

## VI. DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE



As we begin the countdown to 1997, we can look at it as a time to give up, quit and run, or as a call to stand up and create something new. The Church in Hong Kong is being challenged not only by the encroaching shadow of 1997, but also by the new understanding of Church which emerged from Vatican II--Church as People of God, servant, sign and sacrament of salvation. Both the 1997 deadline and our own theology are urging us to age quod agis, to become what we are meant to be -- a community of believers which is both totally Catholic and totally Chinese. The struggle in many ways is not very different from that of Matthew Ricci's time, four centuries ago.

In all of the comments made in the above papers, there is a clarion call to do three things: (1) to pursue personal and community renewal, (2) to facilitate more rapid structural change and (3) to deepen our participation in Society. These dictates are not unique to Hong Kong, but for the Church in Hong Kong there is a special urgency. Time and history are urging us to move more rapidly since our borrowed time is fast running out.

### Personal and Community Renewal

Hopefully the 1997 deadline will act as a stimulus for those of us here in Hong Kong to move more quickly to implement the changes of attitude and structures suggested by Vatican II.

1. A concentration on Christian formation: personal, spiritual, pastoral and theological.
2. Experimentation with new models of community.
3. Formation of small groups of Christians.

4. Training for family and small group prayer.
5. Formal development of varied ministries.
6. Development of lay leaders.
7. Interiorization of spiritual values to offset the materialism and consumerism of Hong Kong.

### Structural changes

The Hong Kong Church, especially in recent years, has played a unique role as a bridge church, assimilating elements of East and West, Chinese culture and Catholic theology. It has absorbed a variety of elements and has struggled to appropriate them into a truly international Christian community of believers. While 1997 is urging a more rapid localization of the Hong Kong Church, it should also take measures to insure its continued international and universal character. Some of the structural changes suggested are:

1. Greater emphasis on Chinese culture, language, values and symbols on all levels of Christian life.
2. More rapid employment of local Christians in administrative posts and pastoral ministry with an emphasis on greater lay participation.
3. Experimentation with non-clerical structures in parishes and other institutions.
4. Serious consideration given to secularizing all institutions, i.e. the complete turnover of the administration of schools, hospitals and social centers to competent lay people.
5. Less dependence on outside resources: both personnel and finances, e.g. total self-support by 1997.
6. Attempt to bring together Catholic leaders from Taiwan, Mainland China and Hong Kong for dialogue about possible areas of cooperation and unity, e.g. in liturgy, theology textbooks and seminary training.
7. Theological reflection on the role of the local church in relation to the universal church, e.g. what elements are essential, which are secondary.

## Participation in Society

The Hong Kong Church, although often cooperating with the local government, has also played the role of advocate for the poor and defender of human rights. In the minds of many there is a fear that this function may be weakened after 1997. Again there is an urgency for the local church to clarify its own position and for it to take the necessary steps to insure its freedom to pursue and implement Christian principles. Some recommendations are:

1. Local church people should not get caught up in the frenzy to emigrate, but should be a sign of confidence and hope for the people of Hong Kong.
2. The local church should pursue the guarantee of fundamental human rights in the Basic Law of Hong Kong.
3. The local church should reflect on the way that it can cooperate with China in its policy of the Four Modernizations.
4. The local church should clearly state its position on fundamental moral issues, e.g. abortion, regardless of consequences.
5. The local church should continue its advocacy efforts regarding justice, peace and rights issues, e.g. the rights of workers.
6. Since the Church now encourages dialogue with Communists and even with atheists, Hong Kong Christians should reflect on the position of the Church in a Socialist Society. In what areas can it cooperate and in what areas should it take a firm stand based on sound theological and moral principles?

# APPENDIX

## Hong Kong Roman Catholic Church - Some Basic Statistics

### 1. The Catholic Population in Hong Kong

YEAR	CATHOLIC POPULATION	TOTAL POPULATION	PERCENT
1987	263,270	5,585,000	4.71
1986	267,322	5,396,000	4.95
1981	259,001	4,986,600	5.19
1976	253,763	4,403,000	5.76
1971	231,840	3,936,000	5.89
1961	177,179	3,129,600	5.66

### 2. Priests

Diocesan:	1976 - Total 64 (62 Chinese, 2 others)
	1986 - Total 74 (73 Chinese, 1 others)
Institutes:	1976 - Total 274 (59 Chinese, 215 others)
	1986 - Total 267 (64 Chinese, 203 others)

### 3. Religious

#### Women

1976 - Total 770 (453 Chinese, 317 others)
1986 - Total 745 (449 Chinese, 296 others)

#### Men

1976 - Total 83 (33 Chinese, 50 others)
1986 - Total 79 (35 Chinese, 44 others)

### 4. Catholic Schools (1986)

#### Number of Catholic Schools

	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary + Middle
Catholic	54	106	73
Total Number	825	714	415
Percentage	6.55	14.85	17.59

## Students in Catholic Schools

Kindergarten	
No. of students in Catholic schools	20,231
Total Number of students	231,610
Percentage	8.73
Primary	
No. of students in Catholic schools	135,005
Total Number of students	531,993
Percentage	25.38
Secondary + Middle	
No. of students in Catholic schools	102,959
Total Number of students	446,193
Percentage	23.07

## 5. Catholic Social Welfare Institutions (1987)

STAFF: Paid - 54 sisters; 945 Laymen 3,945; laywomen (Total 4944)

### CLIENTS SERVED:

Child service: Boys 2,175 Girls 1,958

Residential homes: Men 281 Women 971

Elderly care service: Men 839 Women 4,135

Medical service: Hospital 2,985 beds  
109,554 patients  
O.P.D. & Clinics 997,965 persons

Hostels: Men 928 Women 411

Home help services: 1,177

Family services: 7,365

Other services: 118,745

(include lodge, clubhouse, camps,  
6 community social centres,  
9 children & youth centres)