

Documentation

Proposals of a Professor

1. *We must solve the problem in the Church of China today.*

We do not want to recall the painful past during which the Church of China suffered all kinds of persecutions or the incident of Ignatius Pi, Archbishop of Shenyang (Mukden), which made the persecutions legitimate. Let us leave aside these painful recollections and try to resolve the problem of the present day.

The urgent task today is to unify the government-approved Church and the underground Church. The union of these two Churches will benefit both the Church of China and the people of China.

The Catholic Church is one in its founder Jesus Christ. It is one throughout the whole world; it is also one in China. We do not speak of the far away past; let us only mention the well known missionary Matteo Ricci. Until the new regime came into power the Church of China had been one. But from 1950 to the present day the Church of China has been unfortunately divided. Achieving the unity of the Church will certainly profit the whole Church of China; it will be agreeable to God; it will please the Pope; and it will be welcomed by the whole universal Church.

The unity of the Church in China will also benefit the country of China. The Chinese government has proposed the theme "Stability and Unity". The number of Catholics in China is small and constitutes a very small segment of China's population. Little though it may be, it is nonetheless an agent that can play an important role among of the masses.

2. *Who can unite the divided Church?*

Not the Vatican; experience has taught us that.

Not the Chinese government. Its way of solving this kind of problem is to support one, and suppress the other. Presently, the persecuted Church is becoming stronger than ever.

Neither can this problem be solved by sympathetic

people abroad; their strong voices do nothing but deepen the division.

Only the two groups themselves can solve the problem. It is our home task. Without the Vatican, the Chinese government and our foreign friends, we will sit down together to discuss the problem and endeavor to find a solution to this unfortunate situation.

3. I propose the following points to achieve the unity of the Church

a. Let us put our effort under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus Christ left the world, he sent the Paraclete to undertake the work of leading his Church.

b. "Unum ovile, unus pastor". This principle still has its value, otherwise we would not be the Catholic Church any more.

c. We are the Chinese Church and we look for the welfare of the Church of China and of the Chinese people.

d. Let China's religious affairs be dealt with in China, and not in the Vatican, but under the leadership of a personal representative of the Pope. Let the Pope himself designate his representative, whomever he desires among the Chinese bishops presently in China, even though this bishop may be with the Patriotic Association. He must, however, be faithful to the representative of Christ in this world.

But before anything else, there must be a preparatory dialogue between the government-approved and underground bishops.

We wish to communicate this humble proposal to all our friends with the hope that after being informed they will intensify their prayer for the unity of the Church in China.

/signed André Han
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