

Appendix:

Hong Kong

Catholic Council of the Laity

by Christopher Li



The Hong Kong Catholic Council of the Laity was established in January of 1959. Its aim was to organize the laity to participate more fully in the mission of the Church. The Council was originally called the Diocesan Council of the Lay Apostolate.

The first president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary of the Council were all appointed by the bishop, but now these officers are elected by its members. The executive board members of the HKCCL are recommended by parish associations, while the rest of the membership, numbering altogether over 70 persons, is composed of delegates from parish councils and diocesan associations.

As Hong Kong society evolved, so, too, did the Council. Throughout the years, it has amended its constitution on several occasions. Finally, in March of 1974, it was renamed "The Hong Kong Catholic Council of the Laity" and formulated the following goals:

- to encourage the laity to live their christian life in the modern world in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel and to carry out the task of evangelization within their social environment.
- to plan, promote, and coordinate lay apostolates and lay ministries.
- to exchange experiences, to share methods and plans of action among the participating groups.
- to facilitate unity and communication of ideas between the clergy and the laity, and among lay people themselves.

Aside from meetings of the various work committees, the following regularly scheduled meetings are also held:

- monthly meetings of the executive board. The purpose of these meetings is, to determine, plan, and carry out the Council's decisions and to assist the laity in their work of evangelization.
- bi-monthly evaluation meetings. Participants are the executive board members and members from the sub-committees. They study the ethical, religious and social questions of Hong Kong and draw up plans of action based on the spirit of the Gospel and Church teachings. They also promote the implementation of decisions.

The Hong Kong Catholic Council of the Laity seeks to achieve its goals through a variety of activities. Such activities are all directed toward the training and formation of the laity, while at the same time maintaining close communications with them. It also offers relevant information to member groups so that all might pursue common goals together.

Current activities of the Council may be grouped under the following headings:

1. Formation of leaders:
 - a. parish leadership training programmes
 - b. parish spiritual leadership formation programmes
 - c. voluntary lay apostles programmes
2. Basic formation of Christians:
 - a. correspondence course for catechumens
 - b. leaflets on the Word of God
 - c. collection and distribution of resource materials
3. Activities for non-believers:
 - a. meetings of non-believers introduced by the faithful
 - b. correspondence course on Catholic Doctrine
4. Concern for religious/social issues
5. Participation in diocesan celebrations:
 - a. The World Day of Peace
 - b. The Lenten Season
 - c. Committee for diocesan renewal
6. Propagation, expansion and consolidation
7. Personal learning and renewal

There are more than 260,000 Catholics in the Hong Kong Diocese. As the Council cannot have individual contact with all of them, the various activities of the Council are a means of fostering cohesive cooperation among the parishes. In this way the goal of training and forming the laity is given practical expression and through the living witness of the laity the Good News of Christ gradually spreads and reaches the grass-roots level of society.