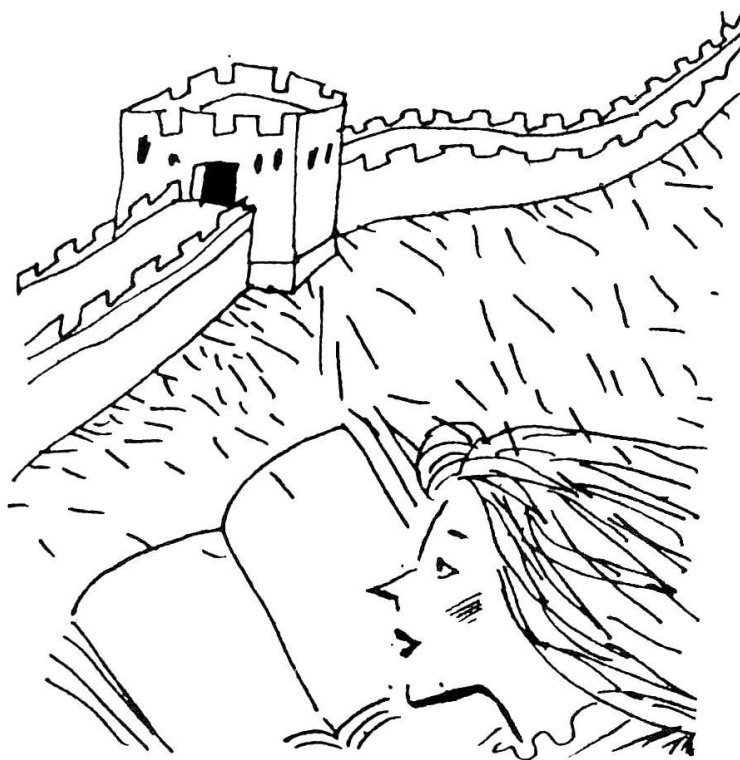


The U.S. Church and China



"A drama of immense and far-reaching consequences" is unfolding in China and throughout Asia, Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco told the U.S. bishops November 15, and the U.S. church can "make an extraordinary contribution" in this area. Quinn's comments came in a portion of the bishops' general meeting reserved for "varia," reports on any subject a bishop wishes to bring to the attention of the bishops' conference. Quinn's "varium" follows.

The curtain is rising on a drama of immense and far-reaching consequences. China is awaking and together with other countries of Asia will have a tremendous and still incalculable influence on the future of the world.

The church in the United States is in a position to make an extraordinary contribution toward this important development. In China alone the voice of one-fourth of the human race calls the church in our country to raise its consciousness and involvement in this drama to a new level.

Some Facts

China is in Asia and what happens in China will necessarily affect the whole of Asia. In addition, there are 25 million Chinese spread over the whole of Southeast Asia.

Since 1965 when immigration laws were reformed, Asian immigration has been steadily increasing. In the period between 1980 and 1984, the number of immigrants from Asia has been over 250,000 a year, the largest number from any continent and half of all immigrants from all continents put together.

The countries sending most immigrants from Asia are the Philippines, China (The Republic of China, Taiwan and Hong Kong) and Korea.

The increase in Asian population promises to continue. By next year it is expected that there will be close to 6 million Asians in the United States and over 8 million in the 1990s. They are concentrating in California, New York, Illinois and Hawaii.

China Today

We are all aware of the political modifications, the new technology, the modernization, the political and diplomatic contacts with the West and particularly the United States. In addition there are at present some 16,000 Chinese scholars studying in American universities - not to mention the various groups who come on business or for diplomatic purposes.

Possible Response of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops

Our conference has responded consistently, courageously and vigorously to the challenges of Latin America. Some possibilities of responding to China and Asia are:

-Establish a policy of fostering positive, friendly contacts between local churches in the United States with the Chinese and with the church in China. This would require sensitivity and careful preparation in advance of any such contact.

-Establish a China-Asian desk in the U.S. Catholic Conference chaired by a qualified person to foster this concern and implement the agenda and policies of the conference.

-Encourage academic exchanges between our academic institutions and their Chinese counterparts in a spirit of mutual sharing and learning.

-Manifest our friendship by giving a warm welcome to students, scholars and other Chinese visitors in all areas of the United States.

-Assist Chinese seminaries by sending them books and explore the feasibility of offering scholarship grants for their seminarians to study in U.S. seminaries.

-Encourage our Catholic people in business and in diplomatic and related roles to explain the church in a positive way to their Chinese and Asian contacts in order to reduce prejudices and misunderstandings and remove them if possible.

-Raise the consciousness of our people through our Catholic media, through parishes and schools, etc., about China and Asia.

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