

Revolution (1966-76), and 3. after the death of Chairman Mao until the present (1976-86). These three phases reveal a change in the structural function of the CCPA in the life of the Catholic Church and also a change in the attitude and choices of the Catholic community towards it. During the three phases, the CCPA never identified itself as the Catholic Church. The CCPA and the Chinese Catholic Church are two distinct realities.(1)

The foundation of the CCPA itself and its policy of an independent, autonomous and self-directed Catholic Church did not come into existence through a spontaneous movement within the church. It was an imposition of the Communist Party and the government, in accordance with the Party's United Front policy. This was the method to be used for rallying all non-communist patriots behind the work of supporting socialism, modernizing the country and opposing international hegemonism.

With the exception of a few extremist and emotional outbursts by some over-zealous "patriotic" elements, we must acknowledge that there has never been any theological movement within the Chinese Catholic Church itself to espouse a schismatic position based on the propagation of heretical doctrines. We must also recognize that any parallel drawn between the beginnings of the Anglican Church or the rise of Gallicanism in France and the present situation of the Church in China is not as easy as some would have us believe. On the contrary, England and France were Catholic nations, while the Catholic Church in China is a very small minority group in a huge population governed by a totalitarian and atheistic regime, which looks upon the Roman Church (the Vatican or Roman Curia) as a political power linked with anti-communist forces and with foreign imperialism and hegemonism.

Under pressure from the CCP's United Front Department, Chinese Catholics were forced to make a personal choice about the political reality of the united front policy of the new Chinese state. The choice was not an easy one. The key word in the united front policy was and is "patriotism." By considering its policies to be in the best interests of the country, the United Front put a heavy burden on Catholic citizens by making opposition to them akin to

treason. At the same time, by obliging the Catholic Church to cut off relations with foreign institutions and with Rome, the United Front put another heavy emotional burden on the Catholic faithful by making membership in the Patriotic Association akin to cutting oneself off from the Pope.

In the 1950's this was the dilemma which burdened the consciences of Chinese Catholics. Each had to make a personal, painful choice without possibility of escape. The conflict could be resolved only in the privacy of each one's conscience. Faced with two sets of motivation, Catholics had to give public testimony either to patriotism or to the papacy. Actually, in the Catholic conscience, the two realities need not be in conflict.

Some Chinese Catholics chose to give a testimony of definite fidelity to the Holy Father, and accepted being despised, condemned and persecuted as unpatriotic reactionaries. They carried out their worship life in private. However, they not only preserved in their hearts a true love of their country, but through their hard work in prisons and in labour camps, they made practical contributions to the socialist reconstruction of their nation. At the same time, some Chinese Catholics chose a testimony of Catholic patriotism, and were scorned by other Catholics as compromising the integrity of the Catholic Faith. These Catholics became responsible workers in the official structures of the church. They maintained in their hearts their fidelity to the Pope, and at the same time realized their love for the church by carrying out pastoral tasks, in the midst of all sorts of difficulties and external pressures.

In spite of all these conflicts and contradictions, the community of Chinese Catholics has continued, even after the establishment of the Patriotic Association, to be one church. It is one church giving two testimonies. Both types of Catholics in this one ecclesiastical community love their country and are faithful to the pastor of the universal church, even though they follow different paths of witness. Therefore, both the Chinese state and the universal church should look upon the Chinese Catholic community with pride and love.

Isolated cases of human weakness could perhaps put

in doubt the above understanding of the Catholic Church in China. Nevertheless, any easy generalization would be quite unjust and methodologically incorrect. At least we should give people the benefit of the doubt or the right of conversion, and from an historical point of view let posterity make the final judgement (ad posteros suprema sententia).

During the Cultural Revolution both the United Front policy and the patriotic associations of China's five major religions came under attack from the Red Guards and disappeared. At the same time, the Cultural Revolution introduced the second phase of the recent history of the Catholic Church in China. Both the private community of Chinese Catholics and the official institution of the Church suffered persecution during the leftist campaigns against old culture, old habits, old customs and old ideas. The Catholic Church was persecuted not simply for political reasons, but because of the faith. Religion was the distinct target of this leftist campaign of atheistic communism at that time. It can be said that the entire Chinese Catholic community was unified in its common testimony to the mystery of the Cross! How remarkable is the Chinese Catholic Church, purified as it has been by the Paschal Mystery! During the ten long years of the Cultural Revolution the whole Catholic community went underground. It was a long winter in the church's history, when the seed lay buried in anticipation of a new spring.

The first sign of a new springtime was the reappearance of United Front activity after the death of Chairman Mao and the ascent to power of Deng Xiaoping. In March, 1982, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party issued a document (Document #19) entitled "The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question During Our Country's Socialist Period," which set forth the Party's policy on religion. In it the Party recognized that: religion is a long term problem; correct handling of it is of great significance for national unity and stability; leftist forces had recklessly trampled on religion during the Cultural Revolution; freedom of religious belief is central to the new religious policy; forceful methods of dealing with religion are incorrect; the main purpose of the policy of religious freedom is to unite believers and non-believers



behind the task of reconstructing the nation; full support must be given to the eight religious organizations, but Party cadres should not take over the work of these organizations; all illegal religious activities are prohibited and special care must be taken to prevent foreign religious organizations from infiltrating China; friendly relations with religious organizations abroad based on the principle of equality and mutual non-interference should be developed.

As a result of this liberalization in the religious policy, two phenomena took place in the Chinese Catholic Church. The first was a re-structuring of the pastoral activity of the church which took place at the third congress (May-June, 1980) of the newly restored Catholic Patriotic Association. The CCPA conference was followed by a three-day meeting of Chinese Catholic representatives. The 200 delegates (not all of whom belonged to the CCPA) established a Chinese Catholic Bishops Conference and a Chinese Catholic Church Administrative Committee. The work of the two new organizations was to deal with the internal affairs of the Catholic Church: the bishops conference with doctrinal problems and the administrative committee with pastoral matters. These new organizations indicate a meaningful change in the structure of the church. In the 1950's, the CCPA was in fact the sole authority in the Chinese Catholic Church. In the 1980's the CCPA should only retain its original function of serving as a bridge between the Chinese government and the Catholic Church.(2)

The second relevant phenomenon in this springtime of the Chinese church is the practical and existential cooperation which is developing between the two sectors of the Chinese Catholic community. Many seeds from underground have begun to blossom and to add their own color to the green of the meadow under the light of the sun. In the variety of such a multi-colored landscape, distinctions

are becoming blurred and different plants grow in the same meadow. All of us rejoice because this springtime for the Catholic Church in China is at the same time a springtime for the Universal Church!

Theological Implications and Prospects For Dialogue

Behind the external changes of the organizational function of the CCPA and the internal changes of personal attitude on the part of Chinese Catholics towards it, what are the theological issues implied and which must be clarified in order that further dialogue between the Church and the Chinese state might be promoted? China-watchers have already pointed out that the CCPA is a symbol of contradiction, and controversies revolve around it to the present day. The existence of the CCPA addresses substantive questions to our theology, but by being controversial the real issues tend to be submerged. What are the theological issues behind the existence of the CCPA?

Two sets of correlated theological problems can be identified. On one side are questions about the relation between church and state, religion and politics, the spiritual and the temporal, between service of faith and service for justice, and between Christianity and communism. At the same time these questions arise in the present situation of the social-cultural context of China. On the other side there are questions about relations between the local church and the universal church, between collegiality and the papacy, between the universal jurisdiction of the Pope and Vatican diplomacy, between the election and the nomination of bishops, between canon law and the *bonum fidelium*, and between unity and pluriformity. If not the orthodoxy, then at least the orthopraxy of these issues must be addressed, for they are still far from being clarified on the theoretical level.

Perhaps the most serious problem, which forms a link between the above two sets of problematics, is the inculturation of the local church. This has to be realized not only at the theoretical and ideological level, but also at the practical and structural level (localization or contextualization), and at the level of personnel (indigenization) as well. Finally, all this theological reflection

takes place in the framework of the larger and more complex context of the encounter between China and the West.

From a historical and theological point of view it is not easy to understand the real meaning of the CCPA by using common western perspectives. Among China-watchers there are two different schools of thought regarding the CCPA. The first is the traditional anti-communist point of view. Adherents of this view reject the CCPA because they feel that it has abandoned Christian authenticity to serve a temporal power. The second is the historical-humanistic view. This school stresses the complexity of the problem and reserves judgement while it attempts to understand the problem. At the same time, adherents of this school are perplexed by the CCPA's over-identification with a secular government. Both schools have to face the real issue behind the controversial symbol represented by the CCPA, which is that relations between religion and politics in China exist in a different ideological context than those in the West.

From the historical-humanistic point of view, the traditional anti-communist position lacks an historical dimension. On the one hand, its anti-communist position is too spiritualistic, forgetting the temporal mission for social justice. On the other hand, it makes the mistake of transplanting in China the western approach to relations between church and state.

Western history provides many examples of the confrontation between church and state, both entities striving for power within the same ideological and social system. In these conflicts the church frequently gained the upper hand. In modern Chinese history the communist state and the church were in conflict not only politically, but ideologically and socially as well. Therefore, if the church continued its confrontational stand vis-a-vis the government, she would inevitably become an inner subversive force linked to all of the external anti-communist forces. For this reason the church in China has been deprived of all political tasks. All political duties have been given over to the CCPA, which deals with the government in a non-confrontational way within the system. The CCPA is the result of the radical confrontation between church and

socialist state. Therefore, the CCPA ought to be a political institution only, permitting the church to be free from involvement in any kind of reactionary politics. The CCPA thus serves as a bridge between the church and the government

This interpretation holds that at the time of the establishment of the CCPA the church had already made a political choice against the communist government and was already in some way linked with its adversaries. In 1949, church leadership was for the most part still in the hands of foreign missionaries, the majority of whom came from western imperialist countries. The church was predominately pro-Nationalist. Many of the clergy and Catholics left for Taiwan with the Nationalist army. After the pro-nuncio Riberi had been expelled from China, Rome eventually assigned him to Taiwan, which was still in a state of war with the communist government on the mainland.

Different attitudes prevailed among the Catholics who remained on the mainland. The government forbade any political action against its policy on national reconstruction. At the same time the church forbade Catholics to cooperate in the political activities of the communist government. In this situation Catholics had two alternatives: an intransigent refusal to dialogue with the communists or a fundamental acceptance of the new China for the sake of further dialogue. Thus, some Catholics accepted the reality of the CCPA as an institution which handled political matters in order to allow the church to be totally free from politics in her ministry. As for the consecration of new bishops, to seek nomination, permission or ratification from Rome was considered a political matter because Rome was apparently following a pro-Taiwan policy.

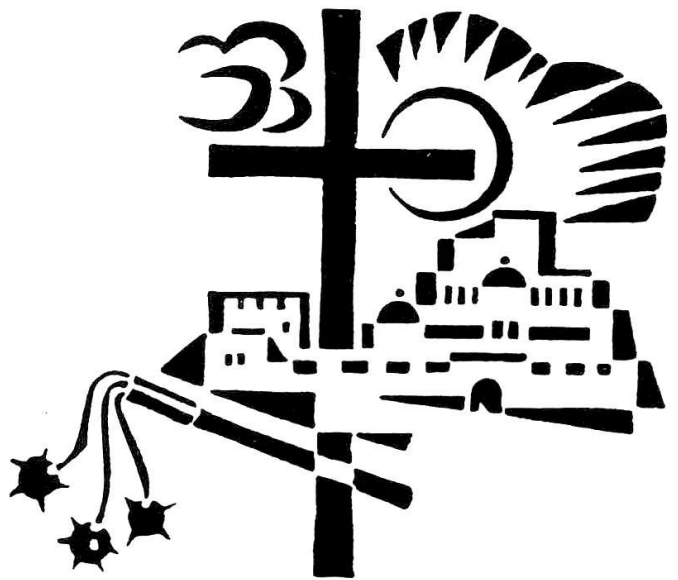
According to its own self-understanding, the CCPA is based on the traditional principle of the separation of religion and politics. If the church exists only for a religious mission and for a spiritual ministry, then the CCPA is a political institution whose purpose is to safeguard the division between religion and politics, between the spiritual and the temporal. Patriotic Catholics are not required to adopt an atheistic ideology, but they must accept the policies of the government in the temporal and political realms. In this way the patriotic position is

more coherent than that of the traditional anti-communist because the latter adopts a political ideology, e.g., nationalist, and seeks political power in a given social system, thus undermining the purity of the faith.

The CCPA's view is that the Chinese church must be independent from Rome and dependent on the Chinese government only in temporal-political matters. Its criticism of Vatican policies and its rejection of Vatican control refer only to matters relating to politics under specific conditions. The CCPA has adopted the formula: spiritual authority to Rome; temporal authority to the Chinese government. It has adopted an attitude of "belongingness to China". Its members feel that the decision to identify with the Chinese people in the present historical process is based on justice. The establishment of the CCPA has a historical dimension, then, and in this sense its statement of purpose would get a sympathetic hearing from theologians of the historical-humanistic school.

In the above schema, both the traditional anti-communist perspective and the historical-humanistic outlook explain only one side of the CCPA reality. Their evaluations are not complete, for the CCPA has its own original way of being and acting which defies each school's definition. On the one hand, the CCPA is based on the traditional principle of the separation of religion and politics. The CCPA does not adopt the atheistic ideology of communism and has only to accept the policies of the government in temporal matters. Thus the CCPA has greater significance than the traditional anti-communist school, because the latter absolutizes and eventually espouses the political ideology of bourgeois anti-communism.

On the other hand, in accordance with the perspective of the historical-humanistic school, the CCPA



has identified itself with the historical movement of modern China as a response to the call of God to a commitment for justice within history. Nevertheless, the CCPA baffles this theological school also. For while the CCPA requires all Catholics to cooperate with the government in the temporal sphere, the right of the Church to participate in public life with a critical attitude is denied. Rather the existence of the CCPA challenges the old structures of the church. Only the CCPA can perform a critical function, namely to hold the government to its promises in the realm of religious freedom and to create better conditions for the exercise of the church's ministry.

As interesting as this reasoning and interpretation of the reality of the CCPA is, nevertheless, its weakness is a lack of clear distinctions between praxis, ideology and theory. On these various levels Catholics, or the church, must find ways of dialoguing or cooperating critically with the political reality of a given government. For instance, while rejecting the atheistic basis of communist theory, Catholics can accept some points in its ideology. They must still maintain, however, a critical attitude towards unethical structures and towards unethical practices in the implementation of its policies. Although Chinese Catholics are fulfilling their historical destiny in the cultural context of the new China, they are not dispensed from exercising a critical function within the ideological and social system. Behind differences in ideological and cultural systems, there are transcultural and primordial rights and duties which belong to every human being. Perhaps the most important right and duty is that of being always sincere, active and critical in all aspects of human life, be it individual or social, all the while seeking a transcendental dimension in thought and action. At the same time, a merely passive cooperation is not the most effective means for achieving success in a social revolution.

The most important questions which remain in the first set of problematics about the CCPA are relations between religion and politics and the need for dialogue and cooperation between the church and the communist state on the practical, ideological and theoretical levels. In the second set of problematics the main issue is clearly the relationship of the local Chinese church with the universal church,

and in particular with the Holy Father. The Holy Father is not only the bishop of Rome and the head of the Vatican curia, but he is also the pastor of the universal church, exercising full and supreme jurisdiction over the whole church and over each and every local church. Nevertheless, the way of exercising this power, both actively by the Pope and passively by each member of the church, under the particular circumstances of a given situation, is open to interpretation. For instance, different ways of appointing bishops in local churches, by nomination, election or ratification, are possible. The history of the church reveals different methods of doing this which take into account the power of the civil authority. In all these matters we must keep in mind the ultimate standard of Canon Law: the salvation of souls is the supreme law.

The basic question which binds the two sets of problems together is the inculturation of the local church in China. Inculturation ordinarily means the appointment of an indigenous episcopacy and clergy in a young local church. This is followed by the theoretical inculturation of theology in the ideological thought patterns of the traditional culture of that local church. The most important aspect of inculturation is the structural one, namely, contextualization. Contextualization is the incarnation of a church in the present historical evolution into the future. Indigenization is the first step because the actors in any inculturation of a local church must be the indigenous members of this local church. In China the indigenization of the local church has been achieved and is continually being realized in its special situation. However, the theoretical inculturation of theology in the old categories of the traditional culture of China has never been carried out.

For the last 35 years the church in modern China has been struggling with the process of contextualization. This is the church's basic task, to which all other theological problems are connected: to take over the positive elements of the Chinese historical and cultural tradition, to be actively incarnated in the present historical and social context of new China and to be dialectically identified with the Chinese people in their development of a modern society. Modern theologians speak of a new way of

doing theology. It is a theology from below, created in the situation by grass-roots people. It is a theology of the poor and for the poor, which stresses not so much theoretical orthodoxy as the practical orthopraxy of the community working for the total liberation of man. To develop such a theology is the task facing the Chinese church, both today and for years to come.

Conclusion

Within the limits of this paper the theological issues mentioned above have only been touched upon very lightly. They should be the object of serious reflection by all who have a concern for both the universal church and the local church in China. In this connection another aspect of the relations between the church and its cultural context arises, namely that of interculturalization. This pertains to the exchange which takes place among different local churches, belonging to different socio-cultural contexts. In communion with the universal church all local churches, especially those in Asia, have the duty of fostering this process of inter-culturalization with the local church in China in order to achieve mutual understanding, cooperation and enrichment. The recent visits of Cardinal Jaime Sin of Manila, Bishop John B. Wu of Hong Kong and some bishops of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences are the first step in such intercultural exchange. Such visits should foster further theological and pastoral corresponsibility.

Finally a word must be added about transculturalization, which is the Christian engagement in the process of the transcultural unification of the world beyond the cultural differences of nations and according to the universal values of a growing planetary culture. Transculturalization is the inculturation of the church in the new planetary and universal culture of the world of tomorrow. At this point in time, Christianity and China stand together at a new crossroads, for both share a similar vision about the destiny of man. Both strive for a transcultural and transnational unification of all peoples. Only if China and Christianity join their visions and forces in a dialectical way can this new evolution of human history reach its climax. For it is only the cosmic energy of a glorified Christ which permits mankind to pass from dreams of utopia to hope for an

historical accomplishment.

Footnotes:

1. The Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) is a political branch of the Catholic Church, a lay association, whose task is to be a bridge between the Church and the State. The CCPA is a mass organization, but it has only a small staff serving as secretaries for committees on the municipal, provincial and national levels. Apart from these few people on the committees, it has no formal membership.

2. At present the structure of the relationship between the Church and the State in China is the following: through the CCPA the Catholic Church, on one hand, is accountable to the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) of the People's Government; and on the other hand she is accountable to the United Front Work Department (UFWD), of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In a visual way we can portray the relationship as follows:

