic, social and linguistic contexts in China.

Meanwhile, the above-mentioned problems can be examined from the following aspects:

- i. Lack of awareness of the problems: the Church in China lives with the problems, but without a sense of resolve or urgency to tackle them;
- ii. The Church leadership is faced with numerous problems, but cannot find a way out; often when faced with a question of faith, it adopts a speculative attitude.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cf : "In Cina è il tempo di scelte chiare" (l'intervista di Gianni Cardinale con l'arcivescovo Savio Hon), in *Avvenire* (01/04/2011), p. 9.

iii. The Church leadership finds it hard to make macro plans for the future of the Church. This suggests a vague “sense of the future,” or a lack thereof.

iv. The Church has to be integrated into society. Because the Church lacks a sense of commitment and social responsibility (which is related to the spirit and mission of evangelization), this leads to a narrow understanding of the Christian mission of evangelization.

v. The formation system for Church clergy in China may have imperfections, and the direction of formation lacks focus. A cause of this ambiguity lies in the lack of a clear grasp of the spirit of the times and the specific contexts of a humanistic society, and an absence of a clear knowledge of the future mission of the Church.

## **IV. How the Church in China ought to respond**

### **4.1 Facing the world**

The Church in China should be conscious of itself as a church in the world. All kinds of things happening in the contemporary world, big or small, and any trend of thought coming from globalization will draw the Church in China into it. Secularization, modernization and post-modernism are no longer mere abstract concepts, but rather, real and concrete ways that affect the life of all individuals and communities. Today, we can no longer behave like before, thinking things happening in the Western world and in the universal Church are very far away from us. In the near future, even today or tomorrow, in this age of the Internet and rapid development of science and technology, their challenges are also ones we must face.

Therefore, the Church in China must have the capability and knowledge of the humanistic and social thinking of the world. In this aspect, we can learn from the rich experiences of the Church in Poland. In 2002, I attended a gathering of mainland Chinese Catholic students in Europe, held in Poland. At a dialogue with an official of the Polish Bishops' Conference (most likely the secretary-general), we asked: “Why did the number of Christian churchgoers in Poland decline sharply after 1989?” He replied: “After 1989, many trends of thinking from Western Europe flooded



Poland, and the Church in Poland had little time to reflect, or to offer effective measures to address them. Then the challenges facing the Church in Western Europe soon became ours (the Church in Poland) too.” Today, 13 years after that dialogue, the overwhelming forces of globalization, secularization, pure-rationalism, instrumental-rationality, positivism and absolute relativism in Western thought now pose problems and challenges to the Church in China. Actively or passively, the Church in China must respond! It is not the attitude of faith to let Church communities in China be trapped and stifled by these problems, and do nothing.

Then, how should the Church in China cope with this situation? Among the many needs of the Church in China, it is necessary to establish and to train a team of Christians who are equipped with professional knowledge of theology, philosophy, sociology, religious studies and canon law. This team will help Church communities and leaders to reflect profoundly on current issues, and will make suggestions on timely and effective measures. This could be one of the most important means to solve present-day problems.

#### **4. 2 Facing Chinese society**

Since the late Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China, Chinese intellectuals’ consciousness of the crisis of traditional Chinese culture grew. After the destruction of traditional culture and values by the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), this crisis emerged in the form of social pathologies, and deeply affected people’s body, mind and soul. Professor Zhang Xianglong noted in his article “The Crisis of China’s traditional culture”: “The Yellow River flushes away the Chinese people’s lifeblood, whereas today’s trends wash away the nation’s primal spirit and circulatory system.” This description shows that the Chinese traditional culture and the spirit of a humanistic society are in a severe crisis. This is not an alarmist report,<sup>11</sup> but it is indeed a living picture of Chinese culture today.

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<sup>11</sup> Zhang Xianglong, “Crisis of Chinese Cultural Tradition”, *Guoxue Luntian Wencui*, Vol. 2 (Jan 12, 2004).

The crisis of culture and of the spirit of a humanistic society is fundamentally a "crisis of humanity": the poverty of humanity (non-ontological meaning) and a spiritual vacuum. This is the root of all social crises and social ills. When traditional spiritual beliefs which lack metaphysical stability and the force of constraint are on the decline,<sup>12</sup> and the system of traditional moral values is devastated, and a new system of spiritual values has not yet been formed, what can people depend on to live out their spiritual lives? If the whole society, from top to bottom, has lost its moral principles to which everybody should adhere, and has lost a basis of transcendental values of external and internal forces of constraint, then what foundations of moral obligation can be upheld? This explains why in China, the shrewdness of corruption is said to be smart, violence and fraud are considered virtuous; unscrupulous means can earn one a name; and products of the basic necessities of life—food, clothing, housing and transportation—are fake. This phenomenon is like Thomas Hobbes' description of "man is wolf to man."<sup>13</sup> When the hypothesis comes true, it will shake the basis of the entire moral system of humanistic society.

Faced with this series of problems, Chinese intellectuals and people of insight are yearning to "shape a new culture" or "transform the traditional culture into a modern culture." This injects a new spirit and new blood into Chinese society to shape a new culture which is more dynamic and adaptable to the times. Faced with a series of grievous social problems, especially the crisis of the spiritual life, the Church in China must respond. The social

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<sup>12</sup> China's traditional moral system is mainly based on Confucianism. Through the historical development of Confucianism and neo-Confucianism, the person in the natural law is gradually lost. As the transcendent metaphysical foundation fades away, the force of constraint of personal and social conscience is gradually weakened. Because of the loss of person, it means God fades out from the interpersonal relationship of the "you-me" relationship, away from the humanity and social sphere of human existence. This is perhaps a footnote to the Chinese "face culture" and its generation and development, because the metaphysical foundation is weakened, so physical "face" becomes particularly evident. It even becomes the measure of human survival.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or the Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil*, Book 1, Chapter 13.

teachings of the Second Vatican Council can be applied here. Each local Church should act according to the needs of its local society, and offer the people constructive guidance for a spiritual life.

An inculturated faith or theology should contain not only the essence of traditional cultural values, but also accurately grasp the issues (social, humanistic, economic and political) in contemporary times and respond to them. It should express a living experience of faith in a way that is understood by the epoch, and respond to the physical, mental and spiritual needs of people in today's specific social contexts.

At a symposium entitled "Religion and the construction of a moral system in Chinese society" on June 4, 2011 at Zhejiang University, Professor Zhuo Xinping said in his paper "A dialogue between religion and civilization": While urging people to "eliminate poverty" in an economic sense, one has to "de-sensitize" oneself to religion at a spiritual level. Chinese society, in a state of chaotic transformation, needs to establish a feasible moral system, with an inner pledge and a force of constraint. This moral system requires a firm and solid spiritual foundation, and needs a "sacred dimension" or "ultimate dimension" to construct a system of spirit and values, with a powerful inner force of constraint and cohesiveness. This is where religion can help. Professor Zhuo's call touches the core of the present-day social problems in China. In this realm, the Catholic Church, with 2,000 years of experience of religious practices, has a relatively complete system of moral values. Therefore, it can serve as a reference to the present-day society of China. In response to the pervasive materialist culture, the withering spiritual culture in contemporary China, the poverty of humanity and the creation of a spiritual vacuum, the eschatological dimension of the Catholic faith and its rich spiritual content can help Chinese society overcome its spiritual poverty, and the embarrassment of its cultural identity. Also, Christian values can shape a healthy culture of love and fidelity in China, and provide a basis for morality. This can work because it contains the basic attributes of the life of Christian faith.

To take part in the construction of a humanistic society with spiritual values, to evangelize, and to inculturate the faith, these efforts are complementary. This is because the inculturation of faith

aspires to let the truth of Christian faith, which transcends all cultural systems, to be “incarnated” in the culture, to sublimate and to transform the culture so that the nation can live and develop in ways that are more human, and to show the way forward as a culture of hope for the future. Conversely, the inculturation of the Christian faith will help shape a new culture in China, to provide new blood and a new spirit to reinforce and strengthen the source of spiritual beliefs in Chinese society.<sup>14</sup>

The problem is: does the Church in China have such a consciousness of the problems, and a sense of social commitment? Furthermore, is the Church in China able to participate in and shape a culture for the epoch? This may require senior leaders of the Church to respond and to discern if this demand is a “sign” of the “movement of the Holy Spirit,” and whether it is a mission for Chinese Christians.

### **4.3 Facing the Church in China internally**

Faced with challenges and chaos at different levels, the Church in China must reflect on the source of this “chaos.”

**a. The model of Church management (or service model):** While people are discussing China’s economic and political reforms, Christians should also ponder over “political reforms within the Church.” Currently, all the clergy of the Church in China are Chinese, who are naturally under the influence of the Chinese cultural tradition. Therefore, the “management model” or “service model” is naturally “a model with Chinese characteristics.” Yet in 2,000 years of evangelizing history, the Universal Church has developed her own evangelizing “model with Catholic characteristics,” by finding a medium between the spirit of the Gospel and the tradition of the culture. How does she strike a

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<sup>14</sup> No culture is perfect. China's traditional culture is no exception. Famous contemporary neo-Confucian scholars, Mou Tsung-san, Fu Weixun and Liu Shuxian, believed that Chinese culture should be open to Christianity in order to creatively transform traditional Confucian culture. See: Mou Tsung-san, *Political road and Governance*, Changchun: Jilin Publishing Group Ltd., 2010, page 8; Lai Pin-chiu, *Inheritance and transformation, Christian theology and various cultural traditions*, Hong Kong: Christian Literature Publishing House, 2006.

balance between the two? This is a problem which bishops and priests in the Church must face. Sometimes we hear a clergyman in China say to a brother priest: “Do not tell me what the law of the Church is. My word is the law.” Does that sound familiar?

In addition, in the Church in China, the transition from a “Western management model” left by foreign missionaries into a “Chinese-clergy management model” is not too successful; and the transformation from the “pre-Vatican II model” to the “post-Vatican II model” seems even less successful. Due to various constraints, the Church in China’s knowledge and practice of the Vatican II spirit may still be at a preliminary stage. The “generation chasm” among the Chinese clergy after the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) further hindered a smooth changeover from the old to the new traditions in the Church in China. The appearance of “chaos” in the Church in China is somewhat “natural” for a community that has not taken root in its own traditions, that faces dazzling modern and post-modern issues, and is living in fast-changing scenarios in a political, economic and humanistic society. For such a community, non-chaos would have been abnormal!

**b. From the perspective of knowledge and culture:** On the one hand, the Church in China or its leadership does not have an accurate reading of the culture, the spirit of humanistic society and the trend of development in the country. On the other hand, for historical reasons, church leaders have an inadequate understanding of Church tradition, doctrine and the spirit of Canon Law. Of course cultural differences are also a cause of this problem. Along with these two deficiencies, how can the two spirits or the two service models coordinate with one another? These two deficiencies may lead to the following: neither the Eastern nor the Western spiritual tradition has been thoroughly understood from the roots of the culture; a lack of knowledge of the faith, originally indispensable for guiding Christians’ lives—Church theology, philosophy, liturgy, canon law, spirituality and the like; and an insufficient ability to overcome various challenges to the faith and to the spirit. So, how do the clergy in China guide or serve the Church communities? Do they do it in accordance with the Chinese traditional model (for instance, “patriarchy” or the “scheming theory” in China’s literary

classic, *Three Kingdoms*), or in accordance with the traditional model of the Church (like Church doctrine, canon law and teachings as the basis of instruction)? Or neither, and do they just get by with shrewd reasoning or random thinking?

**c. Formation of teams of Church intellectuals:** The Church leadership and elites could have worked better together. Unfortunately, “The Bishops Conference of the Catholic Church in China,” the entity that should have brought people together to strategize, is still without a mandate. Thus, the leadership of the Church in China can only deal with, in an isolated or solitary way, problems that are beyond any individual’s capacity to deal with. Considering it is difficult to change the status quo at the moment, I think, first, the Church in China should be aware of the need to train its own team of Chinese Catholic intellectuals. They must have a sense of commitment and a sacrificial spirit, like Jesus on the Cross, to serve society and the Church, to help the Church understand the needs of their society, to propel the Church to reach out to society, and to play a constructive role in shaping the spirit of a humanistic society in China.

Since the 1990s, as more priests, Sisters and laypeople studied abroad, more Christians at the grassroots level have become aware of the importance of the cultural dimension in evangelization. This means there is a revival of the awareness of the “evangelization of culture” among Chinese Christians. For both the Church in China and for the universal Church, it is a phenomenon worthy of encouragement and support.

Since the 1980s, the Church in China, after 30 years of effort, is equipped with the “hardware” (the churches, diocesan and parish offices and equipment), basically sufficient to meet the needs of the faithful. Subsequently, Church communities and individuals should shift their attention to the “software” that bears more directly on the mission of the Church. This requires a deeper understanding of the doctrine, canon law and the spirit of the entire Church tradition; a spirit of evangelization, the strengthening of a spirit of mission, a division of labor among evangelization institutes, a sound model of management, an inculturated theology of evangelization and models of spirituality. The communities of Catholic intellectuals,

under the leadership of the bishops, with God's gift of the light of reason—should be able to make a major contribution to this top-level design of the Church in China. But if the leadership of the Church in China and in the Universal Church lacks the awareness, and fails to support the development of such a team, then we can only resort to stopgap measures. The Church in China will continue to be a “problem community.” This will exhaust the mission and the energy of evangelization, and church communities will be stifled.

#### **4.4 Facing the nature of the Church's mission—evangelization:**

The Church in China has two evangelizing targets: the Church and society. Today most Church groups are engaged in the former. Evangelization work dealing with society is not yet in full swing.

In the process of reaching out “to the whole world,” the Church, through social services and a sense of responsibility and commitment, fulfills its own mission. However, this requires us to have a relatively clear understanding of the spirit of contemporary society. We also need to put forward our own constructive ideas to meet the challenges of Chinese society. The Church also has to understand accurately the spirit of her own faith, values and ideas, and have the self-assurance to express clearly to society her own values and ideas.

Some people think that the Church should first solve its internal problems, strengthen the quality of its spiritual formation, and then discuss the question of social commitment. I think this way of prioritizing the Church's evangelization work unfortunately results from an ignorance of Church's historical experience. In our Church's history, many problems encountered by individuals and Church communities were resolved in the fire of commitment to “the nature of mission.”—evangelization. We believe that “saints make evangelization (possible)”; let us not forget that “the evangelization work also realizes sainthood.” The mission of evangelization has the capacity of making saints and receiving graces. The Early Church community, led by the Twelve Apostles, was a good example. After receiving the mission of evangelization, they did not sit down first to discuss, perfect, or expand the

community. Rather, they immediately went out and preached the Good News!

Today, we have received this mission, no less than the Apostles. What is missing is a sense of mission. We have also lost the ability to open, realize, and fulfill ourselves and the community with all that belongs to the spirit of commitment. However, for Christian individuals and communities, a closing up of oneself means the death of the Christian spirit! In this regard, Western Church history and its contemporary contexts offer us many valuable lessons.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, the Church is a community. The Church in China should in the name of the community, work together in a spirit of collaboration and communion, to devise our own evangelization plans, train qualified preachers, develop our own theology of evangelization, and decide on forms of spiritual direction suitable for the Chinese people. The Church will need its own team and professionals working together, so that Christianity finally becomes “incarnate” with “flesh and blood” in the daily life and culture of the Chinese people.

A “culture of evangelization” thus “grows” and becomes a culture with a sense of commitment to society, a culture that promotes love and peace in society, fostering integrity and justice, bringing harmony and freedom, providing a spiritual life and faith among the Chinese people; a culture that would ultimately fulfil both the “Dream of Christ” and the “China Dream”! In this process, the Catholic intellectual communities have to actively work with the elites in society to build a new culture in China, to reconstruct a system of social and moral values. This is the sacred mission of the Church in China, and all Christians should commit themselves to it. Christian identity is revealed through such a commitment by becoming a “witness” of light and hope in society.

To achieve this goal requires a joint effort of all the faithful in the Church in China, as well as the strong support and encouragement of the universal Church, and of all those who love and care for the evangelization work of the Church in China!