

Five Obstacles to Sino-Vatican Reconciliation

by Michael C. Mi

In 1995, after a 46 year stalemate, subtle changes took place in Sino-Vatican diplomatic relations. Two significant events captured world-wide attention. The first: China sent its first ever delegation to the Tenth Catholic World Youth Day in Manila from January 11 to 16. China's twenty-four representatives included not only seminarians, laypeople and five



priests from the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA), but also some communist officials from the State Council's Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB). The group intended to, and in fact did, to a certain extent meet openly with Pope John Paul II and with the representatives from Taiwan. The second event, approved by Beijing, was the presence of the Holy See's representation at the Fourth United Nation World Conference on Women, held in Beijing from September 4 to 15. This was the Holy See's first delegation to be sent openly to Beijing since 1951. The Holy See's delegation was headed by Mary Anne Glendon, a law professor from Harvard University and consisted of twenty-one members, thirteen of whom were women. It is important to note the similarity between these two events both in terms of the status and number of the persons present.

Church History

The Catholic Church came to China more than 700 years ago with John of Montecorvino, a Franciscan, who began the evangelization of the Mongols in Beijing in 1294. The history of the Catholic Church in China has not always been smooth but it has continued unbroken since the arrival of Matteo Ricci, S.J., in 1583.

Diplomatic relations between China and the Holy See were suspended on September 4, 1951 when the Chinese government expelled the Vatican internuncio, Antonio Riberi. This action was not only the result of communist ultra-left thinking, but also the will of the Chinese people whose resentment against their semi-colonial situation had been smoldering for years. The situation has changed significantly during the past few decades. After the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist party, in 1978, the Chinese government initiated a new progressive reform policy. Generally speaking, since then, the religious policy has been more open and tolerant, except for the short period between 1989 and 1992.¹ The Vatican's attitude towards China has also softened since Vatican Council II (1962-1965). There has been a low key series of dialogues through direct and indirect diplomatic channels and through non-governmental sources with both sides indicating their desire to resume diplomatic relations. But this has not yet happened. What obstacles still remain on the Chinese side? How can these obstacles be overcome? The present situation of the Chinese Catholic Church is a direct result of the past forty-six years. It is therefore necessary, in order to present the problems step by step, to review briefly the history of the Catholic Church in China since 1949.

From the establishment of the Communist Government to the end of the Mao Zedong era: 1949-1978

A crisis, intensified by severe inflation and attractive communist propaganda about land reform and political democratic reconstruction, led to the fall of the Nationalist government in China and to the Communist victory on October 1, 1949. On November 30, 1950, a group of Catholics in northern Sichuan, under the leadership of a Chinese priest, Wang Liangzuo, issued a manifesto calling all Chinese Catholics to cut off relations, including ties to the Vatican, with the forces of imperialism in order to build up the "Three Autonomies", and establish a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating church.² Other similar manifestos appeared later.

Premier Zhou Enlai, however, knew very well that continued relations between the Chinese Church and the Vatican had to be tolerated, at least temporarily. Therefore, he stated that as long as there was no opposition to the political power of the Chinese people

and no support within the church for American imperialism, relations with the Vatican could be maintained.³

Most Chinese Catholic bishops condemned the so-called “national” or “independent” church as “schismatic”, and added that Catholics who willingly separate themselves from the Holy See also separate themselves from Jesus Christ and from the universal Catholic Church.

During the “Oppose America--Aid Korea Movement”, the government either nationalized or confiscated almost all missionary institutions and properties. By the end of 1951, some missionaries had already left China. The majority, however were still at their stations even after Riberi’s expulsion.

The year 1955 was a turning point. The Catholic resistance was suppressed by mass arrests and the term “Three Autonomies” was gradually replaced by the more persuasive and appealing “Patriotic Association”. One could oppose the “Three Autonomies” on the basis that they affected the traditional structures and the nature of the Catholic Church, but no Chinese Catholic could resist loving his or her country. In that same year, two resistant bishops, Ignatius Gong Pinmei in Shanghai and Dominic Deng Yiming in Guangzhou, were arrested along with a large number of priests, Sisters and laypeople.⁴

In the middle of 1957, the national Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) was established with Shenyang’s Archbishop Pi Shushi as its chairperson. The communist officials strongly suggested electing and ordaining bishops without the approval of Rome. Since expelled bishops were not allowed to return to their sees, and some Chinese bishops were in prison, many new bishops were needed to fill episcopal vacancies. These vacancies were filled with “patriotic” priests. Between April 20 and July 20, 1958, thirteen “patriotic” bishops were ordained without Rome’s approval in six different Chinese dioceses.

The Vatican received this news with great sadness. On June 29, 1958, Pope Pius XII issued an encyclical letter, “Ad Apostolorum Principis”, in which he expressed his disapproval of the CCPA and stated that he would not recognize the ordination of bishops whose nominations had not been confirmed by the Holy See. Despite this

letter, by 1962 the number of illicitly ordained bishops appointed by the government had reached 42.⁵

With the onslaught of the Cultural Revolution, all religions as institutions disappeared in China; all publications of a religious nature were prohibited; and churches went underground in order to survive. The Religious Affairs Bureau and the CCPA both ceased to function. In 1976, shortly after Mao's death, the ultra-leftist Gang of Four (Mao's widow together with three Shanghai leaders) were arrested, and the ten year nightmare of the Cultural Revolution came to an end. Deng Xiaopeng emerged as the most influential leader of the CPC (Communist Party of China).

The Religious Policy during the Period of Reform and Openness: 1978-1995

The post-Mao era has been mainly the era of Deng Xiaopeng. To achieve the "Four Modernizations", China has seen fit to carry out a relatively kind and lenient religious policy. Deng's experience as a youth studying in France may have influenced his religious attitude, making him more tolerant and flexible than Mao.

Deng's means for moving forward is the United Front. The United Front is an alliance forged by people from all walks of life to support socialist modernization. The present relationship between "religion" and "politics" can best be examined in light of the new United Front slogan, "seeking unity, preserving differences". The original purpose of the United Front is contained in Lenin's words: "One should unify lesser enemies in order to struggle against the greater enemy." The United Front, however, has changed with time, both in terms of purpose and direction. It now works to mobilize all positive elements, to unify all possible strengths, and to change negative elements into positive ones for the sake of the "Four Modernizations" of China. The United Front and the Religious Affairs Bureau are two related organizations whose duty is to carry out the government's religious policy. The United Front Department is the Communist Party's organization and the Religious Affairs Bureau is the State Council's. The RAB executes the religious policy set by the UFD.

There has been progressive improvement in the situation of the Catholic Church since 1978.

- In 1978, two Catholic bishops and fourteen leaders of other religious groups were elected as delegates to the Political Consultative Conference.
- Many priests have been liberated from prison or work camps since 1979.
- In August 1979, Pope John Paul II first expressed hope of reestablishing relations with the Church in China.
- In the summer of 1980, two new organizations were set up: the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Chinese Catholic Administrative Commission. Many members of the commission are also members of the CCPA.
- Major seminaries and convents have been reopened progressively in Beijing, Shanghai and other places since 1982.
- Five Asian bishops and Cardinal Jaime Sin of Manila visited China in 1987.
- The "Guangqi" Press in Shanghai began translating the documents of Vatican Council II in 1989.
- Some Chinese and foreign priests residing outside of China have been allowed to teach in various seminaries for short periods of time. The New Constitution (1982), however, still contains clauses against the foreign domination of Chinese churches.

Sino-Vatican relations began to move away from confrontation in 1989. As China sought international dialogue, it realized that it needed to delineate a new policy toward the Catholic Church. Accordingly, the Party's Central Committee and the State Council promulgated Document 3 in February 1989: "Directives of the Party on How to Deal with the Catholic Church in the New Situation." The most important section in the document, which signaled a significant change of attitude, was that Chinese Catholics were now permitted to "maintain purely religious relationships with the Holy See." This means that Catholics can acknowledge the Pope as head of the Church and can publicly pray for him. However, Catholics cannot have direct contact with the Holy See and the Chinese Church must continue to choose and ordain its own bishops.

At a meeting of the Bishops' Conference held in March 1989, the Conference was accorded the place of leadership in the Church

formerly held by the CCPA; in turn the CCPA was from now on to function under the Bishops' Conference.

Regarding the relationship with the Holy See, the bishops said, "Our faith relationship with the Holy See has never been cut off. What has been cut off is the political relationship which prevents us from having external contacts with the Holy See. Our faith remains the same as before." These poignant words indicate the difficulty the bishops have in communicating the complicated present church situation.

In the late 1980's the government came to realize that religions not only underwent a revival after the Cultural Revolution, but were growing at an unprecedented rate. In the case of Christianity, government and church authorities put the number of Christians at six to seven million Protestants and three million Catholics. Other estimates put the number much higher: fifty to sixty million Protestants and ten to twelve million Catholics. Even the most conservative estimates represent an increase of more than 100% over the last fifteen years.⁶

The Five Obstacles to Sino-Vatican Reconciliation

Since the end of the 1980's, both China--even the CCPA--and the Vatican have openly voiced their desire to restore diplomatic relations. Pope John Paul II has made at least four speeches during the last fifteen years expressing his strong desire for reconciliation (in Rome, to the bishops of Taiwan, August 1995 and December 1990, in Seoul in October 1989, and in Manila in February 1981). He made no distinction between members of the Patriotic Association and underground Catholics; rather, he addressed the Catholic community in China as a whole.

In spite of the desire for reconciliation, China's promising and inspiring reform policy since 1992, and two historic breakthroughs in 1995, the necessary conditions for resuming diplomatic relations have not been fulfilled. The future of the Chinese Church depends on removing five basic obstacles to reconciliation. Unless these problems are satisfactorily addressed, reconciliation in the near future is all but impossible and may even jeopardize the situation of the Church.

First Obstacle: Atheism

Power within the China government is still solely concentrated in the hands of atheists. The extent of their religious toleration depends completely on the demands of any given situation. The present policy concerning Christianity would never regress to its previous low status if any one of the following conditions were present:

- some high ranking official were converted;
- if Christians became a large proportion of the Chinese population and
- if there were a sufficient element of pluralism in both the religious groups and the political parties to prevent the powers from wielding autocratic political power.

Most high ranking Chinese leaders studied in the USSR during the Stalin era; consequently, they have little genuine knowledge of Christianity. They are familiar only with ultra-leftist doctrine which taught them to make use of the United Front to eliminate religion progressively by uniting —educating,—reforming—or arresting—imprisoning—eliminating.

During a 1992 visit to Famensi, a Buddhist Temple in Shaanxi Province, Jiang Zemin, General Secretary of the CPC, publicly recited the famous atheistic poem, *Refute Buddhism, Zuoqian Zhilanguan Shizhi Sunxiang*, written by Han Yu, in 819 A.D., during the Tang Dynasty.⁷ Reportedly, his reason for visiting was to see the relic of Buddha's forefinger bones. But he did not forget first to assert his atheistic stance through the poem, even though in his heart, he might have been attracted by the magic power of the relic. Some among his retinue recited loudly and feverishly the sixth verse after Jiang's fifth verse in order to show solidarity with him. Perhaps a majority of Chinese leaders harbor similar feelings in the exercise of their diplomatic and "religious" activities.

Second Obstacle: Marxism

The Chinese government has not openly or completely abandoned Marxism. The ultra-leftists who still constitute the majority of high ranking officials have only been temporarily weakened under the pressure of Deng Xiaoping's authority.

Sometimes they show their true colors in publications, resorting to demagoguery. The article, "An Earnest Learning from the Religious Theory of Marxism and Religious Policy of the Party," written by Jiang Ping, a deputy minister of the United Front Department, in September 1986, is a case in point. He writes:

It is true that religion has played positive roles in the development of world history and revolutionaries and revolutionary groups have made successful use of religion. But our classic and famous Marxist dictum, "religion is the opium of the people," is still not out of date. It has been proved in both European and Chinese history that the negative role of religion can never be eliminated... After the liberation of our country...the religious situation changed considerably....To put it succinctly, the changes indicate that the religious organizations have changed only in appearance and political inclination, but they have not changed one iota in their social ideology (or world outlook) or their idealism....Religion is the complete opposite to atheism, so we cannot deny its anesthetic role in the social/ideological fields...We have no choice but to limit the degree and extent of religious activities."⁸

Third Obstacle: Underestimation of Vatican's international Status

China is carrying out its modernization program and the leaders' eagerness to succeed has led them to focus diplomatic attention particularly on those countries which have more economic or military strength. Based on the level of their understanding of Christianity at present, they cannot value the international status of the Vatican sufficiently and adequately promote dialogues of reconciliation. They have unconsciously revealed their underestimation of the Vatican in their arrogant and defiant attitude in low key dialogues.

There was once a Stalinist saying prominent in socialist countries, "How many divisions (of troops) are there in the so-called country of the Vatican,?" This kind of shortsightedness still has a strong influence on some Chinese leaders today. In other words, if the Vatican's military and economic strength were equal to that of the United States; if China were economically dependent on the Vatican, or if the Vatican were a military threat, attitudes would change and reconciliatory dialogue would begin immediately.

As for the authority and influence of the Pope in modern world affairs, the following quote from a Chinese atheist, who has lived in Rome for many years, reflects the public opinion of many atheists throughout the world.

Why should we respect the Pope? I don't know exactly. The old man often makes speeches on Italian TV on what happened in the remotest corner of the earth. His speeches appear authoritative, but I wonder how many criminal activities and injustices have changed following his benevolent appeal. I think it would be much better for that kind of man to retire as soon as possible rather than utter useless words interminably. You have no idea how much precious time he has wasted on TV in one year and how many interesting films could have been shown in that time instead.

Fourth Obstacle: Fear of Vatican Control

Besides underestimating the position of the Vatican on the world scene, Chinese leaders also worry that the Vatican could once again exercise control over the Chinese Church. The new Chinese government cannot ever again tolerate having foreign powers usurp Chinese sovereignty or assume China's administrative control. This policy is fixed, fundamental and cannot be changed.

In the past century, Western powers came swarming into China. As a result the Chinese people have tasted the bitterness of semi-colonial existence and experienced its lands portioned out into foreign leased territories. There were, of course, many reasons for China being reduced to the status of a semi-colony. Undoubtedly, one of the most obvious was the decadence and decline of the Qing Dynasty that could not muster up enough strength to control the foreign powers in China. It is no wonder then that today the new Chinese government worries that it could once more be penetrated and subverted by foreign powers. To prevent this possibility, China has set up fairly powerful controls over foreign affairs.

Such concerns stem both from the modern understanding of the differences between Marxism and Christianity as well as from the differences between traditional Chinese and Western cultures. Only when Oriental and Western cultures fuse together--or at least accommodate to each other--will both reach a point of mutual understanding.

In the early eighteenth century, for example, the emperors Kangxi (1661-1722) and especially Yongzheng (1723-1736), both of the Qing Dynasty, expressed these same concerns. China then was a powerful and prosperous country, without threat of foreign invasion. In fact, Emperor Kangxi expanded his territory to the northwest and northeast to include about five million square kilometers. But when he got involved in the Rites Controversy and finally resisted openly the ill-advised encyclical of the Pope, he and his son issued orders to place the church under a ban.

As a youth the emperor Yongzheng had no doubt heard much about Christianity from his tutor, Father Pedrini, and he appears to have admired many of its tenets. However, his belief that religion as a whole was revolutionary and subversive weakened his admiration of Christian doctrines. While he was striving for stability and the continuation of the status quo, he saw foreign priests disturbing the capital with quarrels concerning China's fundamental institutions which he, in common with his Chinese subjects, so firmly supported. Yongzheng explained his concerns one day to several missionaries. His words still afford food for thought today:

You say that your law is not a false law. I believe it. If I thought it were false, what would prevent me from destroying your churches and driving you from them? What would you say if I sent a troop of Bonzes and Lamas into your country to preach their doctrines? You want all Chinese to become Christians, your law demands it. I know. But in that case what will become of us? Shall we become subjects of your king? The converts you make recognize only you in time of trouble. They will listen to no other voice but yours. I know that at the present time there is nothing to fear, but when your ships come by the thousands then there will probably be great disorder.... The emperor, my father, lost a great deal of his reputation among scholars by the condescension with which he let you establish yourselves here. The laws of our ancient sages will permit no change and I will not allow my reign to be laid open to such a charge.⁹

The Qing emperors worried that if converts, still respected Confucius and worshipped their ancestors, while following the Chinese Catholic traditions set up by Matteo Ricci, the contents of Catholic doctrine and Canon Law might commix with the doctrine of traditional Chinese philosophy, religions and law. If Matteo Ricci's

opinion were not followed, the whole Chinese cultural system, especially the civil examination system of the empire, would fall apart immediately. The emperors wouldn't know "from where to select our officials and how to administrate our country in the future. Won't those days be as turbulent as an uncontrollable wild horse?"

Perhaps the Chinese should not have worried so much about their sovereignty. Their concern stemmed mainly from the misunderstanding of the relation between religion and politics, between churches and government. I have yet to hear of disturbances caused by churches unjustifiably interfering in the internal affairs of local governments after the churches have separated themselves from political institutions. It is Canon law that stipulates in detail how Catholics should support and conduct themselves before justifiable secular matters.

The situation in China has changed considerably since the Sino-British Opium War of 1840, following which the Chinese people suffered a long period of semi-colonialism. Western powers often trespassed on Chinese territory in order to interfere illegally into Chinese internal affairs. No Chinese can forget this national nightmare. Because the new government was born out of this nightmare, the worries or "misunderstandings" such as those of Yongzheng's may still be relevant today. No one can dispel these concerns without the emergence of:

- an in-depth fusion of Oriental and Western cultures.
- a really powerful and prosperous China.
- a new sound international structure.

The fact remains that only a few big developed countries dominate international affairs. Nationalism, as a country's basic motivational principle, is still a common phenomenon today. Hegemonies, such as the USA, have interfered unnecessarily in the internal affairs of weaker countries such as Panama, Somalia, and even Iraq, in order to promote their own nationalism. China, as a developing country suffering from gigantism since 1840, is still, in certain respects groaning and moaning weakly.

In light of its universal organization, some secular sectors are quick to point out the similarities between the universal Catholic Church and transnational corporations. Their main concern is that there is no transnational corporation with an administrative system as

tight, efficient, pervasive and enduring as the Vatican system. Given these conditions, it seems that the Pope or the Vatican's State Department could still influence strategic diplomatic decisions.

Fifth Obstacle: the Ordination of Bishops

For more than forty years China and the Vatican have been troubled by the problem of ordaining bishops. In the course of world history, the Holy See has reached many agreements with governments to adapt to a variety of historical circumstances. Why can't this happen in China? Jeroom Heyndricks asks the question in his essay, "The Need for Reconciliation". Why does the Chinese government still refuse "to submit names of potential candidates for bishops to the Holy See? In the future, how will the process of assigning bishops respect the definition of the Chinese constitution and the authority of the Chinese government?"¹⁰

This matter is complex and there are many obstacles to reaching an agreement. First of all, the procedure found in the Vatican tradition may never be accepted by the present Chinese government. Why? We can infer the answer from other policies or diplomatic activities, but such clear answers may not be so obvious from low-key dialogues.

We can draw some insights from the policy on Tibetan Affairs. According to the regulation of the "Golden Urn", in the Twenty-nine Article Ordinance of Tibetan affairs laid down by the Qing Court in 1793, the succession of the Tibetan and Mongolia religious leaders, Dalai Lama and Panchen Erdeni should be specially selected progressively. The first step, whether Dalai Lama or Panchen Erdeni, is to write the names of three carefully selected candidates on wooden (or bamboo) talismans. Then as part of the incarnation/confirmation ceremony, one name is drawn from the Golden Urn in Lhasa. Finally, the name of the candidate is submitted to Beijing for official confirmation.¹¹

In other words, according to the Chinese historical tradition, no matter the religion, the government is always the final and supreme authority in both secular and religious affairs. If Chinese Catholics were to submit the names of bishop candidates to the Holy See, Chinese sovereignty would then seem to be subject to foreign domination.

In addition differences between Oriental and Western cultures have hindered some Chinese from clearly understanding the Catholic tradition. The Chinese civilization is the only one to leave considerable evidence of elaborated philosophical thought in a non-Indo-European language. Furthermore, it has done so in a language different beyond imagining from Greek, Latin or Sanskrit.

Linguistic peculiarities may have played a covert role in human reasoning and may have favored certain orientations of thought. Always, the intellectual traditions, modes of thought and vision of the world of the Chinese differ markedly from those of Europe. Together with the social organization and political traditions of China, the differences constituted a considerable obstacle to Christianization. This is evident by the Chinese reactions to the action of Christian missionaries in the seventeenth century.

The Protestant missionaries of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries complained about the difficulties involved in expressing Christian ideas in Chinese. One of them exclaimed, "Chinese is such an imperfect, unwieldy instrument for conveying spiritual truths!"¹² Although the situation has changed considerably today, some language problems still remain. For example, the sacred position and high prestige given to the words "Holy See" has been expressed clearly in European languages. In speaking of the Holy See, and the "sees" of secular government, it is unnecessary to indicate to any educated Christian which "see" has the supreme authority in the ordination of Catholic bishops. But in Chinese, the words "Holy See" are translated "Jiao Ting". The original significance in terms of sacred position and prestige has been obscured or has disappeared completely within the numerous notions about other religious (Jiao) organizations which have not even yet formed a universal administrative system.

As for the "Pope" no matter what word we use in Chinese, "Jiao Zong" or "Jiao Huang", both mean "the religious emperor" or "the emperor for religious affairs". Since no encyclopedia, dictionary or textbook has yet explained clearly the relationship between the Chinese secular emperor [in the present situation, the chairman or president, etc.] and the "religious emperor" in the Vatican, many Chinese wonder which one has the supreme authority in joint affairs, e.g., in a bishop's ordination. Furthermore, China is much larger than

the Vatican, so people wonder why “the emperor” of the larger country should be subject to the smaller.

Some Chinese may even be heard to mutter, “Come on, submit your names of candidates for bishops from the Holy See to Beijing as other Chinese religious organizations do. Why not?” Recently, more and more Chinese scholars have pointed out that much of foreign culture has been sinicized in the course of the historic sino-foreign cultural exchange process. The Mahayana Buddhism has become Dhyana or Zen after a transformation of more than 1000 years. Why can’t Christianity be assimilated or sinicized like Buddhism?

The question of bishops’ ordination is a crucial one for both sides, but it can be neither avoided nor easily overcome. The Chinese tradition of a centralized authority or political monism has made it impossible for them to understand and accept the Vatican process. For the Chinese religious matters are inseparable from the affairs of State. A cult is only authorized once it has been officially recognized and integrated into the hierarchy of cults, under the patronage of the government. Thus, in the past, the Buddhist and Taoist cults had to be associated with the official cults of the literati tradition. The government (or emperors in the past) allotted titles to the clergy just as they allotted them to their officials.

The Western concept of a distinction between political and religious authority, each vested respectively in the persons of kings and popes has been regarded by China as an aberration.

It comes down to having two suns in one sky, two masters in a single kingdom. Does this mean that if one can imagine the principles of Yao and Shun [the sovereign Saints of Antiquity] being suddenly replaced by those of their sutra, our emperor himself would have to submit to this doctrinal sovereign and send him tribute? What audacity it is on the part of these calamitous barbarians who would like to upset the [political and moral] unity of China by introducing the barbarian custom of the two sovereigns.¹³

The nature of the old opinion above is similar to Mr. Jiang Ping’s present opinion mentioned in the second “obstacle”. These kinds of beliefs are still common in some literati circles today. The only difference between them is the language style. The old words are imbued with a strong superiority complex found in the oriental

autocratic monarchy of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), but the new words are brimming over with an even stronger superiority--that of the proletarian dictatorship of Mao Zedong.

Being unfamiliar with the concept of a clear-cut distinction between the spiritual and the temporal, Chinese atheists cannot conceive of a religion that would detach itself from the general order. It can only imagine religion as dominating it rather than being integrated into it.

Throughout China's history, the ruling and literati circles found religions acceptable only if they reinforced the total order, which is both political and religious; if they strengthened public morality through their teachings and if they contributed towards the stability of the country and collective prosperity by means of the supernatural blessings which they believed religions attracted on the whole country. Under such circumstances, they could be encouraged and recognized by the country. If on the other hand, they threatened the general well-being, public morality and tranquillity, they became object of repressive legislation. Good clergy are those of the CCPA who serve the State and are under its control; bad clergy are those of the underground churches made up of individuals with little to recommend them and who elude State control.

The conflict between China and the Vatican is basically a clash of civilizations as the famous political scientist, Samuel P. Huntington, pointed out in 1993:

International relations, historically a game played out within Western civilization, will increasingly be de-Westernized and become a game in which non-Western civilizations are actors and not simply objects.

The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics.¹⁴

I do not wholly agree with Mr. Huntington's following statement, however:

The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future. Conflicts between civilizations will be the latest phase in the evolution of conflict in the modern world.... Conflicts between

groups in different civilizations will be more frequent, more sustained and more violent...violent conflicts between groups in different civilizations are the most likely and most dangerous source of escalation that could lead to global wars.¹⁵

Perhaps the cultural clash between the West and Islamic States is as serious as he maintains, but regarding Confucian States, it seems to me that Mr. Huntington has exaggerated the minor phenomena and overlooked the major aspects of the situation. The cultural fusion between Christian and Confucian States is the indispensable historical trend. Sooner or later, Christianity will be widely accepted by Chinese people just as Buddhism was accepted after a 500 year period of conflicts and "clashes". Furthermore, there are no obvious signs of escalating clashes that could lead to global wars in the immediate future, as Huntington predicted.

Through my analysis, I hope that history will offer the universal Catholic Church a clearer understanding of the difficulties facing the Chinese Catholic Church and provide an opportunity to grow in closer unity, in a more mature unity--a unity characterized by equality and genuine mutual respect for each other's cultural backgrounds.

The presence of different characteristics and identities should not hamper unity within the universal Church; quite the opposite. A new encounter between various traditions in an awareness of and appreciation for cultural differences can only enrich the universal Church, help it grow in its international relations and enjoy an internal unity inspired by the Gospel. □

Endnotes

¹ Edmond Tang and Jean Paul Wiest, *The Catholic Church in Modern China*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1993, p. 30. Before and after the June 4 incident in Tiananmen Square in 1989, to Deng Xiaoping's inspiring speech during his tour of Southern China, the religious policy was tightened and about thirty clergy were arrested in the country. Two Catholics were killed and 350 wounded during the Youtong incident in Hebei Province.

² The text of the Sichuan manifesto appeared in "China Missionary Bulletin", 1, January 1951, pp. 149-151.

³ Richard C. Bush, Jr., *Religion in Communist China*. Nashville, TN. Abingdon Press. 1970, pp. 105-107.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 121-124. See also "Papal Documents related to the New China," p. 38-45.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 132-135, 139-157.

⁶ Tang, op. cit. p. 40.

⁷ I got the illustrated report from the glass-fronted billboard in front of the gate of Famensi, in September 1994.

Han Yu (768-824 A.D.), a famous scholar and writer during the Tang Dynasty, was dismissed from his office as minister of the Judicial Department by Emperor Xian Zong as the result of submitting a statement opposing the Emperor's intention to hold a grand ceremony to receive the relic of Buddha from India. He was an atheist and considered any religion a kind of corruption offending public morals. The poem *Refute Buddhism*, *Zuoqian Zhilanguan Shizhi Sunxiang*, in eight verses was composed while he was traveling from Changan to Chaozhou in Guangdong Province.

Cf., Zhu Tongrun, *The Chinese Anthology through Ages*, Book II, Vol. I, Shanghai Antiquity Press, 1963, p. 158.

⁸ Jiang Ping, "An Earnest Learning from the Religious Theory of Marxism and Religious Policy of the Party," *Hongqi*, the official magazine of the CPC, issue No. 9, 1986. Beijing, pp. 25-30.

⁹ A.H. Rowbotham, *Missionary and Mandarin. The Jesuits at the Court of China*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1942, pp. 177-178; or see De Mailla (1669-1748), *Histoire de la Chine*, (T'ung chien Kang Mu, the excerpts in French, 1777) XI, p. 392, note.

¹⁰ op. cit. Tang, p. 205.

¹¹ Ning Shiqun and Liu Wei's report: "How the Reincarnation of Panchen Erdeni X has been confirmed", *People's Daily*, overseas edition, 5 December, 1995, Beijing, China. Cf. Jin Hui, etc. *Social History of Tibet, China*, documented and illustrated, China International Press, Beijing, 1995, pp. 25-28.

¹² Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact, A Conflict of Cultures*, The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, New York, 1985, p. 239. Cf. "In What Form Shall We Give the Bible?" Chinese Recorder, (1890), p. 454.

¹³ Op. cit., p. 108. Cf., also Poxie Zhaiyao Lueyi, Huangzhen, Poxie Ji or *Collection for the Destruction of Vicious Doctrine* (1639) Vol. V. P. 286. The collection in eight volumes is the richest collection of anti-Christian writings, a late edition reproduced in Japan in 1855.

¹⁴ Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No.3, New York, USA, 1993, pp. 22-48.

¹⁵ Ibid.