

The Conclusions of the Group Discussions

IN HONG KONG-MACAU CATHOLIC CHURCH SEMINAR

The following is a summary of the conclusions reached in the participants' individual group discussions.

Asian Representatives

The participants of this group came from India, Pakistan, Japan, Korea, Mainland China, Taiwan and the Philippines. They felt that the Churches of Hong Kong and Macau had to make greater efforts to discover the underlying reality of their respective societies, and only then could they proceed towards theological reflection and teaching, based on a deeper understanding. Such an openness will require the humility to admit that the local church does not have all the answers. Local church structures will also have to shed much of their western garb and adapt more to the native cultures.

The local churches of Hong Kong and Macau will have to decide whom they wish to represent. Their first option should be the people who will remain in Hong Kong and Macau after the territories merge with China.

Active participation by the laity and youth was a welcomed feature of this seminar. Perhaps the seminar could have dealt more with the concrete, and included more pertinent references to the situation in Taiwan and other Asian countries.

Hong Kong

The Hong Kong group, the largest at the Seminar, was comprised of Catholics from many walks of life. The following were identified as major challenges facing the local Catholic church in Hong Kong.

The local church must develop Catholic communities that are scripture-oriented, deeply attached to Christ, grounded in the spirit of Vatican II, led by capable lay people, with a special concern for the poor, and with the spiritual values and simple life-style which can challenge the materialism and consumerism of Hong Kong society. It must train lay community leaders. This should be the top priority of the local church for the next ten years.

It should develop a local church that, while entering fully into local and national realities, remains in communion with the Universal Church, clarifying for the Catholic community what this means.

The local church must enter more fully into Hong Kong's evolving history, as an integral part of her struggles to build a better future.

It should learn how to live and dialogue with people who hold different political and ideological positions, and be open enough to appreciate the goodness that is present in them. It should work more to educate the Catholic community to be more concerned for social and political developments, and to take an active part in Hong Kong's social and political transformation.

With regard to China, the local church should identify itself with the destiny of the people of China, and assume responsibility for the historical tasks involved in the struggle to become a more humane, modernized, and democratic society.

It should broaden and deepen the local Catholic community's understanding of China, including its social, economic, and political development, in an effort to reattune itself to its history, culture and national aspirations.

Macau

The date of the turnover of Macau to Chinese sovereignty is 1999. As the delegates noted, Macau is very different from Hong Kong. With a population of only a fraction of that of Hong Kong, yet with a Christian history of over 400 years, and with remnants of the padroado system still active, its problems and responses must necessarily be different. The Macau group was made up principally of young energetic lay people.

The delegates from Macau considered the following elements most important for their local church:

- to deepen the understanding of Jesus Christ as Saviour and root of Christian faith and the development of a more mature faith.
- to promote a sense of community that shares a common understanding and is mutually supportive of common orientations.
- to provide more opportunities for the faithful to come together in small groups and share their faith experiences and concerns of the Christian community.
- to develop on-going leadership training programmes to assist the laity to live out their faith in very concrete situations.
- to promote the total human development of all members of society. We feel we can and should make our contribution to the rebuilding of the nation of China.
- to communicate better with other political groups and be present to all levels of society, especially the poor.