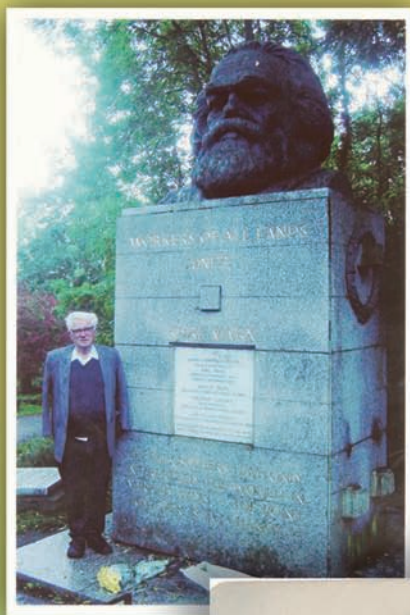


Option for the Deprived



James Hurley S.J.

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Catholic Studies Publications, the Chinese University of Hong Kong

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The Centre for Catholic Studies was established at the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies in 2005, to further develop Catholic Studies at the University. The Aims of the Centre include:

- 1) Promoting academic research related to Catholic Studies;
- 2) Training Catholic Studies scholars;
- 3) Enhancing academic exchanges among scholars of Catholic Studies worldwide;
- 4) Disseminating knowledge of Catholic culture.

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CONTENTS

<i>Publications Preface</i>		1
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>Alfred J. Deignan S. J.</i>	2
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>James Hurley S. J.</i>	3
1.	On the Occasion of the Inauguration of the Youth Centre on Boundary Street, 1968	7
2.	Clarification of Position on Behalf of Students of Chu Hai College who were not Allowed to Register, June 19, 1969	11
3.	Appeal on Behalf of Students who have been on Strike for Four weeks, September 15, 1969	12
4.	“Do Students have rights?” Annual General Assembly, Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students, October 12, 1969	13
5.	Support of Demands of Students Summarily Expelled by Chu Hai College, 1969	15
6.	Opening Speech of First Leadership Training Project Organized by the Student Union of the Hong Kong University, 1969	16
7.	Thoughts on Diocesan Convention (in Response to Vatican II), 1970	18
8.	On Chinese as Official Language in Hong Kong, October 11, 1970	22
9.	On Article 21 and the Creation of a Genuine People’s Forum, 1971	24
10.	On the 19 th Anniversary of Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students, 1971	25
11.	On Human Rights in General, 1971 Human Right: Milestones in their Development	33

12.	Hong Kong and Human Rights, 1971	38
13.	Assessment of Student Movement in Hong Kong, 1972	44
14.	Radicalization of Asian Chaplains, 1972	52
15.	The Future of the Student Movement in Hong Kong, 1972	61
16.	Prophet, 1972	70
17.	Liberation Theology, 1972	82
18.	Property: Private?, 1973	97
19.	A Novice Master at Work in a Factory, 1975	105
20.	On Argentine, "Football Yes. Torture No", 1978	125
21.	Democracy, 1991	131
22.	Social Involvement, Christ the Worker Parish, 1993	144
23.	Some Memories and Final Reflections, 2008	154
	<i>Appendix I: Chronology of Fr. James Hurley SJ</i>	161
	<i>Appendix II: Interview with Fr. James Hurley SJ, by Roberto Reyes</i>	163
	<i>Appendix III: Call me James, by Basil Fernando</i>	173
	<i>Appendix IV: Interview with James Clancey, by Roberto Reyes</i>	180
	<i>Appendix V: Pictures</i>	187
	<i>Index</i>	199

Preface to the Catholic Studies Publications

The Centre for Catholic Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong was established in November 2005. Its objectives are to promote academic research related to Catholic Studies, to train scholars for Catholic Studies, to enhance academic exchanges among scholars of Catholic Studies worldwide, and to disseminate knowledge of Catholic culture.

The release of Book Series on Catholic Studies by the Centre aims at providing a platform for local and overseas scholars to make known their research results, encouraging more scholars to conduct research, so as to enable scholars of various disciplines to exchange ideas and dialogue, and to enhance the understanding by the public of Catholic culture. The whole series is divided into four streams:

- Research Series: Publish creative research works after academic assessment, including individual works and conference proceedings.
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- Liberal Studies series: Publish books for the general public, aiming at promoting Catholic culture through popular means and themes related to daily life.

This platform is open for public. We welcome any comments and submission of scripts, especially those works related to relationship between Catholic Church and the society, in order to strengthen the development of Catholic Studies.

FOREWORD

I am very happy to write this introduction to my fellow Jesuit, Father James Hurley's record of his life's experiences. He shares these experiences of fifty years lived in Hong Kong.

His life here is rich with the experiences of his contacts and relationships with many people, many of whom will remember him. He has shared his dedicated service with the people of Hong Kong and they have shared so much of their lives with him.

As a young enthusiastic Jesuit Priest he devoted his early years to youth, especially those in post-secondary colleges and universities. As a Chaplain he was involved in the student movement of the sixty's and seventy's. He was very concerned with social justice; worked in a factory for some time and became one of the founding members of Amnesty International in Hong Kong.

As a spiritual guide he was appointed Master of Novices of young people who were interested in becoming Jesuits. Then he spent a good part of his life, about twenty years, serving in three different parishes, i.e. Ngau Tao Kok, Wong Tai Sin and Chaiwan. He was a Parish Priest for seventeen of these years.

His deep spiritual concern and care for others; his sincerity and faithful service; his example of Christian love, inspired by his love of Christ, have won him much respect and many admirers. I am sure his sharing of his life's experiences will touch the hearts of many and inspire them.

Alfred J. Deignan S. J

INTRODUCTION

I suppose it is desirable that you, dear reader, should know something about the author of these articles and his background. So here goes!!

I am now a ripe 81, still sprightly enough, and in reasonably good health. I was born on October 1st 1926. I am quietly proud of this October 1st –National Day for the Peoples Republic of China! I grew up in Ardmore, a village near the sea in Ireland. There were 4 of us in the family, 2 girls and 2 boys. I was the youngest. Times were then rather difficult –the early days of independence in Ireland. My father built up a promising business. My mother was an exceptionally devoted Catholic, looked on as a “saint”, and worked vary hard for the family. Her deep faith has had an enormous influence on the family.

For my secondary school I went to a boarding school run, strangely enough, by Cistercian monks. My brother had preceeded me there. In my final year there was a mini strike, in which I played a part. The president of the College wrote a letter of complaint to my father. (see P. 192) But very generously the monks did not object when I applied to join the Jesuits at the end of that year. I now salute them for this magnanimity.

After 2 years of noviceship I took my first vows, and then was sent to the National University where I studied what was then called –Classics. In those days it was looked on as a prestige degree, but in retrospect I would tend to disagree! During my years at the University I came across the writings of Patrick Pearse. Pearse was a writer, a poet, an orator, and had founded a most interesting and experimental school in Dublin. In 1916 he led a rebellion against British rule in Ireland. This rebellion was suppressed and, together with the other leaders, he was summarily executed. Patrick Pearse has had an enduring influence on my life and thinking.

Then followed three years of philosophy in a very rustic setting. Enjoyable years! During that time I volunteered for mission work in Hong Kong, and in August of 1952, five of us traveled by boat to HK. A journey of 30 days and no air conditioning! Our first few weeks in HK were spent on the top floor of the present Court of Final appeal! How come? At that time the building was still the property of the Paris Foreign Missions. Subsequently they sold it to the HK Government, and

we left for our new home in Cheung Chau- the present Retreat House. I can claim it will be one of its “founding Fathers”! It was here that we had our first struggles with Cantonese! But we survived, and in my second year I taught Religious Knowledge in one of the local primary schools. My first experience of standing in front of a class, and using, or rather trying to use, Cantonese! A quite unforgettable experience! Perhaps it was an equally unforgettable experience for the children!!

Then followed a year of teaching at Wah Yan College, Kowloon. At that time the now famous Martin Lee was a student, and a very prominent member of the then debating society. Some might hold that it was here that Martin acquired some of his excellent debating skills. At the end of that year four of us returned to Ireland for theology and ordination. A surprise decision as we had been told initially that we would never again return to Ireland. So man proposes and God disposes! In 1958 we were ordained priests, and in 1960 returned to HK- again by boat.

Very soon I was assigned to work with university and post-secondary students, and teach in Chu Hai College. In this College were some of the finest and most brilliant students I ever met, but - being a refugee university - it was not officially recognized by the colonial HK Government. And it was from here that student movement hit HK. Students here had been mildly critical of the Chu Hai College authorities, but it was a very long and highly analytical article written by two students using pennames that brought things to a head, and twelve students were rather summarily expelled. (one of these was Buddhist monk!). Some of these students approached me and I promised to speak to the College authorities. I tried several times, but did not succeed. Then the newspapers sympathetic to the College broke the news. Overnight I became a rather famous person! The expelled students called a press conference, and they invited me to attend and speak. At this stage it had become a highly-charged and rather political question. These students were – wrongly, I feel, looked on as “leftists”, which at that time was a very major “crime”. So I approached my superior, Father Fergus Cronin. At most I expected a somewhat reluctant agreement to my being present. But Fr Fergus could not have been more positive. “Go, James”, he said. “Attend, this is where you must be”. I can never forget these words. In all my years under obedience as a priest and Jesuit I have never come across such a courageous and positive expression of authority. And it was with the greatest of joy that before Fergus died I was able once again to thank

him for such daring, trust, and magnanimity. Chu Hoi College authorities thought differently, and made this clear. So I resigned, and devoted the following years to working with the Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students during those rather heady days of the student movement.

From 1972 to 1973 I was on sabbatical in Manila. Ferdinand Marcos had just declared martial Law in the Philippines, and I was lucky to meet and get to know some of the people involved in this very volatile and politically sensitive situation. On my return to HK I was to have become the chaplain to university students at the Asian level. However my Religious superiors thought differently and I was – to the very great surprise of many people - put in charge of Jesuit novices! After a few years we ran out of novices and then I was able to realise a long-cherished dream – to work in a factory as an ordinary worker. An article in this booklet describes my experiences in this area of life. So I will spare you!

After a few months in the world of the factory I spent some days discerning my future. The result of this discernment as a decision to work in a parish (not a wealthy one!) with some emphasis on the social apostolate of the Church. So for the next 20 years I worked in Diocesan parishes, most of that time as parish priest. Perhaps my best experience was in Christ the Worker parish at Ngau Tau Kok. There we had a very active Justice and Peace group, and an equally active branch of Amnesty International. I had been one of the founding members of AI in HK, and up to recently was a longtime member. Just now I have reservations about some of their recent decisions. However I still strongly support their work for Prisoners of Conscience. And I do cherish the memory of a visit to our parish in Wong Tai Sin of Peter Bennenson, the founder of Amnesty. I invited Peter to visit the nearby very famous temple, but he declined and instead made a quiet visit to our little chapel.

So much for my somewhat elaborate and rambling introduction. I continue to work, but not perhaps as vigorously and as extensively as before.

Now over to you, dear reader. I hope that the following pages, although written many years ago, will nonetheless strengthen your resolve to work for the welfare and human rights of those who are poor and deprived.

Thank you for your attention.

James Hurley S. J.
2008

1. On the Occasion of the Inauguration of the Youth Centre on Boundary Street, 1968

Mr. Chairman, Miss Lee, Honourable guests, fellow students:

My first task here this afternoon is a very easy and very pleasant one. It is simply to say thank you. Thank you for coming. Thank you for honouring us with your presence at this simple opening ceremony. I would like to thank you all individually and by name, but that would be impossible. However I do feel that there are some who must be singled out for special mention. First of all I thank Miss Dorothy Lee for coming to perform the opening ceremony. Miss Lee needs no introduction. She is from the Social Welfare Department where she used to be in charge of the Youth section. This section has developed into the group and community division and happily Miss Lee is still in charge. Miss Lee has always had a very keen and practical interest in our student projects and helped us in many ways on innumerable occasions. So it was a great pleasure for us when she accepted the invitation to come and perform the opening ceremony. Thank you Miss Lee.

We must also thank Caritas. This Centre here on Boundary Street is largely devoted to the youth of Hong Kong, and here on the sixth floor we are concerned with youth at post secondary level. Caritas has given us this floor free, nor do we have to pay rent, and for this princely generosity we sincerely thank them. Naturally enough we students are expected to furnish, equip and run the place ourselves. This is very reasonable, but it does give us some financial headaches. People have asked me where we got the money that we have so far invested in this College Centre. Well we have begged, we have borrowed, and perhaps we may also have stolen! If indeed we have stolen from any of you I promise you that at sometime in the distant future we will make adequate restitution! You will however be happy to hear that for this project the students themselves have raised over ten thousand dollars. I need hardly say that this sum is not sufficient, and so we will continue to beg, borrow, and maybe steal! In the last year or two I feel that I have become a professional beggar, and in such a capacity have visited many of you who are sitting in front of me this afternoon. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you for your generosity, and above all for your tolerance and forbearance with me. Last summer I had a rather amusing experience

as beggar. I come from a remote village in a remote area of the south of Ireland, and when the good people there heard about our difficulties they said why not get our parish priest to organize a collection for Father Hurley. Fr Hurley did not disagree with this suggestion. However to organize a collection in a Catholic Church one must first get the permission of the Bishop and also of the Irish Jesuit superior. Because of the special circumstances of the case-after all it was an affair among friends in my own native village- I felt that neither permission was necessary. Came the Sunday when the collection was to be made for Fr Hurley and his students in far - away Hong Kong. An announcement was to be made about this extremely important matter. But dear friends, believe it or not, who happened to be on holidays on that particular Sunday in that very remote corner of Ireland but my Jesuit superior. And by a still stranger twist of fortune it was he who was asked to make the announcement! Luckily and through the good offices of my Hong Kong superior, I have lived to tell the tale! Next May I will return to Europe for about three months in an effort to supplement our meager resources.

Dear friends pardon me for inflicting on you these gory, crude financial details. It wasn't really this that I intended to speak to you about. There is something else, something far more important, something which concerns the youth of Hong Kong. Every day we hear about the problem of youth. Brashly perhaps I feel that there is no youth problem among us, but perhaps there may be a problem for those in charge of youth, be they parents, teachers, priests or welfare workers. Let me try to develop this point. There is no youth problem. For the last six years I have been working with the young people of Hong Kong. They are not without fault, but taken all in all I venture to say that they are as fine a group as you will find in any part of the world. I will go further and say: they are second to none in the world. When I see everyday shining examples of their idealism, self sacrifice and enthusiasm I often ask myself: if you Fr Hurley could step back twenty years and became a student once again would you be as good? I would like to say answer yes, but I fear it would not be an honest answer. Last summer I had the good fortune to witness a remarkable example of this idealism and self sacrifice. You will remember the general strike that was called for. If this was successful Hong Kong could have been paralysed. One of the organizations to which I belong produced a statement appealing to the youth of Hong Kong to sacrifice the summer holidays and work wherever they were

needed. I assure you, dear friends, that it was with a certain fear and trepidation this statement was produced: fear of our leftist friends, and fear of a poor response among our students. Little did I realize what the students of Hong Kong were made of. In a few days over a thousand of them, fearless of threat and danger, had come forward offering their time and service. It was indeed a moment of glory not merely for just one of the organization but for the youth of Hong Kong. For me personally it was a chastening experience. Chastening because I had even dared to think there might be a poor response. How grossly I had underestimated the heroic qualities, the hidden riches and resources of the young people of Hong Kong.

A few moments ago I said there is no youth problem in Hong Kong, but there is a problem of those who are in charge of youth. I myself am the proof of this statement. But perhaps I am not altogether alone in this matter. Perhaps there are other guides and counselors of youth who have not realized the riches and resources of the young people of Hong Kong. Why should this happen?

I do not profess to know the complete answer, but looking into my own heart I do find some distressing phenomena, phenomena which may be shared by other colleagues. When we guides and counselors of youth were young ourselves our lives too glowed with youthful enthusiasm and burning idealism. No sacrifice, however severe and demanding, was too much for us. Such sacrifices were rather privileges to be sought after rather than hardships to be avoided. But as we grew older we grew wiser or so we thought. I do not say we jettisoned or abandoned our ideals. But in the name of sweet reasonableness we bartered and haggled, we compromised, we came to terms with the mean and dubious standards of the counting house and market place. Is it any wonder then that we the present day guides and counselors of youth cannot fire the imagination of youth and give to them a vision of greatness? For no man can give people a vision of greatness unless in so far as he habitually chooses to live with it himself.

My dear friends this sorry state of affairs and its lamentable results were demonstrated to me last summer at a study camp which I attended. After one of our meetings one day I sat around with three or four young men discussing their future. They had just graduated primary, secondary and post-secondary, having passed through

well-known institutions of education in Hong Kong. They could look forward to a prosperous career and the esteem of society. But instead of being elated they were rather-sad and dejected; sad and dejected because they felt themselves empty: no star to follow, no standard to rally to, no ideal to fight for. In the primary school, and these are their own words, they were told to work so that they could get a place in a good secondary school. In their secondary school they worked for their school certificate, the passport to a good job. Post secondary education they found to be no different.

Is it any wonder then that these young people should stand on the thresholds of life feeling sad, dejected and empty? Living a life where youthful ideals and noble aspirations had withered away. But can we blame them? The answer is no. If anyone is to shoulder the blame surely it is their elders, their guides and counselors, their parents and guardians. No, my dear friends, it is not that youth has failed us, it is rather that we have failed youth.

What I have been trying to say here today was said more briefly and succinctly over a hundred years ago by a great military general: Napoleon. He said there are no such things as bad soldiers, there are only bad generals.

2. Clarification of Position on Behalf of Students of Chu Hai College who were not Allowed to Register, June 19, 1969

I have been lecturing in Chu Hai College for eight years, and I would like, through the columns of your newspaper, to clarify my position with regard incidents concerning this College.

At the end of August twelve students of this College were requested by the authorities not to register for the coming scholastic year. Some of these twelve students consulted me, and as a result I had five interviews with the College authorities. In the course of these interviews my position was as follows: if a student is requested not to register it is equivalently expelling him from the College. To expel student specific evidence must be produced to prove, clearly and convincingly that he has been guilty of some crime, or serious violation of College regulations. Such evidence has not yet been produced. If it is produced I am prepared to state publicly that the College has acted reasonably and justly. If not, I shall continue to believe in the innocence of these students.

During these interviews with the authorities of Chu Hai College, I worked for a peaceful and honorable settlement of the problem. At one stage such a settlement seemed imminent, but then negotiations mysteriously broke down.

More recently demonstrations took place on the steps of Chu Hai College. On the first day of these demonstrations I issued a statement saying that although I deeply sympathized with these demonstrators I could not see my way, just then, to giving a full and unqualified approval to this method of solving the problem.

On Saturday, September 13th, a student commission was set up to study this question. It is composed of the three major student organizations of Hong Kong; The Hong Kong Federation of Students, The College Student Association of Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students. This commission, I said in my statement of September 15th, will encounter difficulties, but at the same time I firmly believe it will ultimately bring us a solution.

3. Appeal on Behalf of Students who have been on Strike for Four weeks, September 15, 1969

I appeal to the community to give this commission a fair chance and full support. It will certainly encounter difficulties, but I am confident that with such a commission we can eventually find a solution to this problem.

It is perhaps a pity that those who staged today's sit in did not wait for the findings of this commission. However although many of us cannot give these students our full and complete support we must realize that for almost four weeks the principal actors in this drama have been living with constant stress and strain; their nervous energy and emotions have been seriously over-taxed, and have often been on the verge of breaking point. If you or I were in the same position would we set differently?

Hong Kong can no longer presume on the passivity of its young people, and this is an encouraging phenomenon. But I do hope that all who are concerned with the exercise of authority will reflect on the events of these days, and find ways and means of entering into a fraternal and genuine dialogue with our young people.

Note:

Father Hurley is a lecturer in the Foreign Language and Literature Department of Chu Hai College. He is also chief honorary advisor to the College Student Association of Hong Kong; religious advisor to the Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students, and advisor to the Hong Kong College Students Social Service Team. However the views he expresses are his own personal views, and do not in any way necessarily reflect the views of the associations with which he is connected.

4. "Do Students have rights?" Annual General Assembly, Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students, October 12, 1969

"Do students have rights?" This was a question asked by Father James Hurley S.J. at yesterday's annual general meeting of the Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students at Caritas Social Center, Boundary Street.

In answering this question Father Hurley said that society, while never denying the rights of students, had hitherto emphasized the responsibilities of students rather than their rights. "The time has now come" he said, "to shift the emphasis, and underline the inherent and basic rights possessed by all students."

These student rights have never been formally spelled out in any charter comparable to the articles of liberties demanded by the Barons of King John in England in 1215, and embodied in the Magna Carta, or to the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10th, 1948. A charter of student right is needed, and it is to be hoped that the students themselves will take the initiative in producing such a charter.

Much more important than the possession of rights, Father Hurley said, is the possession of ways and means of protecting these rights. Such ways and means do exist for students, but most effective and most appropriate is a strong Student Union; a Student Union that can bargain and negotiate, as an equal, with College and University authorities. "The Student Union I envisage", Father Hurley said, "Would be something akin to the Trade Unions which exist in Europe, America and other parts of the world, but not yet unfortunately in Hong Kong."

With one or two notable exceptions the Student Movement in Hong Kong, in general, has not yet reached this ideal, but it is approaching it. When twelve students were expelled from Chu Hai College a Commission, composed of the three major student organizations in Hong Kong, was set up. Its purpose was to study and investigate this question. With the setting up of this commission the student movement in Hong Kong has entered a new phase, and many of the elders in our community have praised this commission for its balance, maturity, and quiet but impressive insistence on student rights.

However the student movement in Hong Kong must be ready, not merely to study and investigate, but also to bargain and negotiate. Otherwise student rights can never be effectively protected.

Such ideas about Student Unions and the Student Movement may not be readily acceptable just now in Hong Kong. The Attitude of the community towards youth and authority, while rapidly changing, is still characterized by a certain benign paternalism. This, coupled with a rather alarming insensitivity to human rights, might increase the generation gap and lead to further serious confront-actions between students and authority. Father Hurley appealed to all in authority to give serious attention to this problem and avert such confrontations.

Father Hurley is the National Chaplain to the Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students and also the Chief honorary advisor to the College Student Association of Hong Kong.

5. Support of Demands of Students Summarily Expelled by Chu Hai College, 1969

With regard to the sit-in staged by a group of students at Chu Hai College I would like to distinguish 1) between the demands of the students who participated in this sit-in, and 2) the tactics they adopted to obtain these aims.

I fully support the demands. The central issue concerns the summary expulsion of twelve students from Chu Hai College. If a student is requested not to register- as happened in this case- it is equivalently expelling him from the College. To expel a student is a very serious matter, and for such a drastic action adequate and specific evidence must be produced to prove, clearly and convincingly, that he had been guilty of some crime or serious violations of College regulations. Such evidence has not been produced in the case of these twelve Chu Hai students. I make this statement after interviews with the authorities of Chu Hai College, where I have been lecturing for eight years, and to which I shall owe allegiance and loyalty.

To achieve their aims the students are resorting to a sit-in. Such sit-ins are nothing new in the student movement in other parts of the world. But in Hong Kong it is otherwise, and we sincerely hope that they will not become too familiar a sight in our Colleges. The circumstances of Hong Kong are also quite exceptional, and so I hesitate, at this stage at least, to give a clear, unhesitating, and unqualified approval to such methods. But I am in sympathy, deep sympathy and believe I do understand, a little at least, the feeling and frustrations, remote and immediate, which have led to this sit-in. It is indeed a regrettable thing and a sorry comment on our society, be it in Hong Kong or any other part of the world that such drastic actions and gestures are the most effective way of really focusing the attention of the community on a serious problem.

At a press conference held on Saturday (September 6th) in connection with this matter I suggested that a commission be formed whose task it would be, calmly and impartially, to study this problem. Today I repeat that suggestion. Thus justice will be done, and also be seen to be done. I myself would be the first person to accept the verdict of this independent commission.

6. Opening Speech of First Leadership Training Project Organized by the Student Union of the Hong Kong University, 1969

Speaking at the official opening of the first Leadership Training Project organized by the Student Union of the Hong Kong University, Father James Hurley, chief honorary advisor to the College Student Association of Hong Kong, and also spiritual advisor to the Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students, said that a Student Union must provide leadership in the university or College, and also in society. At present the sensitive area in the University was the question of student participation in the administration of the University. Students the world over are clamoring for such participation. Such participations, Father Hurly said, is a good thing. It will help the students to feel that the university is really their university, although they are not the sole or exclusive owners. It will also give them a fuller appreciation and understanding of the difficulties of administration, and thus ensure that their training and formation is not merely academic, but also balanced, practical and all round. It is true that students lack experience, but they can contribute vision, idealism and openness - qualities, which are often sadly lacking in the administration of more elderly people.

The University cannot insulate itself from society and live an ivory tower kind of existence. The university is part of society, and at its service. So also is the Student Union. Students are sometimes described as the future leaders of society. This is not true, Father Hurly said. Students are already leaders of society. That they have accepted this role even here in Hong Kong was strikingly demonstrated during the riots of 1967 when over a thousand of them offered to work in any capacity on public transport in order to help avert a threatened strike called for by the leftists. Father Hurley said students of 1969 should enter the area of human rights. In Hong Kong many people are afraid to speak up. Students have already given a lead here, and it is hoped that this lead will usher in a new era in Hong Kong, where authority will be less paternal, more genuinely democratic, and based on sincere dialogue.

Father Hurley also referred to the problem of young people, "Youth is not a time for pleasure, but for heroism," said Paul Claudel, but many of our young people have no ideals, and life for them has little real

meaning and purpose. However a Student Union which is alive, dynamic and dedicated, could communicate a new vision and hope to our young people.

Father Hurley also urged students and student unions to be actively concerned with politics; just now in Hong Kong politics perhaps did not present a sufficient challenge to students and young people. But students should realize that their role was a creative one; not just to accept the status quo, but rather to transform it. Hong Kong also needed new and more dynamic political ideas, but these must mainly come from students and their student unions.

As a means of achieving their aims and objectives Father Hurley advocated greater union and co-operation among the existing Student Union and Student organization in Hong Kong, and in Asia. He also said that a healthy Student Union which realized its commitment to society should also remain close to the ordinary people, sharing as much as possible their lives and work, aims and aspirations, joys and sorrows, grief and anxieties.

Speaking of the violence which students in other parts of the world have used to achieve their aims, Father Hurley said such a phenomenon is an indictment not so much of students but rather of the society in which they live. Very often when a society has grown callous, indifferent and insensitive to the needs of its fellow beings then only the language of violence and demonstration is available. Unfortunately this was true of other parts of the world. It is to be hoped it will not happen again in Hong Kong.

7. Thoughts on Diocesan Convention (in Response to Vatican II), 1970

People are asking: Why a Diocesan Convention? This morning let me try to answer this question.

Recently in Hong Kong we held elections. The results are already a part of history, but the inquest goes on: why did so few register? And of those who registered why did so few turn up to vote? These are questions that our pundits and politicians are trying to answer. My dear friend the Church does not wish to identify herself with this political party or that political party, but she cannot wash her hands and say: politics are no concern of mine; we are not responsible for the political malaise of Hong Kong. The Vatican Council steered the Church boldly and firmly into the modern world, and devoted a considerable length of time to a discussion of the Church and politics. It reminded Catholics of their right and duty to vote. It also spoke of the necessity of providing political education for people, especially young people. Is it not therefore reasonable to expect that in recent months the Church would provide some guidance, leadership, and we hope, inspiration, for the community, particularly its catholic members. As far as I know the only guidance and leadership was provided by a group of Catholic students. Their exhortation to the people to vote did not of course necessarily imply full approval and blessing of the political structure in Hong Kong.

Let us turn our gaze for a moment from the politician to the worker. Pius XI used to say that the greatest scandal of the Church in the 19th century was the loss of the working class to the Church. I won't ask could the same happen in Hong Kong, for the simple reason that the Church has made no great impact on this section of our community. A few weeks ago a lady, one of our separated brethren, who spent two years closely studying this problem, said that although Hong Kong lived in the 20th century, its social thinking belonged to the 19th century. And yet the Church has been here over a hundred years. Has it been the leaven that it should be? Are we giving the lead that we should give? Some years ago one of our public personalities spoke of the need for a weekly holiday for our workers. An editorial in our local Catholic paper followed fully approving of this idea. Recently another gentleman wrote making a plea for our shop workers. Again we expressed our approval of this idea. My dear friends the Church possesses a

magnificent social doctrine; so magnificent that it could and should, provide leadership for Asia and Hong Kong. But is it not distressing that instead of giving a lead we are merely following the lead of others? The politician. The worker. Let us look for a moment at our young people. A few years ago I had a very salutary experience. It concerned a young friend of mine. A local post secondary student, a good fervent practicing Catholic, educated in a Catholic school. Let us call him Michael. For some months I had noticed that Michael was devoting a great deal of time and attention to another youth organization. There was nothing wrong in this other organization but rightly or wrongly, I felt that our Catholic organization could at that time ill afford the vitality and dynamism of a young man like Michael. I had noticed other students too being attracted to this organization, prepared to make sacrifices for it which they were not prepared to make for the Catholic one. One day I spoke to Michael and his friends telling them that the Church also championed the ideals which they were working for in this other organization. Michael and his friends were not impressed and I can never forget Michael's summing up: "I know the Church does champion great ideals," he said, "but that is not obvious to me. It seems to me that the Church is asleep." Very recently I received a letter from a girl who is about to graduate from one of our local post-secondary Colleges. Again she is a Catholic, and received most of her education in a catholic school. She has given me permission, to read part of this letter to you. The grammar may not be correct, nor the style elegant, but the note is authentic.

"Dear Father Hurly", she says, "I want to tell you something. In these few months I do not think I am a Catholic. I always do my best to pray, but I cannot do it. I am sick under my present conditions - going to school, returning home, doing my dull homework. No exhilaration. I hate myself. I feel like crying. I know I need something, but I do not know what I need. How poor I am".

My dear friends here are a young person standing on the threshold of life, but instead of being elated she is rather sad and dejected. Sad and dejected because she feels life to be empty and meaningless. Poor is what she calls it herself. And she has no star to follow, no standard to rally to, no ideal to fight for. Youthful visions and noble aspiration have withered away - if indeed they ever bloomed.

My dear friends, can we who are responsible for youth, be we priests, nuns teachers or parents, read this letter without feeling seriously disturbed and worried? It is true that since the disturbances of 1966, Catholic and non-Catholic have been genuinely concerned with the problems of our young people. But is it not a distressing comment on our community to reflect that just as the riots of 1967 awoke us to the labour problem, the riots of 1966 awoke us to the problems of youth. Does this mean that the only language which effectively speaks to us and that we really listen to is the language of violence and demonstration? Does it mean that we are callous, indifferent, and insensitive? So callous, indifferent, and insensitive that we are incapable of reading the signs of the time?

My dear friends, the politician, the worker, the teenager. Do not say that their problem and the many other problems of our community are no concern of ours. You will remember that magnificent opening sentence of the Vatican Council Document: the "Church in the Modern World": "The Joys and the sorrows, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age", it says, "these too are the joys and the sorrows, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of the Christ.

What do we do about these problems? When Pope John looked out on the world and saw similar problems he summoned the Vatican Council. Here in Hong Kong we summon a Diocesan Convention. The summoning of this convention is an admission that despite the mighty achievements of the past we do need updating and rejuvenation. This task is too difficult and arduous for one man or one organization. It is the task of the whole diocese: Bishop, priest, nuns, religious, and lay people.

You have been asked to contribute your ideas. Please cooperate. This is not really so difficult. Let me give an example. When friends gather together in an informal atmosphere, it may be over a cup of tea, they frequently discuss the Church, her parishes, her schools, her priests, her nuns, her organization. On such occasions each of you has a lot to say. The next time such an occasion occurs - it might be good even to create such an occasion - write down your ideas and those of your friends, and send them to the Convention. Do not worry about incorrect grammar or inelegant style. The Convention would prefer to have your ideas.

My dear friends for the first time in the history of the Church in Hong Kong the clergy and laity will sit down together for a collective examination of conscience, for a collective appraisal of our works. Please make sure that you will have made your contribution to this historic event.

8. On Chinese as Official Language in Hong Kong, October 11, 1970

At the annual general meeting of the Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students Father James Hurley S.J. (National Chaplain), urged all students actively to help in the campaign for making Chinese an official language in Hong Kong. Success in this campaign would release more talent for the service of Hong Kong. Able and intelligent young men would be able to serve in the Urban Council and in the Legislative Council. But at the moment a lack of fluency in English prevents them from doing so. These young people would bring to their task a more dynamic and more creative approach than many of the present incumbents in these offices.

The psychological impact of making Chinese an official language would also be very great. It would help to develop among the masses of the people a feeling of belonging to Hong Kong and lessen their suspicion that they are in fact only second class citizens.

Chinese is not merely the language of ninety eight per cent of the people of Hong Kong, it is also the medium through which is transmitted one of the oldest and richest cultures of the human family. This special status of Chinese is an added reason for making Chinese an official language in Hong Kong.

Making Chinese an official language should not lead to a narrow nationalism which cuts itself off from the larger patrimony of the human family. Such a tendency would not be in the keeping with the best traditions of Hong Kong; nor would it contribute to a healthy and integral development in the Chinese language itself.

Many difficulties will be encountered in making Chinese an official language. The solution of these difficulties lies not merely with the government, but with all sections of the community. Father Hurley appealed to all student organisations to give a lead in the study of these problems. Such an approach will create in Hong Kong a student movement which although committed to radical reform of society and its structures, still remains balanced and mature.

Much has been said about difficulties in translation e.g. the difficulty of finding an adequate word for a Western legal term. Such difficulties

are genuine but can be solved in time. A language is a living thing, and if developed- as Chinese is – will have acquired a flexibility which enables it easily and confidently, to cope with new experiences. In the past Chinese has demonstrated its ability in this area, for instances in its encounters with Buddhist ideas from India and scientific idea from the West. These words and ideas, alien at first, have now made them perfectly at home in the Chinese language.

Father Hurley said he was confident Government would eventually make Chinese an official language. In recent years it has shown a greater awareness of, and sensitivity to, Chinese feelings and sentiments. An example of this is the fact that now many of our public holidays coincide with traditional Chinese festivals.

Father Hurley hopes that the same openness and friendliness would be the basis of Government's approach to the Chinese language question.

9. On Article 21 and the Creation of a Genuine People's Forum, 1971

Despite the difficulties of the task and the altogether unique situation in which we live some form of political development is a pressing necessity for Hong Kong. Without such a development the mounting frustration and deep feeling of alienation among our students and young people may explode in our faces. Furthermore, Article 21 of the Declaration of Human rights which states, that, "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the government" also commits us to this task.

However when resolving this problem we must not necessarily think of democracy in its ordinary trappings of elections, political parties etc. We should think rather of an Asian form of democracy where the people truly participate in the government of the country, but in an Asian way, and in a manner adapted to our Asian civilization. The seeds of such ideas are present in many of our Asian civilizations, but unfortunately they have not yet been seriously cultivated. The civilization of such ideas presents a mighty challenge to the young people of Hong Kong and of Asia. But if successfully cultivated these ideas would enriched the concept of democracy and greatly extend its frontiers. It would also help to solve our own particular domestic problem in Hong Kong, and provide us with a viable solution and a way out of our present political impasse.

Father Hurley also spoke of the need to create a genuine people forum. This would involve greater co-operation between the various sections of our community in Hong Kong. Such cooperation between student organizations, labour groups, professional and industrial organizations, and a readiness on the part of all to speak out strongly and clearly on the issues of the day will add a new, constructive, dynamic, and political dimension to the community of Hong Kong. Above all it would prove another meaningful way in which the people can effectively participate in government.

10. On the 19th Anniversary of Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students, 1971

On February 19th the Federation celebrated its tenth birthday. A strong and sturdy youth by now. But not infrequently difficult. And sometimes exasperatingly difficult.

Even the birth of the Federation was a difficult one. On the eve of the formal inauguration it was discovered that the Government registrar of Societies had never even been consulted! However as everything had been prepared and invitations already sent out it was decided to go ahead. So for the first few months of its life the Federation was, strictly speaking, an illegal organization!

Early Years

The production of “Moon Kong Hung” (滿江紅) was the first major project of the Federation. It was an artistic success, and also brought the Federation much-needed funds. The most important by-product of this drama was the marriage, three years later, of the chairman and secretary of the organizing committee! This has not been the first “Federation” marriage. Nor do we dare to hope will it be the last!

While one group of students was busy with “Moon Kong Hung” another group was toiling with the Federation’s first newspaper. The “Federation Bimonthly” was the result of their labours. This paper—despite its name—appeared about four times a year! It is also a far cry from the present “Catholic Post-Secondary”, and is a very good example of the radical change that has taken place in the mentality and attitudes of Hong Kong students.

Journalism and drama were not the only concerns of the Federation in those early years. The religious life of these students was always the main concern of student and chaplain alike. Masses, talks, discussions, and retreats were a regular feature of this period. These activities were “traditional”, and belonged very much to the world that preceded the Vatican Council. Even then we could see quite clearly the crises which the faith of many students must undergo on entering the university. Some students survive, and their faith is all the deeper and richer as a result. Many unfortunately give up. The Federation has never been able to provide a fully satisfactory solution to this most serious problem.

Perhaps it can never do so, because the roots of the problem are outside the Federation.

Challenges

The riots of 1966 were the first big challenge to the Federation. Other student organizations publicly expressed their views on these riots and their proximate cause- the rise in the fare of the Star Ferry. Should the Federation follow suit? When this question was presented to the committee a small minority was in favour of taking a stand. The majority, however, were silent and confused. This was my first real encounter with the “closed” Catholic mentality. Moreover I could see how deeply entrenched it was. The liberating process, I felt, would be a long one, and maybe quite painful.

However 1966 did not pass without some worthwhile achievements. The first study camp was held that summer at Gaudete House in Cheung Chau. For a full week forty students enthusiastically discussed the problems and implications of the “Church”, the most basic, and perhaps the most theological of the Vatican Council documents. Their horizons were stretched that week, and their faith emerged deeper and considerably enriched.

At the end of the same year the Social Service Team came into being. This Team has consistently aimed at providing a service for youth in some Kowloon resettlement areas. Its most imaginative project was a course in basic English for taxi drivers. The values and effectiveness of all this work however, is now being seriously questioned in the light of ideological developments in the Catholic student movement in Asia. One notable achievement of the Team that cannot be lightly passed over is the fact that four of its six presidents have been girls. Here at least is one place where battle for women’s liberation has been fought, and decisively won!

Riots of 1967

The tension-packed summer days of 1967 are still fresh in our minds. In early May organization after organization publicly pledged its support of the government in its efforts to restore law and order. Late in May the Federation took a similar step. Their statement was not brilliant, but it did mean that for the first time the Federation had taken

a risk. The “Closed” mentality had been pried open.

The federation’s moment of glory came in July. Hong Kong was threatened with a massive strike. The Federation reacted quickly and decisively. A public appeal was made to all post-secondary students “to abandon all prejudices and make use of our long summer holiday to participate actively in maintaining public facilities”. “We therefore hope”, the appeal goes on to say “that organizations for public utilities will support us and let us fill some of posts which have been left vacant because of the strike. We also hope that other organizations will support what we do, and work together for the peace, stability, and prosperity of Hong Kong”

It was with considerable fear and trepidation that this public appeal was made. Would those in charge of the project be subjected to intimidation? Would the students give their support?

In few days one of our fears at least was removed when over a thousand young people trooped to the office set up for that purpose at Wah Yan College Kowloon. Never before had the young people of Hong Kong so eloquently demonstrated their courage and idealism.

Through no fault of their own the Federation could not provide work for all these volunteers. But until the very end of the summer a group of forty students helped to man the trams of Hong Kong. Neither frequent bombs nor threatening letters made them waver in their resolution. Let us pause here to salute their courage and daring.

I have been with the Federation in some capacity or other from its very beginning, but I would unhesitatingly consider this to be its most striking achievement.

In 1968 the first week-long leadership camp was held at Chung Chi College. This camp has become one of the Federation’s most important annual events. However, radical changes have taken place. In the early camps the emphasis was almost completely on ideological formation. Efforts are now being made to make training and formation an integral part of the daily life of the Federation.

In 1969 the Asian Secretariat for Asian Catholic Students changed its headquarters to Hong Kong. The history of this secretariat does not

make for happy reading. However under the resolute leadership of its present secretary, Peter Fan - a former President of the Federation - it has acquired much greater stability and vitality, and is exercising a dynamic presence among the Catholic students of Asia.

Student Movement in Hong Kong

1970 was a more than usually eventful year for the Federation.

The student movement had definitely come to Hong Kong. The reaction of FCS was a hard-hitting and wide-ranging document on the student movement and its implications for Hong Kong. In the opening paragraph of this document the Federations boldly declares “its solidarity with the overall aspirations of the student movement in the world. We feel that the students are in general the harbingers of a new way of life within the universities and colleges, and of a more just society within the nations of the Worlds”. Some trenchant observations on life in Hong Kong follow.

Not unnaturally this policy statement received considerable publicity in our local press. A full editorial in the Sunday Examiner described it as “a notable example of the maturity that is typical of our students.... It promises well for the future of Hong Kong”.

In the summer of the same year the Hong Kong Federation was host to an Asian seminar for Catholic students. This was a stormy and turbulent week of meetings and discussions, but from the clashes and confrontations emerged a more dynamic vision for the Catholic student movement in Asia. Asian delegates to this seminar commented on the abundance of talent among our Hong Kong students. Many also commented on our tendency to over-organize, and not a few were surprised at our seeming complacent acceptance of a colonial way of life.

More recent years have been notable for the emergence of “Catholic Post-Secondary” (曙暉) as a stimulating rather provocative newspaper, sometimes reminiscent of the more outspoken prophets of the Old Testament. And its fate has been the fate of all prophets. By some it is highly praised, and by others roundly condemned. Nobody adopts a neutral or disinterested attitude towards the “Catholic Post-Secondary”

Assessment

We have already given the observation of our Asian brothers on HKFCS. We have also indicated the comments and criticisms of our local friends. To both we are sincerely grateful. This concern of theirs is a source of encouragement for us, and must ensure that the Federation will never fossilize, and its arteries never harden.

In evaluating any organization we must take into account its policy, be that policy implicit or explicit. I have referred to the riots of 1966 and the challenge they presented to FCS. Up to that time the Federation had no clearly defined policy. However by 1967 it had in fact opted for involvement in the problems of Hong Kong.

This involvement can be clearly seen during the riots of that year. It can also be seen in the numerous public statements released over the years to the press on current problems, local and international. The Major policy statement of 1970 in response to the advent of the student movement to Hong Kong is another very obvious example of this commitment.

Such an expression of social and political awareness is perhaps a quite unique and highly distinctive achievement for a Catholic organization in Hong Kong.

In venturing this opinion I am aware of the many inadequacies in this Federation involvement: the specifically Christian contribution has not always been evident. Involvements, and Christian involvement, are two overlapping, but still quite distinct realities. The Federation was not able to embrace both together. The students are now aware of this problem, and are searching for a solution: the Federation involvement has neither been very creative nor imaginative. True, the Federation has been with the world and its problems, but it has yet to become “the light of the world”, and the soul of the student movement in Hong Kong.

It is only in the very recent past that the Federation has begun to deal seriously with specifically Church matters. The climate requisite for fruitful dialogue in this area is being gradually built up. This process has occasionally been a painful one.

The Difficult Child

At the beginning of this essay I referred to the Federation as “a strong and sturdy child”, “not infrequently difficult”, “and sometimes exasperatingly difficult”.

Perhaps the reader may have a young brother who is also difficult. This fact is incontestable. But who is responsible? A little careful probing sometimes reveals that it is the parents who are largely responsible for the strange conduct of the child. We could do well to recall here a recent editorial on the youth problem in the “South China Sunday Post-Herald”: “If this generation has a problem”, it says, “it can be summed up simply: the problem is parents”. A sobering thought for many of our more elderly readers!

I do not wish to close my eyes to reality and deny the faults of students and young people. I have worked with them for more than ten years, and am only too well aware of these faults. I can recall a group of students writing to a well-known member of the Hong Kong community inviting him to join a launch picnic. Just after the letter had been posted they discovered this gentleman had been dead for six months!

I can still hear a good Sister replying to a fellow Sister who was urging her to hurry up and be in time for one of our functions: “Sister, don’t worry. It would be impossible to be late for an FCS function”. The number of such incidents is legion.

But having seen the mole in the student’s eye are we seniors prepared to see the beam in our own eye? Are we willing to admit our own deviousness? Our lack of perfect honesty and sincerity? Our tacit approval of dubious standards and questionable ideals? Our complacent acceptance of a world where millions of our brothers and sisters live in a state of institutionalized violence, racked by hunger, sickness, illiteracy, and abject poverty, with nothing to live for and less to hope for.

It is such a world that students and young people refuse to accept. It is against such sordid realities that they rise in revolt.

Perhaps now we can understand a little why the young people of the present day can sometimes be “so exasperatingly difficult”.

However I would like to reassure the reader that the Catholic students of Hong Kong do wish to enter into a dialogue with the community. But they wish this dialogue to be - let me use their own words - “friendly, genuine, sincere and authentic”.

“Dialogue” is a word that is frequently used. Everyone accepts the idea. But how many genuinely practice it? I have sat listening while one of our eminent city elders spoke at great length to a group of students on the need for dialogue. He seemed blissfully unaware, however, of his own monologue, and of the silent, speechless students sitting passively around him.

Genuine dialogue demands that we listen. Really listen. Listen with “all our heart, and mind, and soul”. This is demanding. The student may speak aggressively, but we must distinguish between his ideas and the language in which he expresses these ideas.

Genuine dialogue also demands that we do not come to dialogue with preconceived ideas which we expect the student to accept unquestioningly and accept without demur. We must be ready to learn; to modify, adjust, or even radically change our own views.

These are revolutionary attitudes, difficult to accept for those who have been brought up with the idea that young people should be seen and not heard; and that father, mother and teacher are the sole repositories of all the wisdom of the ages.

If we are not willing to unlearn these feudalistic ideas of authority and obedience the generation gap grows wider. Frustration increases. And the child - maybe the parent himself - becomes still more exasperatingly difficult. Perhaps even menacingly difficult.

Future of the Federation

At a meeting last September one very reflective student proposed that the Federation, being an obstacle to progress, should be dissolved. The proposal was turned down, but it did spark off a round of criticism which was sharp and deep-seated.

This phenomenon is not unique to the Hong Kong Federation. It is found in other student organizations, here in Hong Kong, and also in many parts of Asia.

The federation has reacted calmly but decisively to this situation. It has admitted the problem. The goals, objectives, structures, and achievements of the Federation are now being reexamined and reevaluated. This close scrutiny will reach down to the grassroots of the Federation, questioning everything, even the relevance of its very name. Someone has described this process as a kind of “cultural revolution”.

Personally I am convinced that the federation will emerge from this searching reappraisal, purified and chastened, but also resolute and rejuvenated, and fully determined to play a more radical and decisive role in the affairs of Hong Kong, and of Asia.

11. On Human Rights in General, 1971

Human Rights: Milestones in their Development

Human rights since 1948

The history of human rights does not begin with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the United Nations in 1948. Nor does it end there. Since then there have been developments, some happy, and some not so happy. Let us look at the bright side of the picture first.

In September 1953 the European Convention of Human Rights came into being. This convention has been accepted by almost all the member states of the Council of Europe. It has its headquarters at Strasbourg in Switzerland. In addition to the Convention there is also a "European Court of Human Rights", which also has its headquarters at Strasbourg. The function and purpose of this Court is to pass judgment on alleged violations of human rights.

The first case presented to this Court was the so-called Lawless case. This young man had been detained without trial by the Irish government as a suspected member of an outlawed political organization. The Irish government justified its action by saying that a state of emergency existed which threatened the life of nation. In 1961 the Court upheld the decision of the Irish government. Another case of some interest concerns a Belgian journalist, Da Becker. He was accused by the Belgian Government of collaborating with the Germans during the Second World War, and so was deprived of the right to take part in the management and editorship of any newspaper or publication. Da Becker claimed that this violated article 10 of the Convention which guarantees the right to freedom of expression, and so appealed to the European Court of Human Rights. As a result of the findings of the Court the Belgian law governing this area of human behavior was amended.

Civil Rights is another area where some progress has been happily made, particularly in the United States. The problem here is as old as the United States itself. Very early in its history the theory of racism, which regards Negroes as sub humans and consequently not entitled to the rights enjoyed by human beings, reared its ugly head. Slavery was rampant and accepted by the white population. The Civil War changed

the situation. In 1865 slavery was abolished, and in 1868 citizenship and equal protection of the law were conferred on the Negroes. However by the end of the century civil rights for Negroes had become a dead letter. Disenfranchisement enjoyed Federal approval and support, and racism was a national creed. Not until the Second World War was there a significant and appreciable change. Adolf Hitler's anti-Semitism and atrocities perpetrated in the name of Nordic supremacy stirred the consciences of the American people. In 1946 President Truman established the President's Committee on Civil Rights. But it was not until 1957 that the first Federal Legislation since 1875 in the area of civil rights was passed by Congress. Despite these gains the Negroes were not satisfied, and even still found themselves treated as second-class citizens. They resorted to more direct action such as boycotts, sit-ins, and freedom marches. The response to this new situation was a strong civil rights Bill introduced by President Kennedy in 1963, and passed in 1964. The problem is still far from solved, but considerable progress has been made.

Man's Inhumanity to Man

We have been looking at what we have called-optimistically perhaps, the bright side of the picture. There is unfortunately another side. Doctor Eugene Carson Blake, when General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, sent an open letter to U Thant, the then Secretary General of the United Nations, in which he spoke of the increasing deterioration in the cause of human rights and dignity. Doctor Blake said that letters were being constantly sent to him by people alleging that either their civil or religious rights had been violated. Doctor Blake mentioned in particular eleven countries where such violations were alleged to be taking place: USA, Soviet Union, Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Guatemala, Lesotho, Rhodesia, South Africa, and Portugal's provinces of Angola and Mozambique. Happily Hong Kong is not mentioned. We cannot examine the situation in all of these countries, but let us take a brief look at Rhodesia and Brazil.

In many parts of South America, particularly in Brazil, a highly explosive situation exists; some call it a pre-revolutionary situation, one of "institutionalized injustice". Brave people like Archbishop Helder Camara have not hesitated to raise their voices in protest against this situation, and advocate a bold and daring policy of reform. But the opposition is strong and ruthless. In 1969 a student leader,

Candido Pinto, was shot by unknown assailants and left paralysed from the waist down. A younger student-chaplain and an ardent apostle of reforms, Father Neto, was abducted and killed after torture. Another priest was imprisoned, and after twelve hours of interrogation and torture he attempted suicide.

In March 1970 the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace met in Rome and discussed, among others things, the alleged atrocities in Brazil. A spokesman for the Commission stated that human rights were one of their major areas of concern, and in particular “the promotion of an international juridical body for the protection of human rights and their evident violation, such as the atrocities in Brazil”. As a result of this statement the Catholic Bishops of Brazil have decided to support an investigation into the alleged torturing of political prisoners.

Bishops Speak Out

In the newly founded republic of Rhodesia an even more potentially explosive situation exists. Ever since this country declared its independence in 1965 its Government has consolidated white supremacy. Recently they have adopted a constitution which ensures that the country’s four million Blacks cannot achieve a parliamentary majority over the 230,000 Whites. In addition there is a land tenure act under which Rhodesia is divided into two equal areas, one black and one white. In theory each race is forbidden to enter the other area. If this apartheid is pushed to its logical conclusion inter-racial Sunday church congregations will be impossibility. If a member of a black community turns up for a religious service at a white church he may, by law, be turned away. These examples illustrate the tone of the present legislation.

Father Michael Traber, a newspaper editor who did not hesitate to criticize the Government and its totalitarian methods, was deported from Rhodesia in March 9th. He spent nine years in the country building up a strong local African press, and his influential magazine, Moto, was the last surviving publication through which independent African opinion could be expressed. His deportation was an attempt on the part of the regime to stifle even this vestige of dissent.

Students have also protested against the gross iniquity and injustices of such a situation. But the strongest protest has come from the Catholic Bishops of Rhodesia. In a joint statement they described the new situation as one which they could not on any account accept: "We cannot in conscience and will not in practice accept any limitation of our freedom to deal with all people, irrespective of race, as members of the one human family". Some weeks ago the Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students sent the Bishop a letter offering their sympathy and support.

Before we complete this rapid survey of the ups and downs of human rights since 1948 let us reflect on a statement of the Beirut Conference held in 1968. According to this statement 80 per cent of the world's resources are at the disposal of 20 per cent of the world's inhabitants. In such a climate how can the cause of Human Rights flourish and thrive? This is a question which each one of us, must seriously and soberly ask himself, and try to provide an answer.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Development in its contents?

In the last paragraphs we have seen something of the gap, indeed the enormous distance that often separates the abstract proclamation of Human Rights and its application to the concrete everyday situation of human life.

Here we could ask a question about the Declaration itself and its contents: will some articles be modified? Reformulated? And other articles, perhaps, added? The answer to this is yes. Life progresses. Man finds himself in a new situation. The dignity of his person is submitted to new stresses and strains. Hence the need for additions and new formulations. Let us give some indication of possible areas for such development.

Some people have always objected to war and have withheld their support and participation. This right of conscientious objectors has always been upheld by society. But in recent years the number of such objectors has been rapidly increasing and they are getting more vociferous and insistent in their demands. Should Conscientious objection therefore be considered a human right? Pax Romana, an international movement of Catholic intellectuals and students, thinks it

should, and has submitted to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations a memorandum requesting such a declaration. “it is clearly a violation of Human rights”, this declaration says, to conscript the conscience of a human being and to demand that he follow a form of service that is against his conscience.

Recent decades have seen enormous advance in science and technology. But these advances have brought in their wake considerable difficulties for the rights of individuals. Phone tapping, hidden microphones, surreptitious observation of all kinds, can completely destroy the privacy of the individual. The International Conference on Human Rights held at Teheran in May 1968 recognized the gravity of this problem, and promises to give it its serious attention.

In the past few years we have seen the emergence of youth, amounting in some places to a special youth culture. Should there be a special declaration on rights for youth? WAY (World Assembly of Youth), an international organization which has its headquarters at Brussels in Belgium, thinks there is such a need and listed what it considered to be sixteen such rights. Among these is the right to vote at the age of 18. However this list is only tentative. But at the next international gathering of WAY in 1971 a definitive charter of rights for youth will be passed.

Will there be a need for a separate charter of rights for students? Six years ago the National Union of Students of Philippines (NUSP) launched a campaign for such a charter. Initially this campaign was highly successful, and a charter was made ready for parliament. However at the last moment the students rejected it because of considerable changes made in the text without their consent. They have pledged themselves to fight for a mere genuine charter.

The above examples make it abundantly clear that there can, and indeed, must be changes and modifications in the Declaration of Human Rights itself.

12. Hong Kong and Human Rights, 1971

Some months ago I addressed a group of thirty students on the question of Human Rights. Most of these students had heard about the Universal Declaration Human Rights, although quite a few were hazy about its status. However, much more important and more startlingly significant: only two of this group had read this document! Yet these thirty students were from a well-known and highly esteemed post-secondary Institution in Hong Kong. Let me cite another sad fact. On December 28th 1968 the local Sunday Examiner published an editorial commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights. “Sad to say”, the writer of this editorial comments, “it is not as easy as it should be to turn to this historic document..., it is disturbing to find that the text of the declaration is difficult to lay one’s hands on”.

The preamble to the 1948 Declaration asks each individual and each organization, “by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms”. However, it would seem that the zeal of our local community in this respect is somewhat suspect.

But what about the observance of these rights in Hong Kong and their application to our everyday life?

Hong Kong’s record in this area is tolerably good; at least much better than that of many of our neighbors, and nearly all the thirty articles of the Declaration are adequately implemented. Our record is of course far from perfect, and we do have skeletons in our cupboard.

There are some articles in particular which we have been rather reluctant to implement. Let us look for a moment at numbers 23 & 24 of the Declaration which spell out the rights of the worker:

- ◆ Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- ◆ Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- ◆ Everyone has the right to form and join Trade Union for the protection of his interests.

- ◆ Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitations of working hours, and periodic holiday with pay.

In the recent past some headway has been made in this area in Hong Kong, and we can say that we are stepping, belatedly of course, into the twentieth century. But can we stand up and say with pride that it was our respect for the Declaration of Human Rights that led to this improvement? I think we must rather hang our heads in shame and admit that it was the disturbances and riots of 1967 which wrung these from our hands. And for this scandalous insensitivity let us not throw all the blame on the government. This is the responsibility of the whole community, particularly of those of us who profess to be followers of a labouring man called Jesus Christ.

The will of the People shall be the basis of the authority of the government

Article 21 of the Declaration states clearly: “everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen, representatives”...The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government.

We are being constantly told that the peculiar and delicate nature of the circumstances in which Hong Kong finds itself make the immediate application of this article very difficult, if not altogether impossible. True, our circumstances are very special, a fact which even the most ardent advocate of the Declaration must recognize. But surely it must also be possible, even within the present structure, to associate the people more closely with the government and its decision-making processes.

In Hong Kong we already have an incipient and limited form of democracy. But life is not static, and we cannot remain forever at this stage. Many of the younger and more reflective members of our community want the powers of the Urban Council greatly extended. Above all they want at least some elected members on the Legislative Council. We cannot label these demands as too radical and excessive. But if the Government and the community do not show concern, and demonstrate a serious and enlightened approach to such ideas these young people will find it increasingly difficult to identify themselves with Hong Kong, and make their own the needs and aspirations of this

“fragrant” city.

Dialogue

Until recently, in most parts of the world, orders were handed down and blindly obeyed. But this era of secret decisions imposed on a silent and passive people is over. Now the views of all the people involved in a decision are ascertained, weighed, and discussed before the final decision is arrived at. We see this system working successfully even in our own Catholic Church. Before important appointments are made there is now broad grassroot consultation, and priests and lay people are consulted. Their views may not be deliberative or decisive, but they must be seriously considered, carefully evaluated, and never ignored.

A greater use of such dialogue and consultation would be another way of associating the people more effectively with the Government. So we appeal to the Hong Kong Government to experiment more extensively and more boldly in this area. Initially it would be on a limited basis, but as our people get more involved and grow in political maturity it could be more widely used.

The term of office for our present Governor has been extended. We do hope that when the question of a successor for Sir David arises Government will initiate such dialogue at least with our elected Urban Councilors. It does seem very strange that in this day and age such an important appointment could be made ten thousand miles away from Hong Kong without previous consultation with our democratically elected representatives.

Public Opinion

Still another way of ensuring that “the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the government” is the more effective use of public opinion. In any politically mature community individuals and organizations speak up. They do not hesitate to comment on Government and its policies, and Government must pay attention.

Here in Hong Kong people do write to the papers, and organizations - notably student organizations - publish statements commenting on current events. This is indeed a healthy phenomenon, but unfortunately

too rare. The great majority are strangely silent. This is surely one of the great sins of omission on the part of our local community, and if our Government is criticized for being tardy, paternalistic, and not sufficiently responsive to the challenges of our present situation we the people must take some of the blame.

What is the reason for this phenomenon of the silent majority? Fear? A lack of appreciation for the importance of public opinion, and of training and education in its use? Personally I think it is a combination of all. Our education system has not always encouraged our young people to be articulate, to speak critically and constructively on current topics, either in society or in their own environment. And so today Hong Kong lacks a really strong, well-informed and dynamic public opinion. Some of the progressive and more forward-looking members of our community realize this need and are trying to give greater depth, resonance, and volume to public opinion in Hong Kong.

And fear? Unfortunately I have come across far too many examples of people who are genuinely afraid to speak out; afraid of the consequences for themselves and their families. However not all fears are rational and well-founded. To what category does thus fear belong?

In my years working with students I have not come across any example of interference from Government in this area of freedom of speech, Government's own patience and restraint while under fire is admirable, although one would like to see it more responsive to these criticisms.

Unfortunately not all sections of the community are as tolerant and open-minded as Government. Young people expressing new views and attitudes are quickly branded as leftists and labeled as suspects. Young graduates do not always find a sympathetic and receptive audience for their opinions and new approaches. They have tried, and eventually, the more than cold and negative response to their views has forced them, victims of frustration and despair, to opt for the ranks of the silent majority. Peace with dishonour! These young people have been forced to sell the finer part of their souls? What a price to pay for economic security!

Fault there possibly is on both sides. But all sections of our community, be it big business or a small primary school, needs to create a climate

which facilitates and encourages a genuine dialogue, and the free and uninhibited exchange of ideas.

All this prompts the question: is there freedom of speech in Hong Kong? Recently I was present while a group of more than usually sensitive and reflective students discussed this question. They came to the conclusion that Hong Kong enjoyed comparative, not necessarily absolute, freedom of speech. They felt that we are far ahead of many of our neighbours in Asia, but they also felt that there are still too many occasions when it is “quite inconvenient” to express what one really believes.

“The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government”. We have been exploring ways and means of incorporating this principle of the Declaration more fully into the present political structures of Hong Kong. It is the bounden duty of each one of us to persevere unfalteringly in this journey of exploration.

Human Rights in Hong Kong adequately protected?

Human rights are of little help unless they are adequately safeguarded. Courts of Laws guarantee to do this. In addition an organization will try to find within its own structure some ways and means of achieving the same results. And so all over the world we have Unions, Labour Unions, Teacher Unions, Student Unions etc. Some of these unions wield an immense influence.

What about Hong Kong’s unions? Perhaps here is Hong Kong’s greatest single weakness in the field of Human rights. Unions abound, but they are weak and largely ineffective, and thus many sins, serious and otherwise, are committed against human rights. Enough has already been said about our Labour Unions; no further comment is necessary here. What about our Student Unions? Are they in a position to bargain and negotiate, as equals, with College and University authorities in the cause of student rights?

In answering this question it must be remembered that only a few short years ago student unions were largely concerned with student welfare and recreation. It was not then customary to speak about student rights, much less about adequate safeguards for such rights. The situation has changed, and the area of their concern is now much broader and deeper.

A new awareness and seriousness has been born. Sooner than we expect they will be in a position to enter into a genuine dialogue with College authorities and bargain and negotiate with them as equals. But at the moment not all the student unions can do this. The unhappy and still unresolved events of last September in one of our private post-secondary colleges, glaringly exposed the weakness of the student movement and student unions in Hong Kong. Student rights were involved. These rights were ineffectively protected and soon forgotten about. It remains to be seen how much the movement has grown and matured as a result. But it does seem unlikely that there will be a repetition of such a mistake.

It is hoped that all unions in Hong Kong will, like the Student Unions, seriously examine their consciences, sincerely resolve to fight for the rights of their members, and never deviate from this path.

Conclusion

The history of human rights is the history of man himself. Each generation has its own contribution to make. Let the young people of Hong Kong, and particularly its student organizations, ensure that here in Hong Kong these rights are sincerely and ardently preached, and effectively implemented.

13. Assessment of Student Movement in Hong Kong, 1972

Has the student movement in Hong Kong been successful?

To answer this question let us present some facts.

In August 1969 twelve students were expelled from one of our post-secondary colleges. The Charges brought against them were never proved. Student organizations intervened on their behalf. However the twelve students were never reinstated, and by now have been forgotten by the student movement.

In April 1970 the Legislative council approved a subvention for our two universities which in fact was an increase on previous subventions but a reduction from the documented requirements of the universities. Students of the Chinese University registered their protest by boycotting classes for one day. However the Government did not increase its subvention.

In July 1970 the Chinese Language movement was launched, and pursued resolutely and vigorously. In the following October the Government set up its "Chinese Language Committee". Government has already accepted some of the recommendations of this committee. No decision however has yet been made on the more controversial recommendations of this committee. And just now at least the students are not pressing for an answer.

In 1971 the main concern of the student movement was Tiu Yu Toi (Diaoyutai). Several demonstrations were held. However on May 15th this year the islands were handed over to Japan.

In late 1971 students intervened on behalf of the blind. This was indeed a clear-cut and unmistakable success for the student movement. The four requests of the blind were met with.

It may seem churlish though, to point out that the students seem to have forgotten other demands, much more radical and far-reaching in their effects, which the blind and disabled of Hong Kong could very justifiably have pressed for.

So much for the facts. In presenting them I tried not to be selective. However they speak for themselves and what they seem to say to us is not altogether too reassuring. The picture which emerges is of a student movement which has had limited success and is not infrequently the champion of lost causes

However let me hasten to add that what I have just said is meant only as a preliminary answer to my original question. So far I have really been acting as a “devil’s advocate”, and presenting the case for the opposition. For to look upon this movement as a history of lost battles and defeated causes is to use a suspect and superficial criterion. What criterion then do we use to measure the success of our student movement?

Students - the conscience of society

Unhesitatingly almost all will answer yes to this question. The student’s sensitivity, enthusiasm, concern, and idealism make society really aware of problems which otherwise would be conveniently forgotten or swept out of sight under the carpet. Others express the same idea when they say that the student is the radar of society.

Early in 1970 at the height of the student “troubles” in the Philippines, a Philippino priest working among students wrote to me “the students have succeeded in opening the eyes of the government, politicians, and adults to the problems confronting present day Philippino society”. The Philippino student had become the conscience of Philippino society.

In 1971 the President of Notre Dame University in the United States commenting on the anti-war demonstration organized on almost all the campuses of the United States said: “when students started protesting against the war in Vietnam there was not much definite result. But I think they did create a public conscience about the value of life and, more important, prodded the conscience of the U.S. public”. Students did not stop the war, but they become the voice of conscience for the American people.

Hong Kong students - the conscience of society

Has the Hong Kong student, like his counterpart in the Philippines and the U.S., prodded the conscience of Hong Kong, and succeeded in

who dragged us lecturers up off our knees”.

During the student “troubles” of May 1968 in France, Anthony Simpson, a British historian, then lecturing in a French University said that for the first time in many years “the French people are beginning to ask what their society is all about and what has to be changed”.

A few months ago the government of Northern Ireland was disbanded. A large share of the credit for this must go to the civil rights movement initiated by students in 1968 and 1969.

There are a few random results of student activism in other parts of the world.

Hong Kong’s successes are not yet quite so spectacular. Why? I have referred to the pressures on the local student activist, from his home, his college, and society. These pressures exist in other countries as well. But in Hong Kong they are considerably greater, particularly those that come from family and society.

We must also bear in mind that the history of the student movement in Hong Kong is comparatively brief. And we don’t have to look too far for the reason for this. Social awareness was not a value that was seriously cultivated in our educational system ‘Politics’ was a dangerous word with ominous undertones. A critical and creative approach to a problem was largely ignored. Students were the passive recipients of information.

In the world of ideas the leadership of the West was tacitly, almost blindly, accepted.

The situation in other countries, particularly in the West, is far different, and has been so for decades. It is only now that in Hong Kong we are beginning to make any appreciable dent on the local system.

In such circumstances, therefore, we cannot as yet expect our student movement to be as productive as its counterparts in other parts of the world. However the achievement gap between them is closing.

There are other differences.

newspapers to such problems.

Influential

The student movement has been one of the most significant and striking social phenomena to hit Hong Kong in recent years. Perhaps it is also the most hopeful and most potentially creative. Time will give us the answers to these questions.

However to say that the student movement is significant is not to say that it has in fact been the most influential force in our midst. It has indeed prodded our conscience. But so far it cannot claim to have shaped events in the same way as e.g. the Legislative Council and mass media. This last remark must not of course be taken as blanket approval of all that the Legislative Council and mass media stand for. Influence can be exercised for good and for evil!

The time however may be coming when the student movement can effectively challenge the establishment, and the pillars on which it rests; challenge its basic assumptions and values.

Pressures

In assessing the impact of our student movement we must take into consideration the obstacles it has to overcome and the pressure it is constantly forced to live with. These are considerable. They come from:

- ◆ The family of the student activist. The parents rarely understand why he should be involved, and often positively disapprove. This is an understandable reaction on the part of parents. Unfortunately no attempt is made to bridge this gap.
- ◆ College and university. He had to join the rat race to win his place at colleges. Exams, tests, papers, and constant new additions to the courses allow him little time for social involvement.
- ◆ Society. Here is a milieu which deep down still finds it hard to accept that a youth or student has ideas worth listening to and considering, and is reluctant as yet to face the full implications of dialogue. Like his parents, society too frowns on his commitment to the ideals of the student movement and would be happier to see him more exclusively devoted to his studies and using his free time on social service projects. These projects, however, often fail to go to the roots of a problem, and leave him dissatisfied.

In the view of all these pressures it is not a surprise to find that the incidence of mental illness among college students in the last few years has risen rather alarmingly.

But not all the obstacles come from outside. Some come from within the fold itself:

- ◆ The apathy of the general student body. Many students are hardly even aware of what is taking place around them. The activists are a minority but a rapidly increasing minority.
- ◆ The wrangling, rivalries and petty jealousies which bedevil all organizations are not strangers to the student movement.
- ◆ The annual change of leadership. In a student organization this is impossible to avoid. But it does mean that a strong leadership and healthy tradition are built up only with considerable difficulty.
- ◆ The lack of coordination and cooperation among the various student organizations. The vast reservoir of ability and strength has not yet been fully tapped or properly channeled.

In my own personal view, one of the most formidable difficulties encountered by a student leader is the fact that he is often catapulted into the front lines, into the most delicate and most potentially explosive areas of social and political life with little previous training and preparation. This strain is considerable, but I never cease to be impressed by the composure with which such challenges are accepted.

Defects

Saluting the success or impact of our student movement does not mean that we close our eyes to its defects and weaknesses. We cannot for instance ignore.

An excessive bureaucracy which seems to strangle new ideas and creative approaches. Most, if not all, the issues championed by the student movement in Hong Kong have been initiated by small groups and student. Newspapers, and subsequently championed by a student organization. Here is a point which student unions and organization could profitably meditate on.

Short-lived enthusiasms. Causes are taken up and then forgotten. The Chinese Language issue is a good example of this phenomenon. For months there has hardly been a whisper from the student movement

about this issue, which they fought so resolutely in 1970.

This is a serious defect, and a sign of a movement that has not yet reached full maturity. The annual change in leadership and the very limited time at the disposal of the student leaders make this understandable. However a movement which tolerates such defects can never be a powerful force for creative social change.

Persistence on the Tiu Yu Toi issue is a sign that the students are becoming aware of this problem, and beginning to overcome it.

Lack of study and ideology. Without such a basis to sustain it a student movement is but a house of cards to be blown around and buffeted by the winds. Happily students are now seriously grappling with this problem.

Hong Kong and the rest of the world

How can our local results compare with those of the rest of the world?

Again let us present some facts.

After the riots at Columbia University in April 1968 the trustees agreed to an independent enquiry by a commission headed by Archibald Cox, Professor of Law at Harvard University.

The report of this commission condemns violence, student violence and police violence. However it also recognizes that it required the student riots to reveal the fact that the teaching staffs at Colombia were powerless when there was disagreement with the administration on fundamental questions, and that the faculties did not have an established senate through which their views could be formulated and communicated.

Some of the staff at the University subsequently expressed their gratitude to the students because otherwise Columbia University “would have gone on sleeping into eternity”.

Richard Walsh, a lecturer at the National University of Ireland, writing on student activism at that University said: “it cannot be denied, however unpalatable it may be to some of us, that it was the students

who dragged us lecturers up off our knees”.

During the student “troubles” of May 1968 in France, Anthony Simpson, a British historian, then lecturing in a French University said that for the first time in many years “the French people are beginning to ask what their society is all about and what has to be changed”.

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In such circumstances, therefore, we cannot as yet expect our student movement to be as productive as its counterparts in other parts of the world. However the achievement gap between them is closing.

There are other differences.

In the West students have sometimes used force to achieve their aims. In Hong Kong the student movement has hitherto been a peaceful one. In the next article we must however ask if the situation will always remain like this. Objectives are also different. In the United States the student movement has been concerned with racism and the war in Vietnam. In Hong Kong these issues leave students comparatively untroubled.

We have spoken of differences. We must also speak of youthful idealism, dedication, commitment, courage, and social concern. These are qualities which unite the students of the world into a global student community, and in many ways, are more impressive and striking than those things which separate them.

Conclusion

I am a frequent visitor to one particular College in Hong Kong. In the fall of last year I visited it after an absence of three months. I found it this time festooned with posters and plastered with slogans. My mind raced back one year- to students who were among the tamest and most submissive in Hong Kong. What a change had taken place! And how quickly! Radical changes have indeed taken place in student attitudes and in a very short time. Where will these changes lead to?

In my next article I will try to answer this question.

14. Radicalization of Asian Chaplains, 1972

“The exigencies of modern Asia demand that in the future the major thrust of the Catholic student movement be in the area of socio-political action.” This is the first conclusion of the Asian chaplain formation course held at Bangalore, India, from mid-August until mid-September this summer. In this article I would like to give the reader some idea of the discussion and reflections that led to this statement.

Thirty chaplains to university students in Asia participated in this formation course- the first of its kind to be held in Asia. They came from India, Ceylon, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Laos, and the Philippines. Hong Kong had four representatives: two priests, and two nuns.

During the first week we surveyed in some detail the Asian scene. A representative from each delegation gave a comprehensive description of the situation in his own country, emphasizing in particular the reaction of the Catholic Church and of the Catholic student movement to the challenges of this situation. After each report there was ample time for questioning and discussion. By the end of the week our horizons had been extended, and Asia had become a living reality for all of us. But the picture of Asia which emerged from our discussions was far from being a reassuring one. Most of us found it profoundly disturbing.

Asia in a pre-revolutionary situation

We had eye-witness accounts of the insurrections in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) last Easter. A brother of one of our Ceylon participants was still in jail as a result of this upheaval. The presence of this particular chaplain gave to our discussions a sense of immediacy and urgency. It was only here in Bangalore that many of us really understood the seriousness of the situation in Ceylon, and how very near to total success the youthful insurrectionists had been.

In other Asian countries we found an explosive and almost pre-revolutionary situation. Many of our Asian brothers and sisters seem to be living in a state of institutionalized violence. There is copious evidence of the unequal distribution of wealth and resources.

The rich get richer. The poor get poorer. The gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” grows wider and wider. A degrading and dehumanizing poverty stalks many of our Asian cities and countryside. The misery of the many and the ostentatious life-style of the rich make an explosive situation which needs only a spark to detonate it.

Authority and power, jealously guarded by a few, is often summarily and arbitrarily exercised. Fundamental rights and freedoms are frequently disregarded. Dialogue is a word which is either unknown, or to which mere lip service is paid.

There is widespread unemployment. In India alone it is estimated that about 35 million, or 12 per cent of the labour force, is unemployed. In Ceylon massive unemployment, and its consequent frustrations, was one of the main reasons for the upheaval of last Easter.

The chaplains gathered at Bangalore did not close their eyes to the considerable progress that Asia has made since independence, and the fact that in a few decades it has marched the distance of centuries. But all of us sincerely believed that Asia is now facing one of the greatest challenges in its millennial history. Radical and revolutionary changes must be brought about quickly. Without such a transformation violent revolution is almost inevitable.

Response of Catholic student movement

A healthy Catholic student movement should respond meaningfully to such a challenge. But hitherto it has largely ignored such events, concentrating its efforts for the most part on work camps and social service. In the long summer holidays Catholic students build roads and wells in remote villages. At Christmas they visit the slums handing out presents and relief. But ten years later the face of the slums and shantytowns has not substantially changed. The people still live in grinding poverty.

The value of work camps and relief was not denied at Bangalore. Such activities provide at least short-time solutions, and arouse the social consciousness of the students. These camps, therefore, need not be completely jettisoned. But there must be a new orientation and deeper thrust in the Catholic student movement in Asia.

Political role of Catholic student movement

We have referred to the Catholic students working in the slums. These students must not be content with building a house for a worker and his family. They must fight for better houses and living conditions for all the people in the slums. They must incessantly urge government to enact laws that will fully protect the legitimate rights of the worker. They must induce the legislators of the state and the employers of the city to provide for all workers adequate security, better working conditions, and a family living wage that can support the worker and his family in at least frugal comfort. They should help to conscientize the worker, helping him to become aware of his rights and privileges, and encouraging him to form unions that will ensure that the laws of the state and the promises of the employer are fully and rigorously implemented.

We have taken the example of a worker. We could just as easily have taken the example of a peasant and the exploitation to which he is subjected in not a few Asian countries. We could also have taken the educational system which in so many countries is individualistic, bookish, alienating, and does not help the student to see the problems of his environment and his own creative role in society. Other problems will suggest themselves to each one of us.

All this is just another way of saying that if the Catholic student movement is to work effectively for the full and total liberation of the worker and peasant, and bring about fundamental changes in the educational system it must obviously involve itself in socio-political action, in that area of life where the basic structures of society can be changed and transformed. So the chaplains at Bangalore invite the Catholic student movement of Asia “to play a more radical and decisively political role in the affairs of Asia”.

When issuing this invitation the chaplains were aware that “politics” is a rather explosive word, and that in the eyes of many politics itself is a “dirty” and more than suspect occupation. They realized moreover that in the past the Church over-involved itself in this area of life. So a considerable amount of our time and energy at Bangalore was devoted to a discussion of these points.

The derivation of the word “politics” was referred to. Its Greek origin is highly respectable and means simply “the affairs of the city”. “Civics” is an exact etymological equivalent, but this word of Latin origin is rather anemic when compared with its Greek counterpart.

We felt that involvement in politics and “the affairs of the city” was more than necessary, because it is here that legislation is enacted and the major decisions that govern our everyday lives are made. For a Catholic student movement, therefore, to ignore politics is to render itself impotent and ineffective.

Political involvement: Christian Perspectives

Here we found two converging points of view.

Political involvement was seen as a further extension and expression of the Christian commandment to “love your neighbour”. Hitherto the Catholic student movement has expressed this love through work camps and social service. But this type of love, as we have already seen, is inadequate. It does not reach down to the grassroots, and leaves intact the shaky and suspect structures of our society. True Christian love must go deeper and express itself in politics; in that area where, as we have just stated, the basic structures of society can be changed and transformed. “Politics”, Pope Pius XII is reputed to have said “provides the widest scope for the expressing of Christian love and service.”

Socio-political involvement was also seen in relation to God’s creative act. This activity of God has not ceased. It is an ongoing process. But it is now our privilege as persons to cooperate with God, to become co-creators with him in shaping and fashioning this world of ours, and guiding it to a full and integral development. However it is in the legislatures of the world that such shaping and fashioning mostly takes place.

Characteristics of this involvement

The political involvement of the Catholic student movement in Asia must be selfless, and completely at the service of our fellow citizens. Never must it be an effort to enhance one’s own prestige or that of the Church. Nor must it be identified with involvement in party politics.

This involvement will express itself in a critical analysis of national problems, and in an enlightened and courageous comment on current affairs. It will also strive to conscientise the weak and the oppressed, making them aware of their God-given rights and of suitable ways in which to fight for these rights.

But this involvement must not rest content with mere words, however brave and courageous. It must have the courage of its convictions, and translate its words and ideas into effective but peaceful action. Only then can such involvement be termed sincere and authentic.

Role of Chaplain in Socio-Political Involvement

“We are convinced”, the chaplains answer in their consensus statement, “that we would betray our trust as priests and student advisors if we were not to stand by them (students), and struggle along with them in their active socio-political action towards the building of a new society”.

So the chaplain is not meant to be a more passive spectator of the events of history. He must be with the students. He must not ask them to take risks which he himself is not prepared to take. A few case studies helped us to spell out more specifically the nature and extent of this involvement on the part of the chaplain.

Should a chaplain actively participate in a student demonstration?

In answering this question the group felt certain that the chaplain's role should not always be limited to that of advisor. On occasion, at least, something more will be required of him. This “something more”, this actual involvement and participation may lead to mistakes on the part of the chaplain, and misunderstanding on the part of the community. However it was also felt that we must have the courage to take risks and learn through mistakes. One Chaplain quoted the advice given to him by his Provincial Superior on the eve of this chaplain's participation in a particular student protest. “Go ahead”, the Superior said, “This is where you should be. I trust you. You will probably make some mistakes. But do not be overworried about this”. The chaplains hope that the magnanimity and openness of this Superior will eventually be shared by all the community, and particularly by confreres in their own religious communalities.

Should a chaplain in his work try to establish a relationship with the government and its officials?

All agreed that as the student movement is now focusing more and more on national and government issues, the chaplain, without being paternal, might sometimes be in a position to interpret the attitudes of the students to the government and to the community. An example was given. Not infrequently students express excellent ideas but in a belligerent language. People are turned off by this aggressiveness, and may reject the ideas as well. So the baby is thrown out with the bath water! In such a case the chaplain might help the people and government officials to distinguish between the ideas and the language in which they are expressed, and so salvage the ideas of the students for the betterment of society.

This important part of the chaplain's ministry which brings him into a relationship with the government is fundamentally one of reconciliation. However he is also warned not to compromise himself or uncritically defend the status quo. The statement even goes on to say that his ministry may be a "prophetic criticism of the government". Only too well do we know what prophetic criticism of the government leads to, in some countries at least. One chaplain with us had been in prison five times! So the chaplains at Bangalore exhorted all fellow chaplains, even those in different countries, publicly to express their solidarity with those chaplains "who have been the victims of harsh criticism or civil censure". They appeal also to ecclesiastical and religious authorities for the same support.

The hazards of socio-political involvement for a chaplain were fully recognized. So he is advised that this concern and commitment of his must be disinterested and spring from a deep love of Jesus Christ. His life of prayer and liturgical worship must also be integrated into this commitment. Moreover he is also advised regularly to discuss problems with his fellow chaplains and the student community.

Many felt that our stance with regard to socio-political involvement on the part of the chaplain was too negative and defensive. So further discussion focused on how it could positively contribute to spiritual growth. There was general agreement on this point, but pressure of time and a heavy backlog of work prevented the discussion of this point from being as fully productive as it could have been.

Reflections on Bangalore

1. The socio-political thrust of the Bangalore conference is not something completely new in the thinking of the Catholic student movement in Asia. It had already been accepted at New Delhi in 1969, and again, but this time much more clearly, at the Pan-Asian Conference held in Hong Kong in the summer of 1970. Bangalore gathers up all these ideas, together with their implications, and spells them out more systematically and more decisively.

It is when it speaks of the socio-political role of the chaplain that Bangalore makes a most significant contribution. True, the seeds of this idea had been sown at the Asian Bishops' meeting held in Manila last November when one of the resolutions said the chaplain should "with the students confront the issue of the campus and our changing society". I was present on that occasion and reckoned that it might take two or maybe three years before all the implications of this idea would be clearly seen. Bangalore, less than one year later proved me quite wrong!

2. Has the Bangalore conference been too ambitious, setting impossible targets for the catholic student movement in Asia? At first sight it would seem as if it has been so. In most countries of Asian Catholic students are a small minority, and with one or two exceptions - such as Indonesia - lack political experience. However the winds of change are beginning to blow strongly in the Federations of Asia, and in the direction of socio-political involvement. It is also true that if we cooperate with men of similar vision and with those who possess the expertise and professional competence which we lack just now then we can achieve something worthwhile; something which we initially thought to be beyond our grasp.

Our principal source of strength and courage will of course be the Risen Christ. "Without him we can do nothing". (John 15:5)

3. Some one has cynically suggested that the greatest difficulty in the implementation of the Bangalore ideas and insights may be the other Asian chaplains! True, a few chaplains may have reservations, and they will accept them with something less than alacrity. But I personally believe that the majority of our Asian chaplains will readily accept the new orientations and directions. The very enthusiastic

reception of the consensus statement in one Asian country where such a reception was least expected confirms this belief of mine.

It is also true that these chaplains, who accept these new orientations, really commit themselves, and wish to persevere in this commitment, may have to evolve new religious life styles in order to relate more meaningfully to the pressure and demands of this work. Moreover, new and imaginative forms of training will have to be thought out for those seminary students who are destined for this ministry. Only in this way can our future chaplains fully measure up to that which is expected of them.

Bangalore and Hong Kong?

The Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students should have no difficulty in accepting a socio-political orientation. Such an orientation has been with us since 1967, and in 1970 it became part of our official policy. Regrettably this policy has not yet penetrated to the grassroots of the Federation - its member colleges. Hopefully the Bangalore consensus will provide the necessary stimulus for its fuller implementation and wider acceptance.

At the moment many Catholic students are seriously questioning the value of the work they are doing in their Catholic societies. This is a healthy phenomenon. I am convinced that a study of the Bangalore statement will help these students of Asia to become a frontier Church and to play a more radical and decisively political role in the affairs of Asia. What more challenging ideal could be presented to Catholic students?

We in the Catholic Federation must also remember that here in Hong Kong "politics" is a loaded word, and for many who live in our city it has undesirable associations. Our task will be to outlaw these prejudices and restore politics to its rightful and honourable place among us. Otherwise we isolate ourselves and work in a vacuum.

Conclusion

The conference at Bangalore had its ups and its downs. Even two days from the closing date it seemed as if it might end in confusion. But it did not. And I am convinced that future Church historians will look upon

this conference as a most decisive milestone in the history of the Catholic student movement in Asia.

On the last day of the conference one of the chaplains said that this had been the most creative period of his life. This, I think, was a sentiment shared by us all, in varying degrees. Our horizons had been stretched; our knowledge filled out, and our spirits rejuvenated. But above all our commitment had been challenged and deepened.

Several times during the meeting I reflected on my own personal commitment. I have worked for six years as national chaplain to the Catholic Federation in Hong Kong, and until I went to Bangalore – I felt that my commitment to this movement was adequate. Bangalore however shattered my smugness and complacency. It revealed to me a person who had undeniably made sacrifices for the movement and had even on one or two notable occasions put his own reputation on the line. But it also revealed to me a person who had not yet given his all, and who was still holding back in certain areas.

Deliberately I have resolved to give my all, little and insignificant as it is. I hope the Catholic students will help me to be faithful to this resolve.

15. The Future of the Student Movement in Hong Kong, 1972

Will the student movement disappear?

An editorial in the Catholic Sunday Examiner of July 16th last year gives a thought-provoking answer to this question. “Youthful contestation, student protest”, it says, “seems to meet a deep need that though new is not likely to disappear”.

Those who witnessed the events of May 13th in Central will readily agree that in Hong Kong the student movement is something that is going to be with us for some time. Before May 13th even some student leaders felt that the movement was showing signs of emotional fatigue and of being a spent force. These people have since revised their views.

Future Direction: Political

Full and effective student participation in the administration of the College and its decision-making processes will be an issue for some time to come. While pressing for this the students could also remember the ordinary workers in the Colleges and Universities, and devise ways in which they too can be more fully and appropriately associated with the administration. Social justice will also be an issue. The student movement should expose injustices and prod the community into stamping them out.

However I personally feel that the crucial issues will be more frankly and more directly political: colonialism, and China. These are undoubtedly highly explosive problems, and I venture to suggest that they will have to be handled very creatively.

Let me explain.

Hong Kong will undoubtedly revert to China, but just now China does not seem in too great a hurry to receive it back. However colonialism is already heavily under fire in our midst.

Various solutions have already been put forward, and all have their limitations. Some of these might even suggest a movement with an independent Hong Kong as its goal.

I suggest that creatively dealing with this problem of colonialism means reaching down into the depths of the Asian and Chinese soul. Here, undoubtedly, are resources which are truly vast, but as yet untapped and unknown. It will be the challenge of the student movement to tap these resources, and thus offer something new and fresh to a world jaded with slogans and clichés. This something new and fresh must be above and beyond present categories and systems. It will be genuinely Asian, and Chinese, truly democratic, and a viable solution to our present problem here in Hong Kong. The concept of democracy will have evolved and enriched itself in this process.

This is indeed a mighty challenge for the student movement. It means patient and painstaking research; cooperation with others, and above all the ability and willingness to think creatively. Thinking creatively, however, may not be easy for those who have received their education in Hong Kong.

The problem of China and communism will also have to be handled creatively. The vast majority of students reject capitalism. Many are undoubtedly fascinated with communism, especially since the entry of China into UN last November, and some groups have already identified themselves with the ideals of the Peoples Republic of China. A sizeable number, however, have reservations. Another impasse? However I am confident that here there is a viable solution.

We live in a constantly evolving and developing world. Communism and capitalism are surely not the final points or peaks in this evolution. Our mental horizons must reach out beyond present realities to new worlds and new ideologies still undreamt of, and still to be conquered. The seeds of these new ideologies may be found in the present systems.

Another more than daunting challenge for our student movement, also requiring study and research, cooperation, and above all creativity. That is why I said in my second article that the student movement could possibly be the most potentially creative force to hit Hong Kong in recent years. We might here recall R.H.Tawney's observation, "that first duty of youth is not to avoid mistakes but to show initiative and take responsibility, to make a tradition, not to perpetuate one".

The student movement of the future will undoubtedly be political. Here it is more that interesting to recall the seminar sponsored by the

Federation of Students in December 1966 on “Students and Politics”. Not a few honourable members of our community, and even some students themselves, were cautious in their approach to this topic. How the student and political climate has changed! Perhaps the staunchest supporter of the students on that occasion was the editor of the Catholic Sunday Examiner. “The students say they want political knowledge”, he said in a special editorial commenting on the seminar. “That is all to the good” he goes on to say. “But they will not get political ideas from the older generation, for it has none...Hong Kong badly needs political programmes, but they will be new programmes with new ideas, and these will come from our youth...Progress in the world of ideas comes generally from the young. Hong Kong needs a political programme; it is for our youth to supply it”.

Perhaps one of the roles of student movement in Hong Kong will be to reinstate politics, rescue it from suspicion, and make it a truly honourable and challenging profession.

How achieve these Goals? Violence?

I have stressed the need for genuine study and cooperation with others. Above all I have stressed the need for creativity. Could the movement, however, erupt into violence?

Undoubtedly the students in general are committed to peaceful methods, and this is reassuring. This view, however, is not necessarily shared by all. As I write I have a letter in front of me from a student friend. “I think if we want to turn society into good”, he says, “We must have a revolution, and make everybody a revolutionary”. He goes on to sign himself - as he does in all his letters to me - “revolutionarily yours”.

Not infrequently I come across students who hold similar views, possibly in a more mitigated form. “When were radical changes ever brought about in society without a resort to violence?” is a question these people will ask. More recently a new graduate who as a student would never be labeled radical by classmates and who now passes as a member of the establishment holding an important post in a prestigious firm, said to me: “how do we persuade these people, these capitalists, these hide-bound conservatives to change their ways? Do we have to burn their cars?”

Many of us have lived through the riots of 1966 and 1967. These riots did lead to reform. This is indeed a fact, but nonetheless a sad commentary on our callousness and lack of sensitivity.

Just now we are once again living with a tense and explosive situation. How do we defuse it? Only by listening to the voice of youth. Seriously listening. Convincing them that we are not strangers to their ideals and aspirations. But above all we must ourselves press and press very hard, for a solution to the problems and issues they speak about. If we are not willing to do this I find it hard to see how we can avoid a repetition of 1966 and 1967.

In this context I would like once again to stress the need for creativity. Gandhi was one of the great pioneers in using non-violent methods to bring about radical and revolutionary changes. I feel that in his ideas and principles are the seeds of further new approaches. It is for the students to cultivate these seeds, bring them to flower, and thus add something new to the human patrimony in this most important area of life.

Student movement: Effective?

Ingredients of success are already present. There is, for instance, idealism and the readiness to sacrifice oneself for these ideals. I have commented on this to some of them. They were surprised. "This is not self-sacrifice, Father; this is our duty". A few have even quite seriously discussed with me the possibility of renouncing marriage and living a celibate life in order to devote themselves more unreservedly to there ideals.

All recognize the need for a much deeper and more thorough study of issues.

However if the student movement is to be truly effective it must be more resolute and persevering. An issue once taken up must be pursued to the end, and not dropped after the initial euphoria has passed away.

The student movement must also learn how to win fuller public support. There is a gap between the student and the public. Both sides are at fault. Here the students might take a leaf out of the police note book and learn how to win people over to an understanding and acceptance

of their point of view.

Above all the students must work hand in hand with non-student groups. Alone, students are the voice of conscience, prodding us into an awareness of problems. They cannot, however, alone and single-handed, solve these problems. The solution of the problems is the task of all, young and old, students and non-students.

We can already discern the beginning of this cooperation. The demonstration of May 13th in Central was organized by students, but not confined to students. There are of course obvious dangers in such cooperation. However a mentally alert student movement can cope with such dangers. As the movement develops, and succeeds in arousing the awareness of our citizens it will have to consider the need for extending the range of this cooperation.

In such circumstances and under such conditions I am confident the student movement can be effective, and be an immense stimulus to the dynamic development of our society and community.

Society and Student Movement

“Listen to the voice of protest”.

There are the words of no less a person than President Marcos of the Philippines!

But listening is not always easy. Students are often the voice of conscience and the salt of the earth. The voice of conscience is not always sweet and pleasant. Salt halts corruption and decay, but when applied to an open wound is a painful experience. Salt is also an important element in the cultivation of pearls. And Hong Kong is the Pearl of the Orient.

Listening demands that we listen intently; with all our heart and mind and soul, convinced that despite the aggressive language which he may sometimes use the student has something of value to contribute.

Listening demands that we really believe in the student, genuinely trust him, and see him not as a problem but rather as a ray of hope. Listening also demands that we approach him with humility, willing to admit our own mistakes and responsibilities for the faults and injustices against

which he inveighs. It was Doctor Spergel, the UN advisor to the Hong Kong government on youth work, who said before he left Hong Kong that protest activity was a direct response to the failures of adults, including parents, community and political leaders". Only a few weeks ago Pope Paul VI said that youth today was protesting against "an emptiness passed on to them by their elders and due in no small way to the fact that the proceeding generation were foolish teachers".

Society must also ensure that youth students fully participate in all projects and enterprises. A regional seminar sponsored by UN and held at Bangkok in 1970 recommended that "Governments should recognise youth as partners in nation-building by fully involving them in all stages of planning, decision-making and programme implementation."

Youth as partners: when will we realize this ideal in Hong Kong?

Society must go still much further.

Hong Kong youth hunger and thirst for an ideal. But what do we offer them? Only a few weeks ago a first year university student answered this question for me: "above all I want a worthwhile ideal. But nobody over 40, priests, nuns or lecturers ever speaks of an ideal. It seems an alien concept to them". Billy Graham, the famous American preacher, has a poignant story about a father who came to see him. This friend's son had just informed his father, "I'm dropping out of school, Dad". Asked why, the son replied: "Well, Dad, the truth is, I hate you". Stunned the father asked: "but why son? I've given you everything". To which the son replied: "that's just it. You've given me everything, everything except something to believe in".

Perhaps many elders can recognize themselves in the picture of that father. We must begin again. Begin with a personal conversion, and a rejuvenation of ideals which we jettisoned as we said good bye to the enthusiasm of youth and came to terms with the dubious standards of the counting house and market place.

Society must also initiate a massive programme of radical reform.

Barbara Ward, an economist of international repute, spoke of a world "laden with a twin explosive: the starving poor and the impatient young". "The imbalance between the haves and have-nots", she goes

on to say “is behind the student unrest and the general revolutionary tremors of the advancing 70’s.” In Hong Kong the “starving poor” is fortunately no longer a major problem. But the imbalance between the haves and have-nots is a very pressing and immediate one, maybe even a scandal.

Only very recently the editor of “the Asian” said in one of his editorials that “the obscene spectacle of conspicuous affluence among tiny elite contrasted with the abject poverty of the many is surely enough motivation to crack our social order wide open”. He was speaking of Asia, but what he says about the “tiny elite” surely applies to Hong Kong too.

In a speech at Canada’s Expo 67 Gunnar Myrdal, an Asian expert said: “never in history has an upper class climbed down from its privileges and opened its monopolies out of sheer idealism - although idealism can play a role when the pressure from the underprivileged has once been effectively applied”

Is our own “upper class” and “tiny elite” ready to heed these words of warning, read the signs of the times, and share their wealth and resources with the masses?

Despite the delicacy of the problem, power and authority will also have to be similarly shared.

There are but a few of the elements in a programme of radical reform.

A Youth Policy?

In 1969 UN called for a national youth policy “at the highest political level”. The Regional Seminar held at Bangkok in 1970, and to which I have already referred, calls “on all member government of the region” to formulate “their national youth policies on youth”. To the best of my knowledge very few government in the region have as yet formulated such a youth policy. Perhaps we in Hong Kong could give a lead.

In formulating such a policy we must not see youth and students as a problem to be solved or as a potentially dangerous situation to be defused. This is too defensive a mentality. We must rather see the situation as a challenge: how can we unleash all that massive, almost

unlimited, potential and idealism for the full and integral development of Hong Kong, China and Asia?

The Report of the Commissions of Inquiry into the Kowloon Disturbance said that Hong Kong's future well - being "is in the hands of the young people of today. It is in them that Hong Kong must make its major and most significant investment". This investment has indeed been made, but one hesitates to call it "major" or "significant".

Conclusion

In the 19th century the workers of the world banded together to fight for their rights. They succeeded, but at that time they were looked upon with suspicion, and regarded as disturbers of the peace. Students of the world find themselves in the same position today. Assuredly they will win, but it may take some decades before this struggle of theirs is fully understood.

In this struggle, in this movement of the students of the world, we can, I feel, also discern an evolution in the idea of democracy. For let us not presume that parliament and elected representatives are the full flower and definitive expression of the democratic idea. Even in supposedly modern democratic countries there is a feeling of frustration and hopelessness among the ordinary people. They feel it is impossible for them to have any influence on the shaping of events. Against this background we can see the student movement as an effort to stretch democracy and extend its frontiers so that the ordinary person can effectively participate in the government of his country.

It has been said that students are heralds of a new world.

Personally I believe this, and let my final words testify to this belief.

As a Catholic priest I am committed to preach peace, justice, sincerity, truth, and equality. I have done so, but all the time there was in my mind a lurking suspicion that I did not really believe that these ideals could ever be realized. I felt that on my deathbed I would leave behind me a world very like the one I was born into. Then, however, I encountered the student movement, and with it, a new hope and a fresh vision.

Students of Hong Kong and of the world: sustain me in this my new-found hope.

16. Prophet, 1972

I am a chaplain to university students in Hong Kong. In recent years a number of these students have been involved in protest movements of various kinds, and I myself - the chaplain - have on occasion been more than marginally involved with them. Frequently we have tried to look at our actions "in the light of the Gospel". In the course of these discussions and prayer sessions the idea of prophetic witness has surfaced. This idea seemed to satisfy the aspirations of many and give a genuinely Christian foundation to their commitment.

This paper is an attempt to analyse this idea in some greater depth and detail. It is built around two people: Amos from the Old Testament, and Father Dan Berrigan who is considered by many to be a prophet of modern times. The final section of the paper will be devoted to some reflections.

A. Amos

Amos was a shepherd who lived on the edge of the desert at a place called Tehoa, and from there he was called by God to prophesy. His ministry coincided with the reign of King Jeroboam (783-743).

Israel was materially well off at this time. Unfortunately, however, gross inequality, bribery, corruption, venality of judges and an assortment of other evils and injustices were rampant. To this situation Amos directed a substantial part of his preaching.

What was the origin of this inequality in Israel?

While the Israelites were nomads in the desert a solidarity and strong sense of social awareness had been generated; they realized they failed or flourished as a group. When they settled in the lands of the Canaanites these principles and attitudes were preserved, and became a prominent part of religion. When the newly acquired lands were apportioned ownership was vested in the clan or tribe; the individual received an equal share, but he was not free to sell it.

The Israelites lived side by side with the original inhabitants, the Canaanites. Different laws governed their lands; the Canaanites lands were privately owned and could therefore be sold. The more

enterprising of the Israelites began to buy these lands, and so very soon a clear distinction between the haves and the have-nots arose among the Israelites themselves.

The biggest landowner was the King himself. He summarily acquired the lands and distributed them as largesse to his “faithful followers”. Samuel had warned the people about this. In the first book of Samuel we read:

“Samuel told the people who were asking him for a king all that the Lord had said to him. ‘This will be the sort of King who will govern you.... He will seize the best of your cornfields, vineyards, and olive yards and give them to his lackeys. He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage to give to his eunuchs and lackeys..... He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves”.

Israel enacted laws to protect the poor and ensure certain equality in the distribution of wealth and resources. Every seven years, for instance, all landowners were obliged to hand over the fruits of their harvest for the benefit of all.

Laws and legislation are good. However they are not enough. So in addition God raised up prophets to champion the poor and oppressed, and denounce the injustices that abounded. One of the most outstanding of this type of prophet is undoubtedly Amos.

Amos was not a man to pull his punches or mince his words. Let us savor a few of these trenchant denunciations:

“Proclaim it in the palaces of Assyria
And in the palaces in the land of Egypt:
Saying, ‘Assemble on Samarians mountain
And see what great disorder there is in that city,
what oppression is found inside her.
They know nothing of fair dealing
- It is Yahweh who speaks
they cram their palaces full by harshness and extortion”
(3: 9-12)

In chapter five he goes on to describe in vivid terms how the unjust will be punished:

“Trouble for those who turn justice into wormwood,
 Throwing integrity to the ground;
who hate the man dispensing justice at the city gate
 and detest those who speak with honesty.
Well then, since you have trampled on the poor man
 extorting levies on his wheat-
 those houses you have built of dressed stone,
 you will never live in them;
and those precious vineyards you have planted,
 you will never drink their wine.
For I know that your crimes are many,
 and your sins enormous.”

(5-12)

Amos must have been a disturbing person to have around, a threat to the smugness and complacency of men in exalted positions. So a priest, Amaziah, denounces him to the King; “Amos is plotting against you”, he said, “in the heart of the House of Israel; the country can no longer tolerate what he is saying” (7:10)

So Amos is expelled and returns to his flocks in the wilderness.

Before we take leave of Amos we must note that social justice was not the only theme of his preaching; nor was his the only prophetic voice raised against the injustices of the times – Jeremiah and Isaiah were almost equally eloquent in their denunciations of these evils.

Other points worthy of note are:

- ◆ Amos was a layman and did not belong to the priestly class
- ◆ His prophetic protest was part of God’s plan. Often he prefaces his remarks with: “The Lord Jahveh speaks”.

Let us now take a leap across the centuries.

B. Father Dan Berrigan

Our documentation on Father Berrigan is more copious than that of Amos. However our judgments may be a little less sure.

A full length article in Time Magazine (January 25th, 1971) describes Dan and his brother Phil as “cradle rebels”. His father was the son of an Irish immigrant who like thousand of other Irishmen had fled poverty in Ireland and settled in the States. He became a Trade Unionist, but as the Church was a little less than enthusiastic for this movement he gave up the practice of his faith. Later on he returned to this practice when he met a Catholic German girl and married her. However he remained strongly socialist and when he moved to Syracuse he organized the city’s first electrical workers union.

Dan joined the Jesuits in 1939 when he was 18.

Father Arrevalo, of Loyola House of Studies, was a fellow theologians of Dan at Weston College. Both were also very close friends, and Father Arrevalo still treasures a crucifix given to him as a present by Dan as they celebrated Mass together during Christmas of 1967. This cross had been given to Dan by his brother Phil as an ordination present. Father Arrevalo speaks very highly of Dan’s kindness and charity to foreign members of the Weston community.

After completing his studies Dan took a teaching post at Jesuit High School in Brooklyn. In the meantime his brother Phil was working with the Blacks in New Orleans. Phil’s crusading zeal in this cause seems to have rubbed off on to Dan, and this marked the beginning of the radical phase of his life. In 1965 he spoke sympathetically of a young man who burnt himself to death in protest against the Vietnam War. Cardinal Spellman was not pleased by this expression of understanding and sympathy, and as a result Dan was sent on a trip to South America. Reminiscent of Amos’s return to the wilderness at Tehoa! Unlike Amos, however, Father Berrigan was able to return in a short time – after ten weeks – because of mounting pressure among American liberals. In October 1967 his brother Phil and two others poured a mixture of human, calf’s and duck’s blood on selective service files at Baltimore. In May 1968 they repeated the performance, this time accompanied by Dan and five others, and using homemade napalm. For this they were tried and found guilty.

In March 1970 Dan appealed to the Supreme Court, but his appeal was turned down. For four months after this he was a fugitive, evading police. He was sheltered by 37 different families in twelve cities, but was finally captured and committed to a Federal Correctional

Institution at Danbury. In August 1970 William Guindon, the Provincial of the Jesuit New England Province, wrote to Dan welcoming him to the New England Province. He enclosed a copy of a letter “of fraternal support mandated by the New England Province Forum”. “Your actions and your words have touched us”, this message said. “You make us confront our own consciences to ask what we are doing to build peace among His people. For some your actions are a stumbling block; for others a challenge to follow. To us you are a brother Jesuit, part of our hope, part of our joy in sharing life and service”.

One cannot but admire the magnanimity of these sentiments. Dan was released from Danbury a few months ago.

All this has been copiously documented and freely discussed in an issue of “Holy Cross Quarterly” which was exclusively devoted to the Berrigans. The response of the readers to this issue was overwhelming. Almost three thousand letters were sent to Father Casey, the editor. 2,500 were requests for copies. The rest were comments, heated and passionate, and – except for four – all unashamedly taking sides. Many were quite moving. “I have been writing this letter for three months”, writes Richard Kennedy of Arlington, Mass., “delayed by an overwhelming feeling of inadequacy, frustration, even anger at the Berrigan brothers. I felt that the phenomenal strength of these men had so intimidated me that I had been held important..... There is the fear that the Berrigans may require me to follow them! I must face the fact that I do not really have faith in my beliefs and am therefore a Christian coward.....But perhaps out of the anxiety they cause me I shall begin to try doing as they have done. On this there is hope”. another letter however, addresses Father Casey in an altogether different tone. “You must be truly sick. A quiet retreat to evaluate yourself is indeed warranted, and if not effective, judicious psychiatric evaluation might help your problem”. I was particularly interested in this letter because it is signed by Charles J. Kickham. In the mid-nineteenth century one of the best known and highly respected of the Republican Fenian movement in Ireland had exactly the same name. it is not too unlikely, therefore, that the Charles J. Kickham that appears in the pages of the Holy Cross Quarterly is a distant relation. I wonder what his illustrious ancestor would say or do if he could read this letter of his descendent! An interesting speculation!

Is Dan Berrigan a modern prophet? Does he belong to Amos and his prophetic fraternity?

The issue of the Holy Cross Quarterly that I have referred to takes up this question.

Father Andrew Greeley, the well-known sociologist, presents the case for the opposition. He describes Father Berrigan and his supporters as “self-righteous fanatics”. “If Daniel Berrigan were in power”, he goes on to say, “I would be in jail, and not for destroying government property, but because I was immoral”.

The tone of Fr Greeley’s article I found quite surprising. He argues, it seems to me, with more emotion than reason, and in doing so lessens his credibility with me.

“The Berrigans – Signs or Models?” by Robert Mc Afee Brown, Professor of Religion at Stanford University, I found much more convincing. It is a calm and measured presentation of the case, and he concludes by saying:

“the Berrigans are a legitimate prophetic sign to us as long as we do not let their actions go bail for our inactions, and they will remain an ongoing prophetic sign.....”

The most scientific discussion of the question comes from the pen of Richard Clifford S.J., who received a doctorate in Old Testament from Harvard in 1970. “The problem of the Berrigans”, he says, “is not whether they are prophets, but rather whether they are true prophets. Answering that crucial question – who is a true prophet? – has been a problem from the earliest days of God’s people”. His own conclusion deserves to be quoted in full:

“The Berrigans need not be correct in every detail of their analysis in order to be acknowledged as true prophets. Their message will be supplemented and ultimately judged by the whole Church. But until that day when we shall know for sure, the wise Christian ought to consider well the issues Fathers Dan and Phil Berrigan have raised”.

Earlier in the same paragraph he indicated the nature of these issues: “Out of the dialogue, out of then noisy and heated debate there is

likely to emerge among Christians a view of war that is different from that of the past”.

Here I would like to add some personal reflections.

Dan was an ordained priest, and thus differed from most of the Old Testament prophetic fraternity. Aside from this difference the similarities are remarkable. Dan is a highly controversial figure. He propagates ideas that are ardently accepted by some and violently rejected by others. Few can adopt an indifferent attitude towards him. He is challenging and profoundly disturbing. So disturbing that just as Amos was banished to the wilderness. Dan was committed to Danbury prison for almost two years.

Prophets, be they Amos or Dan Berrigan, are people with an abundance of sharp edges. They are unashamedly one-sided, and in this lies their weakness and their strength. One might like them to be more rounded and balanced. But if they were like that, if their speeches were replete with “whereas”, “however”, and “nonetheless” they would cease to be prophets, and both the Church and the world would stagnate. It is only under pressure from such people that we gingerly and may be reluctantly take the first step along the road of progress and renewal.

I accept Dan Berrigan as a prophet. Through him and his followers I have radically renewed my views about war and peace.

But will the universal Church accept him as such?

We have already given Father Clifford’s answer. To these let us add a few of our own.

Christ himself said that “a prophet is not recognized in his own country”. To this pity saying of Jesus I would like to add – of it is not too irreverent – “nor in his own time”

There is a more fundamental reason why we cannot expect – in the immediate future at least – a definitive assessment by the Church of the prophetic role of the Berrigan brothers. And it is this: the church’s experience of prophecy is not considerable, but its theology of prophecy and its prayerful communal reflection on this phenomenon,

is relatively true. The prophets were an accepted part of life during a certain period of the Old Testament. The New Testament and the history of the Church also provided many examples of prophetic and saintly figures. John the Baptist, Saint Francis of Assisi etc. However we have never prayerfully or scientifically reflected on the prophetic role of these people.

During my Jesuit training and particularly during my theology studies from 1958 to 1959 I heard little about the prophets. They were a closed book to me. My acquaintance with them was only a nodding one, and it is only in the last year or two that I have begun seriously to read them. I venture to suggest that this experience of mine is not altogether unique. I have often asked myself the reason for this phenomenon. Was it an unconscious self-defense mechanism on the part of the church? Discouraging our acquaintance with people who ask awkward questions and shake us out of a sleepy smugness and comfortable complacency? Another interesting speculation!

Vatican II boldly affirms the prophetic role of each baptized Catholic. However it will take some time before this idea works its way into the main stream of the Church. In my own experience I have come across only one Catholic who was aware of his prophetic role. This is not surprising when we consider the dearth of serious theological reflection on this problem. It is only such theological reflection, coupled with prayerful discernment, which can create in the church the proper climate to pass a fair and equitable judgment on Father Dan Berrigan and his brother Phil.

Society may not yet be in a position definitively to accept Dather Dan Berrigan as a prophet. But it cannot deny the effects of his work.

I have already quoted from the letter of the Jesuit provincial of the New England Province; an except from a letter of Richard Kennedy, and the conclusion of Robert Mc Afee Brown's article. Here I would like to add the testimony of Edward Duff S.J., who writes the first article in the issue of the Holy Cross Quarterly that I have referred to. This article is entitled "The Burden of the Berrigans". Almost in the very first paragraph of this article he writes:

"It is Dan Berrigan's spiritual stance and political posture that challenge me as a priest and as a political scientist. For my own clarity of mind I must come to terms with the issues the Berrigans personify

and publicise. They are a burden”.

Truly a prophet is a burden and a profoundly disturbing person. To befriend one or become intimately acquainted with one is more than demanding. I speak from experience because I have a few genuinely prophetic student friends in Hong Kong! So I can understand – without accepting of course – the Church’s reluctance to introduce such people to her more ordinary priests, nuns and layfolk.

C. Random Reflections

I have spoken only about two prophets: Amos, and Dan Berrigan. There are many more. In fact the Church has never been without a prophet, be he a Francis of Assisi, a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, or a Martin Luther King. Why does God raise up such people?

I cannot even pretend to offer any apologetic answer to this question. My view is only a speculation, but not I hope, an empty or idle speculation.

God expects His Church and especially its official representatives to be prepared to speak out and adopt a critical stance when occasion demands. The early Church did this, and in fact the early Christians were seen as a threat.

As “people who turned the world upside down.” Christianity then settled down and got entangled with the status quo. So entangled that frequently it was quite difficult for it to protest, to stand up and be counted. In such circumstances God raises up people to remind the Church of its proper mission and role. And these people we call prophets.

Sometimes it seems as if it is only by some dramatic, almost bizarre – action on the part of these prophets that can achieve its purpose.

The “Catonsville Nine” seized draft files, poured napalm on them, burnt them, and then prayed while they burnt. Such an action undoubtedly rivets the attention of the whole nation. More important it fits into the prophetic tradition. We can recall, for instance, Isaiah walking naked and barefoot through the streets of Jerusalem and Jeremiah burying his loin-cloth at the river’s bank.

But instead of focusing on the bizarre character of these actions we should rather reflect on the insensitivity of the society in which we have grown up. Why is it that we respond only to such radical action?

Is it appropriate that a priest or religious exercise his or her prophetic role? The answer to this question must be an unhesitating affirmative. A priest or religious does not cease to be a Christians by reason of his ordination or profession.

Is it appropriate, however, that he exercise this “ministry” in the way of Father Dan Berrigan?

In answering this question I would like to call on ideas expounded by Father Clarke S.J. in his booklet “Development or Liberation”.

“In general”, he says, “the secular layman is the primary agent of the Church’s mission within the secular. However there may be circumstances when the priest or religious may have to play this role in order to evoke lay responsibility”.

When I discussed this point with Father Catalino G. Arevalo he referred to an experience of Father Louie Jalandoni; an experience which he and Jalandoni shared with the theologians of School of Theology at Loyola when he lectured them last year on liberation theology.

During the course of his commitment to the Federation of Free Farmers, Father Jalandoni found that the more initiative he took in leading, the more responsive the farmers became. Then a change set in, and he felt the need of reassessing his role. “Things have changed”, he told the farmers. “What do you expect of me now?” There was a pause, and then one farmer replied: “Father, we know that God is with the rich. The rich build his churches, decorate his status..... But we also want to be convinced that God is with us, the poor, too. That is why we wish you to remain with us.” Father Jalandoni’s presence was thus still necessary, but his role was different. His presence would be one of witness rather than of positive dynamic leadership. At that stage of development such positive leadership on the part of the priest might be an inhibiting force for the whole movement. My own experience confirms this view.

There are situations where, unless the priest takes the lead, nothing will happen. There will be no move forward, no onward thrust. Anything less from the priest might even be a scandal and lessen his own credibility. But in such a situation the priest has also a very serious obligation to work for the creation of a strong and vital lay leadership. A conference of Asian university chaplains met for four weeks at Bangalore last summer, and discussed this very point. All stressed the need for direct action on the part of the chaplain, but they also emphasized the further need for dialogue and discernment with fellow-chaplains and students. Under the prompting of an experienced and very reflective student leader present with them on that occasion, they even envisaged a situation where the students might ask the chaplain not to be present at a demonstration.

I began this essay by referring to students as the modern prophets. In many ways there is more than a superficial resemblance with the prophets in the Old Testament. There is often a stridency in what they say and do. We don't have to look too far for dramatic and "bizarre" action. They are often quite disturbing people to live and work with. They constantly challenge you – and here again I speak from experience – to face problems which you would prefer to file away or quietly shelve.

However I have also said that every Christian by reason of his baptism is a prophet. Am I therefore minimizing the role of the student? Not necessarily. Let me explain.

I have argued that the Church has largely forgotten her prophetic role and is only slowly becoming aware of it once again. And it is here that the student comes into the picture to play a very important distinctive role: his words and actions will help the Church to become more sharply aware of the Spirit's gift of prophecy to the Church. This is what has happened in my own case.

When the students have completed their task what kind of church will we have? It will undoubtedly be a lively place with a fresh bracing breeze always blowing through its corridors. This breeze will sometimes become a squall, but hopefully will never develop into a full-blown gale or typhoon bringing death and destruction in its wake.

It will be a church where notions of loyalty and obedience, without in any way being diminished, will be revived but considerably deepened and enriched.

It will be a church more true to the spirit of its founder and early apostles.

It will be a church more open to the dimensions of the world, but much more vocal and critical in its stance. Not merely will it be the light of the world, it will also be the salt of the earth.

Salt is curative. But it also sometimes stings!

17. Liberation Theology, 1972

Liberation theology is largely the response of the Latin American Church to the situation that exists in their countries. That situation is frankly oppressive. Let us briefly look at a few scattered facts:

In 1971 I attended an international meeting of Catholic university students at Fribourg in Switzerland. Present at that meeting was a young man, Juan, who had just been released from a Brazilian prison. One morning I sat listening to him for two hours while he described to me what he suffered in that prison, particularly during the first few weeks. In those early days he was suspended almost daily from a ceiling in a room and had electric shocks administered to him in the most sensitive parts of his body. A doctor attended to ensure he did not lose consciousness. Later on he was taken before a firing squad and told to prepare for death. I believed Juan – the marks of those tortures were still visible on his body.

Carolina Maria de Jesus is a young Brazilian girl with only two years of schooling. She is already the mother of three children, each born of a different father.

The United States is twelve times richer than all its sister republics in Latin America put together.

Let us compare Bolivia, a typical Latin American Republic, with the United States:

- ◆ the yearly income in US is 3412 US dollars; in Bolivia it is 121
- ◆ In the United States 22 babies out of every 1000 die at birth; in Bolivia 88
- ◆ In the United States 98 people out of a 100 are literate: in Bolivia only 35

In 1937 Brazil exported 14 sacks of coffee in order to import one motor car. In 1967 she had to export 40 sacks to import the same car. According to UN statistics, between 1951 and 1961, 9.5 billion dollars of foreign capital was invested in Latin America. The profits returning to the investors amounted to 13.4 billion. Undoubtedly there is considerable development in Brazil. But it benefits only 35% of the people.

“Increases in national income have not reached the poor to any significant degree in the past, and this in spite of historically unprecedented economic growth.” These are the words of Robert MacNamara in his address to the Board of Governors of the World Bank in September 1972.

How true of Brazil!

The above facts are – as I said at the beginning – few and scattered. Nonetheless, they are representative, and help us to understand the oppression, latent or otherwise, that lies behind them. The Bishops of Latin America gathered at Medellin in 1968 did not hesitate to call it a situation of “institutionalized violence”. A few months later the Bishops of Peru described it as “one of sin”. The Jesuits in Latin America called it “an injustice which cries to Heaven for vengeance”. Such systems “kill the young before they can live and the old before they can die.” They prompt one to ask if there is life even before death. Oppression, servitude, and gross inequalities are, however, by no means the exclusive property of Latin America. They rear their ugly head in Asia, Africa, and many other parts of the third world. They are also found in the so-called developed countries, but perhaps in a more subtle and more sophisticated form.

Latin American Response

During the decade from 1950 to 1960 development was the solution almost universally proposed to solve the problems of Latin America. Naively, perhaps, it was hoped that development would remove all inequalities, and waft the countries of the third world on a kind of magic carpet into an era of prosperity and equality. By the end of the decade, however, a great disenchantment had set in. Why this disenchantment?

Development was conceived along western lines. The countries of Latin America were expected to repeat the experiences of developed countries in the west. Development was also conceived as taking place within an existing system. No radical transformation of that system was thought of.

A sense of urgency was lacking. Development was too comfortable a creed, too irenic and “aseptic” in its approach, and displayed

insufficient awareness of the conflict situation that prevailed in Latin America. Some would even argue that it helped to consolidate rather than dismantle unjust social structures. So people began to speak about liberation.

Liberation emphasizes the use of indigenous models, and initiatives from within the developing countries rather than from outside. “It is primarily up to the poor nations and the poor of the other nations to effect their own betterment”. Or, as the Bishops of Peru expressed it, “all Peruvians must be the active protagonists of their own destiny”.

It also emphasizes the growth and development of the person through a process of conscientisation and awareness-building; the need for a social revolution, the overthrow of oppressive structures, and the bold and profound transformation of society; the conflict situation that exists in developing countries, particularly in Latin America.

Father Gutierrez, a native of Peru and the best known protagonist of this new and radical thinking, describes liberation as expressing “ the aspirations of oppressed people and social classes, emphasising the confliction aspect of the economic, social and political process which puts them at odds with wealthy nations and oppressive classes”.

Liberation: Church Response

The first clear and unequivocal commitment to liberation came from the Medellin Conference of Latin America Bishops in 1968: “A muted cry wells up from millions of our people begging their pastors to provide them with a liberation that they cannot get from anywhere ...”. In the same conference the Bishops commit themselves to “distribute apostolic personnel and efforts so as to give preference to the poorest and neediest. We Bishops want to get more close to the poor, in simplicity and sincere brotherhood... we shall make their problems and struggles our own... This must be fleshed out by our denunciation of injustice and oppression, by a Christian struggle against the intolerable situation of many poor people.. We want our Church in Latin America to be free of worldly tie-ups, conniving relationships and ambiguous hallmarks. The Church must be boldly committed to the liberation of each and every man”.

Medellin was a major landmark in the history of the Latin American Church. Only a few decades previously it had been a very colonial church. Now it had decisively “stood up”.

Medellin was also a rallying point for the universal church and “allowed long-damned waters to flow freely”. In a short time these waters were flowing freely – some might say – too freely, in many local churches around the world. At the Interfederal Assembly of the International Movement of Catholic Students held at Fribourg in 1971, liberation was the central theme running through two weeks of lively and often heated discussion. The most creative and freshest thinking on this question unquestionably came from the Latin American students. In Asia the Republic of the Philippines was the country which most readily accepted the new liberation theology. This is not surprising because here also – as in Latin America – feudalism and neocolonialism are major obstacles to progress. In the summer of 1971 Father Arrevalo, a professor at the Loyola School of Theology in Manila, toured Latin America to study liberation theology in its home environment, and assess its relevance to the Philippine situation.

The Synod of Bishops held at Rome in 1971 endorsed, indirectly at least, this new and radical thinking. “Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world”, it said, “fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension ... of the Church’s mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation”. Liberation theology has thus become part of the patrimony of the Church.

Personally I never cease to marvel at the speed with which this has happened.

Liberation: theological foundations?

The Bible, the book “of the poor, the oppressed and the hopeless”, is seen as providing these foundations. The example of Christ himself, the prophets, and above all Exodus, are specially emphasised.

In Exodus, we see the Israelites suffering at the hands of the Egyptians. However, God is aware of these sufferings: “I have heard their appeal to be free of their slave drivers”. So Moses the liberator is raised up “to bring the sons of Israel, my people, out of Egypt”. Moses asks

Pharaoh's permission for the Israelites to spend three days in the desert offering prayers and sacrifices to Yahweh. Pharaoh refuses and calls them a lazy people. Hitherto he had provided them with straw. From now on he refuses, and orders that they must collect it themselves "wherever they can find it." Despite this added burden, however, they must produce the same number of bricks as before: "everyday you must complete your daily quota just as you did when the straw was provided for you."

What a modern ring these words of Pharaoh have!

The subsequent history of the liberation of this people – the ten plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea, the wandering in the desert and the covenant with Yahweh – are familiar to all of us, and need not be recounted here. Suffice to say that in this story we can easily see the oppressed millions of the twentieth century, and God's care and concern for them. Theologians like Jurgen Moltmann constantly appeal to Christians to become an "Exodus church", and to embark on a long resurrection march.

Fearless denunciation of all forms of oppression is a basic expression of liberation commitment. Theological foundation for such denunciation is found particularly in the Old Testament prophets.

Let us take a look at one such prophet – Amos.

"Assemble on Samaria's mountain," he says, "and see what great disorder there is in the city, what oppression is found inside her."

He goes on to spell out this disorder and oppression:

"I have made my decree and will not relent:

Because they have sold the virtuous man for silver

and the poor man for a pair of sandals,

because they trample on the heads of ordinary people
and push the poor out of their path."

He roundly condemns unjust courts:

"Trouble for those who turn justice into wormwood,
throwing integrity to the ground,

who hate the man dispensing justice at the city gate
and detest those who speak with honesty."

The hope of Amos is that "justice will flow like water, and integrity like an unfailing stream."

But what reward does he receive for his prophetic and courageous preaching? He is delayed by a priest to the authorities and forced to return to his flocks in the wilderness!

Other prophets spoke with an almost equal vehemence and intensity for the poor and the oppressed.

Jesus Christ is also seen as a liberator and champion of the oppressed. At the beginning of His ministry he stated that he was sent “to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and new sight to the blind, to set the downtrodden free”. During his life he confronted the groups in power, and on one occasion did not hesitate to call the king “a fox”. It is also significant that he died at the hands of political authority. To use modern language, he was subversive and a threat to the status quo.

This dimension in the life of Jesus is not easily accepted by those who have grown used to the “iconisation” of Jesus, and see Him as a hieratic figure above and beyond history. Harvey Cox has cynically suggested that the greatest miracle performed has not been the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ but rather the transformation of Jesus into a cosmic Tory!

Before passing on it might be useful to mention some of the great names associated with this theology of liberation: Gustavo Gutierrez, a Catholic priest and professor of theology and social sciences at the University of Lima in Peru, has already been mentioned; Jurgen Moltmann, a member of the German Reformed Evangelical Church, and now a professor of systematic theology at the university of Tübingen has also been mentioned; Rubem Alves of the Brazilian Presbyterian Church and presently director of Studies at ISAL; Tissa Balasuriya, formerly Rector of Aquinas University College, Colombo, and now Asian chaplain to the International movement of Catholic Students. Finally we should note that this theology is a developing theology. So there are still many questions to be answered and problems to be solved.

Commitment to Liberation: How?

The Church must take sides. Clearly and unashamedly. Take sides with whom? The answer of Scripture and the authentic tradition of the

Church is clear. The Church must always be the champion of the poor and the powerless, the voice of the voiceless, and the hope of those who have no hope.

The Church in taking sides must be realistic. She must be aware of the conflict situation that exists in society. The class struggle is a reality although of course we cannot go as far as Marx who boldly states in the opening sentence of his Manifesto that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle”. Slowly and cautiously the Church is coming to an acceptance of this unpalatable fact of class struggle. An example of such acceptance is a recent document by the French Bishops. These Bishops note that a struggle does exist “between those who have property, power and knowledge and those to whom such goods have been given sparingly.”

To take sides in a conflict may be a duty, but it is rarely pleasant. What, however, when the conflicting parties are members of your own family? Fellow Christians?

The answer of the Latin Americans is unambiguous: “For a Church that has officially accepted liberation as essential to the Gospel... to say that a unity which hides all-important conflicts is more valuable than a division... is to serve the status quo”. The answer of the Asian Church in the person of Jerry Monte mayor, the founder of the Philippines Federation of Free Farmers, is the same, but expressed in more homely and down-to-earth language:

“What does a good mother do if she sees her elder boy always beating up her younger, weaker son, and taking away his food or money? Shall she say, I am the mother of both of them, I may not take sides in their quarrels... Is not the right, loving thing for her to do to take the side of the boy who is not able to fight the elder son, to speak out against the elder boy’s bullying, to prevent him from continuing to bully the younger boy..?”

The Church must speak up.

We have already given the example of Amos, and noted that many more among the prophetic fraternity of the Old Testament spoke with an equal passion and vehemence.

Joseph Blenkinsopp in his study of the prophets says that “to speak out against injustice is the highest and most characteristic prophetic function... The function of this voice is to disturb, Father Arrupe expresses the same idea when he says that Christian criticism “should be a thorn in the side of history, a sting that forbids man to rest on his laurels.” Archbishop Hurley of South Africa describes this role of the Christian as “comforting the disturbed and disturbing the comfortable.”

In today’s Church a few “disturbing” voices can be heard: Cardinal Kim of Korea; Archbishop Helder P. Camara of Recife, Brazil; Bishop Daniel Lamont of Rhodesia, and Bishop Francisco Claver in the Philippines. These disturbing voices, however, are far too few. Hopefully their example will prod other Bishops into speaking up, and shake us all from “sinful slumber and supineness.”

But the prophetic role of the Church is by no means limited to Bishops. Every Catholic, by reason of his baptism, is already a prophet. Few, however, realize they are prophets. So one of the major pastoral concerns of those of us who are associated in some way with the training and formation of lay people must be to educate them to a realization of this role and its consequences in their daily life. They must be made to see that “to be silent, to be neutral, is in effect, even if not in intention, to be on the side of the oppressor against the oppressed,” and that one of the greatest sins today is the sin of silence.

We must also reach out beyond our Christian ghettos to the masses and to that great silent majority.

Here are immense possibilities for the formation of a strong public opinion – potentially, a most powerful instrument for the liberation of the oppressed. Unfortunately, however, this instrument has hitherto been only minimally used.

Those who speak out for the oppressed must often put their reputation on the line and pay a high price for their courage. Amos, as we have seen, was forced to return to the wilderness. John the Baptist lost his head.

Fellow Christian has a duty to ensure that these prophets are never abandoned, isolated, and rendered ineffective.

The Church's criticism must be loud and clear. It must also be penetrating in its analysis and convincing in its presentation. Let us not be accused of a virginal ignorance and of accepting a level of analysis that would embarrass a minor politician. A closer association with the social sciences is, therefore, of paramount importance for the Church if she is to be really effective in the exercise of her prophetic role.

The Church must act decisively, effectively, quickly. Without such action our prophetic criticism will only be as "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals".

But what type of action?

Public demonstrations; protest marches; calling of strikes; boycotting of goods: all these, according to Father Arrupe, General of the Jesuits, are "among the various means being employed today to fight for justice." He also mentions symbolic actions i.e. actions which because of their dramatic quality focus attention on a problem. Here we at once think of Father Dan Berrigan and his companions pouring homemade napalm on selective service files at Baltimore in protest against the Vietnam War. Or we may recall the White Fathers leaving Mozambique in 1970 as a protest against a colonial regime under which they found it impossible to preach the social message of the Gospel in all its fullness and integrity.

Such actions must of course be preceded by frank dialogue and prayerful discernment. Asian student chaplains meeting at Bangalore in 1971 emphasised the need for such dialogue with both students and fellow chaplains. Without it we will find it impossible to discern the direction in which the Spirit is leading.

The risk involved in these actions is obvious. So it follows that those who are courageous enough to take such risks should at least receive the moral support of the Christian community. Without such support they are made to feel alone and mistrusted. Thus, overcome by disappointment and frustration, they abandon the struggle and another soldier in the cause of the oppressed falls by the way. On the contrary the Church should be "a source of inspiration, support and guidance for all Christians actively engaged in the difficult, thankless, and in some instance, even dangerous task of promoting justice."

All that we have just said adds up to some form of political action and involvement on the part of the Church. This may come as a jolt to those who have been brought up in a certain tradition. However, let them reflect on the words addressed by Pope Paul to Cardinal Roy: “politics are a demanding manner, but not the only one, of living the Christian commitment to the service of others”. Only trial, error, experimentation, and honest discernment will help the Christian community to determine the most appropriate expression of this commitment in a given situation. The type of action we have just described might be termed flamboyant and spectacular. We feel, however, that it must be complemented by a more ordinary and more prosaic type of action which, indeed, may ultimately be more effective.

Here in this area of the ordinary the importance of education can never be overstressed. However education for justice must not be conceived too narrowly, as something confined to the classroom. It must be seen as extending, through mass media and other ways, to the home and the world of the adult. Such education also calls for a radical reappraisal of the present orientation in our education systems. Very often “the school and the communications media”, as we know them, “are often obstructed by the established order” and “allow only the formation of the man desired by that order, that is to say, man in its image; not a new man, but a copy of man as he is.”

There must also be action at the international level. Such action would call for example, equity in trade relations; the ratification of the Declaration of Human Rights by those countries which have not yet hitherto done so; support of the UN and its specialized agencies, particularly those really committed to agricultural development, hunger, education.

All these actions, flamboyant and prosaic, must have as their aim the creation in people of new attitudes and ideals, and also the dismantling of oppressive social structures. The first without the second leads to frustration, and the second without the first is chaos.

In this field of action ecumenical collaboration is most important. Sodepax is already an example of such collaboration. However this collaboration must reach down to the grassroots and be realised at the level of the local church.

What about collaboration with Marxists and communists? This question is not quite so easy to answer. Dialogue between both sides has only just begun. Conclusions, therefore, can only be tentative. Jurgen Moltmann, the great theologian of Hope, feels that a Christian-Marxist dialogue is quite conceivable, and then goes on to enumerate the advantages of such a dialogue and cooperation. A group of Jesuits in a paper presented for a General Assembly of their Order is far more positive: "We are not only allowed, but urged to accompany the atheist all along his projects, work and plans in which his best conviction is embodied and put in practice. Not beginning with what separated us, but capitalizing on the real human values that unite us we can share the atheist's dreams for mankind. Then when he is about to stop and declare there is nothing more to it, we can move on to proclaim our open-ended Hope, which not only answers the deepest and wildest yearnings of man but infinitely surpasses them all." When Caesar Jerez, a Central American Jesuit, speaks of this cooperation he points out how the image of an aloof, immutable God sitting on an Olympian height, disinterested in the struggles of men, is brandished by successful Christians to anathematize those who dare to speak of such cooperation. Jerez ends up with a short but very pointed question: who are the real atheists? The Marxists or the successful Christians?

The official Church is very positive in its attitude towards such collaboration. The 1971 Synod of Bishops representing the whole church commends "collaboration also with those who, even though they do not recognize the Author of the World, nevertheless, in their esteem for human values seek justice sincerely and by honorable means." Dialogue between Christian and Marxists is as yet only a tiny trickle. In a decade or two I can envisage it having become a mighty river. In this respect it will probably resemble the history of dialogue between Catholics and Protestants?

Can the Church ever cooperate in action which is violent? This is no longer an academic question. Many are looking for an answer. The Upsala Assembly of 1968 said that "in countries where the ruling classes are oppressors, indifferent to the aspiration of the people, revolutionary changes may have to take a violent form."

The British Council of Churches sent a group to Africa to study firsthand the Wars of liberation being fought in Portuguese-occupied territories. This group concluded that in such a situation violence was

indeed justified.

Many examples could be given of regimes where it was rioting and disorder that brought about much-needed reforms. We do not have to search far for such examples. They are a terrible indictment of the callousness and insensitivity of such regimes!

Christians accept the use of violence, but only as a last desperate resort and when all other measures have been tried and failed. Rightly we insist on peaceful means. However if our insistence on peaceful methods is not to have a completely hollow ring we must work, and be seen to work, “in season and out of season”, tirelessly and unceasingly, for the righting of wrongs and the elimination of all forms of injustice and oppression. Without this we beat the air, and no sincere man can justifiably believe us.

Furthermore I think it could be argued that not all the possibilities and potentialities inherent in peaceful methods have as yet been fully explored. Christians, therefore, could profitably cooperate in setting up and supporting groups who would study these possibilities.

The Church must give witness. Is our way of life poor, simple and frugal?

A student friend of mine qualified from a prestigious university last year. He has deliberately opted, however, to throw in his lot with the oppressed, and is now working as an ordinary labourer in a Hong Kong factory.

A student chaplain who formerly lived in a comfortable hostel with fellow priest is now living in a dormitory with students. There are plenty of mosquitoes in these dormitory and not a few rats.

Another student chaplain was formerly the Rector of a University College. He resigned this position and is now living in a small house on the outskirts of the city. He supports himself by writing, and occasionally receives donations from friends.

These three people are “thorns in our sides”, forcing us, not necessarily to imitate them slavishly, but to seek for a far more realistic expression of Christian poverty.

Do Church workers really enjoy the full rights and social justice that all the social encyclicals give them? Are their wages such as to support themselves and their families in frugal and decent comfort? Do structures exist whereby they can with impunity seek for the redress of grievance? A few years ago the Baguio Misereor Conference urged that church workers be encouraged to form unions. How many Church organizations in Asia or Hong Kong have done so?

Do we see to it that Church funds are invested in enterprises which make justice a primary concern? In a recent edition of the "Month", Father Harriott S.J. wrote a revealing article on some Church investments in South Africa. Here 21,000 pounds are invested in U.K. Bazaars Ltd., which was one of thirteen companies named by the Institute of Race Relations as paying Africans wages below the poverty line. Other investments are in Namibia, a territory illegally occupied by South Africa despite a plea by the Security Council of UN asking all states to ensure that companies and other commercial enterprises under their control should cease all investments in Namibia. "To adopt a discriminating investment policy," concludes Fr. Harriott, "may reduce Church income. But it would be a welcome proof that where the Church's heart is there is its money too." In this context it is refreshing to note that in August 1972 the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches decided to withdraw investments from corporations and Banks trading with South Africa, and urged all Churches and individual Christians to do the same. In December of the same year the World Council was able to announce that it had sold its holdings in 650 corporations directly involved in trade with Southern Africa.

Investments; workers; poverty: these are only a few areas of Christian witness. The reader will undoubtedly think of more.

The aim of this witness should be to create a kind of liberated zone, where people can contemplate the realization of our struggles and strivings for justice and liberation. The living witness of such zones will certainly lead to the creation of others.

Liberation Spirituality

Workers in the cause of liberation cannot afford to cultivate a bland, over irenic type of spirituality. They must learn how to cultivate an authentically evangelical anger and other combative and rugged

elements of our Christian faith.

The author of Exodus describes Moses leaving an audience with Pharaoh the Egyptian King, “hot with anger.” Great maturity will be necessary in order to learn how to use rather than misuse anger and those other powerful and highly explosive emotions. Moreover we must learn how to integrate them with a forgiving spirit without their losing in the process an iota of their driving force. Perhaps the example of Mahatma Gandhi would be a help and inspiration to us in this area.

Writers on liberation stress the need for prayer. Gutierrez says that the “Christian commitment to the Latin American revolutionary process has to find the way to real prayer... Bonhoeffer was right when he said that the only credible God is the God of the mystics.”

Another author sees contemplation and active struggle for liberation in a kind of yin and yang relationship. One is incomplete without the other.

Liberation prayer will dwell particularly on the story of Exodus; the virtue of hope; the prayer of the Magnificat, - “he has put down the mighty from their seat and exalted the lowly.” Indeed the Bible will be the inseparable companion and “vade mecum” of the liberation worker for in this he finds a “revolutionary and subversive book”, a book, “for the poor, the oppressed and the lowly”, and that has in fact been the favorite reading of such people through the centuries.

Liberation theology: critique

Liberation theology is a creative contribution of the Latin American Church to our Christian patrimony. Being creative we must rejoice that the day has finally come when we need no longer look to the Western Church for all theological initiatives. Liberation theology is, also, a developing theology, a fragile plant that still needs to be carefully and sedulously cultivated. As such it must also be complemented by what the oppressed and exploited, particularly in Asia and Africa, have to say. The result will be a richer and more integrated theology. In the literature of liberation theology I would also like to see greater emphasis on the need for inner liberation i.e. liberation not merely from oppressive social structures, but also from lust, greed, selfishness

and the other untamed desires of the human heart.

Reconciliation with the oppressor, and his liberation from the servitude which imprisons and blinds him. Without such an aim I find it hard to see how we can call ourselves genuine Christians. This desire for reconciliation, however, must be genuine and authentic, and in no way be an excuse for whittling down or lessening our commitment to the liberation movement.

Conclusion

“The people who have been turning the whole world upside down have come here.” This was the reaction of a group of Jews to the preaching of Paul and his companions.

Undoubtedly the early Christians were people whose priorities in life and set of values literally “turned the world upside down.” Then came recognition by the States, and the Constantine era of the Church was ushered in. By and large the church aligned itself with the establishment and status quo. It is now trying, in some places at least, to disentangle it, adopt a new posture, to be present at the heart of the world, and recover some of its revolutionary and subversive spirit.

Today we are witnessing the birth pangs of this new Church.

18. Property: Private?, 1973

“We must go beyond the exclusive and private ownership of the means of production. We must promote the idea of a social ownership. This will more effectively correspond to the true meaning of human labour.”

Is this quotation the impassioned cry of a rabid Marxist?

No, it is the fervent plea of a group of authentic Christians - the Catholic Bishops of Peru in South America.

This plea of the Peruvian Bishops may surprise, if not scandalize, many Catholic and Christians. At school and in the seminaries we constantly heard about the almost absolute and primary rights of private property. We can recall the arguments that were used to justify these rights: the dignity of the human person, the liberty of the individual, a defense against undesirable influences from the State...All these arguments have not been jettisoned. However there has been a very significant shift in Catholic ideas about ownership and private property.

How did this shift come about?

History of an idea

A kind of theocratic communism prevailed among the Israelites of the Old Testament. God bestowed lands and property on the people, and they in turn shared these gifts among themselves. In doing so they looked on themselves as the stewards or trustees of God.

“I will give to thee all this land of which we have spoken, and they will possess it for ever!”¹ This is how God spoke to Moses while the Israelites were journeying through the desert on their way to the Promised Land. Numerous other texts could be cited to prove the conviction of these peoples that all their lands, and the lands of the whole world, in reality belong to God.

God asks that these lands be divided fairly: “a property shall be given to each tribe in proportion to its size”.² Moreover he threatens that anyone who, because of greed or avarice, “moves his neighbour’s

boundary stone” will be cursed. Landgrabbing and other such practices are, therefore, ruled out.

God ask man to till these lands and care for them.³ The role of man, therefore, is more of a caretaker or steward.

So in the Old Testament private property is not unknown, but it is relative and restricted. The only absolute for these people is the sovereign lordship of God. He owns these lands, but has given them to the people for the use of all and not just a few. God wished each man to live with his family in decent and frugal comfort. Gross inequalities and abject poverty are alien to the mind of God.

In the New Testament private property is recognized. We are told “not to steal”. We are warned about the dangers of great wealth and possessions. However we are also given a picture of the early Christian community. These “held everything in common, and would sell their property and possessions and make a general distribution as the need of each required”.⁴ There never was a poor person among them because all who had property in land and houses sold it, brought the proceeds of the sale, and laid the money at the feet of the Apostles;⁵ who then distributed this money “to anyone who stood in need.” We also know the fate of Annanias and Saphiria who tried to withhold some of the money they obtained when they sold a part of their property. Some people have tried to suggest - naively perhaps, that the basic inspiration of Marx and the communists comes from this picture of the early Christian community.

So in the New Testament the right of private property is also conditioned and restricted. More important, however, is the clarity and vividness with which it describes a Christian communism.

The witness of the early and medieval Church is, if anything, stronger and more explicit than that of the Scriptures. Saint Ambrose, the famous Bishop of Milan in the fourth century, says to the rich men who had just given a gift to the poor: “You are not making a gift of your possession to the poor. You are handing over to him what is his. For what has been given in common for the use of all, you have arrogated to yourself. The world is given to all, and not only to the rich”.⁶ Saint John Chrysostom, the famous church orator of the fourth century, preaches the same doctrine even more trenchantly, “the rich

are in possession of the goods of the poor,” he says, “even if they have acquired them honestly or inherited them legally...The wealthy are a species of bandit. Do not say I am using what belongs to me. You are using what belongs to others. All the wealth of the world belongs to you and others in common, as do the sun, air, earth, and all the rest.”⁷

I once had the occasion of using these quotations in a sermon to students, and afterwards I was “accused” of preaching communism!! Theologians in the middle age taught that a man in great necessity can appropriate the property of another if this is necessary for his survival. In such a case he is not stealing. He is merely “taking possession of what is his own”. The Government may punish him for theft, but in the eyes of God he is perfectly innocent.

At this stage one may wonder how the Church could subsequently become such a staunch upholder of private property and see in it something primary and almost absolute.

Misunderstandings

Saint Thomas Aquinas, who lived in the twelfth century, is one of the greatest theologians of all times. His influence is, and has always been, enormous. He has, however, on a few occasions been unhappy in his commentators.

One of these commentators, Cajetan (1469-1534) misinterpreted the ideas of Thomas about property, and unhappily this misinterpretation was widely, although not universally, accepted in the Church. The sixteenth century also witnessed the birth of economic liberalism. The influence of these ideas on society was penetrating and pervasive. Even the church was not exempt.

The nineteenth century saw the rapid growth of Marxian Socialism. The Church reacted strongly and completely rejected the atheistic and irreligious ideas of Marx. It also strongly, perhaps too strongly, upheld the rights of private property against Marx. The common purpose view of property, i.e. property belongs to all and is for the use of all, is not of course discarded, but it did fade into the background. It was this rather blurred and distorted view that was presented to future priests in their religious and professional formation, and from there it made its way into the classrooms and pulpits of the world.

Restoration

In 1961 a young theologian, Gilles Conrreur, published a thesis in Rome on the rights of the poor. In this thesis he argues that the rights of an individual to appropriate the goods of another in case of dire need can be extended to a group of people. This view has very practical consequences because of the growing inequalities between the wealthy nations and poor nations of the world today. However in this article we are more concerned with the way in which this thesis helped to restore to its rightful place the teaching about the common purpose of property. One author has described Conrreur as the “chief artisan” in the restoration of this idea.

What has the Vatican Council contributed in these area?

The preparatory documents are quite traditional and reactionary, repeating the ideas of the 19th century. This view of the preparatory document, however, was considerably modified as a result of the debates and discussions in the Council, and the final result, if not perfect, is quite satisfactory. God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people... a man should regard his lawful possessions not merely as his own but also as common property in the sense that they should benefit not only himself but also others.⁸

Pope Paul VI in his famous letter the “Development of Peoples” says that “private property does not constitute for anyone an absolute and unconditioned right. No one is justified in keeping for his exclusive use what he does not need, when others lack necessities”,⁹ In the next paragraph he refers to “certain landed estates” which “impede the general prosperity because they are extensive, unused or poorly used”. The common good, he says, sometimes demands the expropriation of these lands. When the Vatican Council spoke about this problem of the landed estates it went on to speak of the compensation which should be made to the original owner. Pope Paul, however, is silent on this question of compensation!

The “New” Doctrine

We have followed the journey of an idea through history. At first the Christian community looked on property and wealth as given by God

for the use of all so that each one could - as we have already said-live with his family in decent and frugal comfort. This right is primary, basic and absolute. Private property is not excluded; it is one of the ways in which property and wealth can be shared. The right of private property is secondary. But in the course of time, because of misunderstandings and pressure from external events, what was secondary became primary. However it is only in the last decade or so that we have been rediscovering the scriptural and original view of Christianity. This has been a liberating and enriching process. So much for the shift in the Catholic viewpoint.

Consequences?

They are immense. Gross inequalities between individuals and nations can no longer be tolerated. They are a flagrant violation of the common purpose of property. The world is given to all, not merely the rich. Yet 80 per cent of the world's resources are held by 20 per cent of the world's population. This minority group belongs to the Western and Atlantic group of nations. They also happen to be Christians. We must share with those who have little or none.

Our sharing must not be restricted to superfluous goods. It must be measured by the needs of the others. We must never forget that we are merely restoring to others what is basically and primarily theirs but which we have "arrogated to ourselves". We have-to use the language of the Old Testament - "moved our neighbour's boundary stone", and for this we should, according to Old Testament theology, be cursed. Our manner of sharing must not be patronizing or condescending. Such an attitude reveals our smugness and titillates our satisfaction and self-complacency, but it does irreparable harm to the recipient, perpetuating in him a mentality of dependence.

As an illustration of what he have said about sharing we might recall the land reform decreed by Ferdinand Marcos after the declaration of Martial Law in the Philippine last September, and with it the emancipation of thousands of tenant farmers all over the country. One prominent churchman in a letter to the tenants said, "this is no real emancipation." "Why?" He goes on to answer: "this freeing is done to you and for you in the same old way that you used to be the beneficiaries of gifts presented to you by a benevolent patron... Your emancipation, however, is not a gift. It was due to you in justice!" The

Philippines government is, therefore, merely obliging the landlords to restore to the tenants what is theirs - "the tenants" - by strict right.

"Workers should have a share in controlling the enterprises in which they work." They should be partners in these enterprises. Provision should also be made so that they can share in the profits.

I have spelt out a few of the consequences of this "new" doctrine. But we can already clearly discern several areas where Christian communities can give a lead in initiating radical and revolutionary changes. Let me give two examples of such leadership. The Capuchin Fathers in America sold for one dollar a seminary valued at 340,000 dollars. Previously this building was used as an orphanage and as a school for prospective Capuchin candidates. In future it will be used as an Indian headquarters and trade school." The second example comes from South America. In Ambato of Ecuador 500 acres of land, owned by the diocese, were donated to 90 Indian families. Other dioceses have done the same thing. They have handed over vast tracts of land to landless peasants. Up to a few years ago the church was regarded as the second largest landowner in the country. The state was the first.¹² We hope the examples of the Capuchin Fathers and of the dioceses in Ecuador will be stimulus to other religious communities and diocese around the world.

Dialogue with Communism

Until recently such dialogues was anathema. Happily the climate of opinion has greatly changed. But an effective and fruitful dialogue looks for some meeting point. Hitherto it seemed as if we had nothing at all in common with Marxists and communists. But in the area of wealth and property we have found such a meeting point. So it is perhaps here that the "new" doctrine can make its most significant contribution.

Marx and Engel have stated the theory of communism could be summed up in a single sentence: the "abolition of private property."¹³ A closer examination, however, reveals a more nuanced view of property: "Bourgeois property... the most complete expression of the system that is based...on the exploitation of the many by the few". Only a decade ago the Church, even on the question of property, seemed to be the implacable foe of Marx. Hopefully this article has shown how the

basis for such hostility has crumpled away. “Bourgeois property... the exploitation of the many by the few”, is something which is being roundly condemned in the modern church, particularly by the protagonists of liberation theology.

Moreover the Church is not absolutely opposed to the social or collective ownership of property. On May 1st 1972 the French Bishops Commission on Labour declared they saw no incompatibility between socialism and Christianity. “The economic and political system of socialism,” they said, “is wholly reconcilable with Christianity, as long as human rights are guaranteed”.¹⁴

In fact the Church has for centuries, through its religious priests, Brothers and Sisters, been practicing collective ownership,

Conclusion

We started off this article with the questions - “property: private?” Hopefully we can now answer this question.

Property is common: for the use of all. This is its primary function. Private Property is secondary; one of the ways in which the goods of the world can be used, but by no means the only way.

So Christianity has more communist elements in it than even many modern Christians realize, or may be even care to realize.

Notes:

1. Exodus 32:13
2. Numbers 26:54
3. Genesis 2
4. Acts of Apostles 2:45
5. Acts of Apostles 4:35
6. Cf. Pope Paul 6th, Development of Peoples, par.23
7. Cf. Theology Digest, spring 1970m P.43
8. "The Church Today", no.69
9. Pope Paul 6th, Development of Peoples, par.23
10. From an unpublished letter
11. Sunday Examiner, September 17,1971
12. Sunday Examiner, February 23, 1973
13. The Communist Manifesto, Penguin Books, Ch2, Proletarians and Communists
14. The Tablet, May 13th, 1972

19. A Novice Master at Work in a Factory, 1975

Many have asked me: Why?

Simply, I wanted to experience in my own body and person, to some extent at least, the pains and tribulations of the less privileged among us. This was no passing whim. When I was a student chaplain I often spoke about this problem. But my words sounded hollow and unauthentic even to myself. I felt the need of a real experience. However, circumstances always seemed to conspire against my taking the plunge. After my return in 1973 from a seven months' course at the East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila I had some time on hand. I was resolved that nothing was going to come between me and my factory experience - until the Provincial asked me to take over almost at once as master of novices. So I said goodbye, a definitive one, I thought - to my desire of becoming a worker. However, God's ways are strange. In the summer of 1975 we accepted only one novice, and the Provincial decided to close the noviceship for one year. At once the thought of the factory leaped to my mind. The time was available and the Provincial was willing. However a deep recession had set in and many workers were unemployed. On no account did I wish to deprive a man of a job. So I was far from optimistic. I consulted a Protestant Minister and a Maryknoll Sister who had themselves worked in a factory, and whose apostolate deeply involved them with workers. Strangely, I found them hopeful. They even insisted that I must spend at least two months in a factory. So at the tender age of 49 I found myself looking for a job!

The Search

One afternoon in September I set out for a well-known factory area beyond the airport. Many times I had passed this particular industrial area, but had hardly noticed the factories. Gingerly I now stepped inside and walked around. I did not feel at home here. I felt like turning on my heels and running out. "Why didn't we get some exposure to this type of life in our days of formation?" I asked myself. A certain factory had been suggested to me. I made for it, but took a wrong turn and found myself being cordially greeted in a government office. Eventually I found the right place, and when they see a westerner I am at once brought upstairs to an air-conditioned office. When they do eventually realize that I am just looking for a job I am brought downstairs and whisked, with much less ceremony, into a

small room where I am told to wait for the personnel officer. It seems ages before this gentleman arrives. In the meantime I am not too happy about the less than VIP treatment that has been meted out to the "Cloth". I had mentally prepared myself for this, but my preparation did not measure up to the actual confrontation with the situation. Eventually the personnel officer arrives. Jobs are available in the 18-25 age group only. He takes my name and telephone number and tells me he will ring me up when there is a vacancy in the middle-aged group! I call to another factory. The doorman eyes me incredulously when I say I am looking for a job. The personnel officer is on the third floor. Again I am told there are no jobs. I feel I have more than enough for today. I wander around the street for a while with my thoughts. I begin to learn more, not merely about society, but also about myself. How class-conscious I am despite my loud protestations to the contrary! And in a very small way I begin to understand the frustration and disappointment of a man who goes from door to door looking for a job, but without success.

On another day I went out with my Protestant Minister friend. But again no success. Some days later a member of the Young Christian workers brought me to a large factory where he had worked himself. He knew the personnel officer and announced to her that there was a "westerner outside looking for a job". In surprise she shoots up from her chair and exclaims, "impossible". Before she has fully formulated her "impossible" I arrive on the scene and she is quite embarrassed.

In the meantime an offer has come from a man whose company repairs undersea cable. I would not be expected to dive, but there are plenty of odd jobs up above. Am I willing to accept? Of course, I am. However the boss has a problem. The presence of a westerner doing ordinary work will not make sense to his workmen. They will be baffled, and maybe more than suspicious. Would I, therefore, take the position of a supervisor without in fact doing any supervisory work? I explain my reluctance and he eventually accepts my position. That night, though, two very experienced people whose opinions I value, say I must go as supervisor. I am disturbed. How frequently during the next ten weeks I was to come up against this "European boss" mentality - one of the most unfortunate legacies of colonial history. While I was still wondering what I should do, my Maryknoll Sister friend informs me that she knows a factory where there is a vacancy for a cutter, and that the foreman there is willing to take me on. Early next morning I set out

and with some difficulty find the factory: the 4th floor of a 12-story building. The foreman wastes no time in getting to the point: the job is available; can I come tomorrow? This immediacy scares me, and I plead that I must first consult my own “boss”. However I am already convinced that this is the place for me. The factory, in operation for six months, makes jeans for export to Canada and the United States. It is thus part of Hong Kong’s textile world which accounts for 50% of the city’s domestic exports and 46% of its industrial labour force.

First Day

Just before I left the college in the morning I received a note from a member of our community wishing me success and saying that he was praying that all would go well “in my new and courageous experiment”. How much I appreciated this note! Never before in all my life had I felt so nervous as I did at that moment.

I arrived at the factory in good time and reported to the office. The foreman had not yet come, so I was asked to sit down and wait. While I was waiting an elderly man whom I subsequently discovered to be in charge of dyeing and the father of the boss engaged me in conversation. He was a Christian and when he heard I was a priest he asked me if “I intended to continue in the ministry!” Soon the foreman was on the scene. He asked the accountant to give me a card which I duly signed. And in a matter of seconds I was on the factory floor. Instructions were brief, and of course there were no instructions to my immediate fellow workers. A small tablecloth with simple design and patterns sewn into it was put on the table. A piece of plastic, cut in a certain shape, was placed over a certain part of the cloth. The foreman ran a piece of chalk along the outlines of the plastic. Then I was given rather big scissors and told to follow the chalked line. He watched me cut one cloth, and departed. However in the next hour or two he did come over a few times and suggested a few ways in which I might improve my work. On a few occasions during the morning I experimented with the Jesus prayer, but I found my cutting more jagged. Finally one o’clock and lunch time arrived. I punched my card. This was something that always gave me a thrill and symbolized in some strange and imperfect way for me my solidarity - however transitory with the workers of Hong Kong. Lunch was easy to get. The whole area is ringed with “tai pai dong” or food stalls where food is cheap and the service good. However cleanliness and hygiene are at a premium. Assuredly they are

not the places for people with fastidious tastes or weak stomachs. On occasion I found myself sitting at a table which one felt had rendered sterling service in some school at the end of the last century. Today I found myself with a young worker who, when he heard I was a Catholic priest, began at once to recite the "Hail Mary". He was not a Christian himself, but had spent a year at a Catholic primary school. His hours of work were from 8am to 7pm, mine were from 9 to 6.

At 2 o'clock I continued my cutting. Late that afternoon the foreman and Teresa, the girl who had given me my card that morning - came over to me. Teresa was the only Catholic I met during my 8 weeks in the factory. She also had a brother studying in the college where I stayed. Our conversation was not prolonged but centred around the question which was to come up again and again during the coming weeks: why was I doing this job? The foreman referred to the practice in the Peoples' Republic of China where students and intellectuals are sent to the country-side to learn from the farmers, and thus round off their education. I did not comment, but felt quietly pleased.

At long last six o'clock and the end of work arrived. There seemed to be thousands of workers waiting at the bus stop. I struggled, elbowed and fought my way on. All the seats were occupied. So for the next 25 minutes I stood there wedged in by weary workers as the bus lurched its way across the crowded streets of Kowloon. But I was happy. The nervousness and apprehension of the morning passed. I had made it, and felt confident that I could after all survive the next few weeks.

My Work

By the end of two months thousands of tablecloths had passed through my hands. They were made in the Peoples' Republic of China and dyed blue on their arrival in Hong Kong. Simple but attractive patterns were - as I have already said - sewn into these cloths, and our job was to cut out these in various shapes and forms. It was only after a few days that quite accidentally I found out that these patterns were then sent to the back of the factory to be sewn on to various parts of the jeans. And weeks later, on my way through the packaging department, I saw a hanging dress with a pattern which was almost certainly cut by myself. It had become a quite decorative and practical pocket on the front of a lady's dress. "I helped to make this." I felt a certain thrill. But how long I had to wait for this experience. And then it came just

by accident.

Many have asked me about the quality of my work! As I try to answer this question, I have before me on my desk the last pattern which I cut and which I surreptitiously slipped into my pocket to carry away as a souvenir. It is far from perfect, but in extenuation I can say that as I cut it my eyes were a little misty and my hand somewhat more unsteady than usual! At the end of my first week I was told my chalking was a bit rough, and was asked to change to a ball pen. This was fair comment, but I did feel rather sore and deflated. A few hours later, though, I was reassured when I discovered that all three cutters had been issued with ball pens. Around the same time one of the girls on the sewing machines at the back of the factory told me it wasn't always easy to put my cuttings unto the machine. I was glad of this remark because it was the beginning of a rather good rapport with her particular section. On another occasion it was found that I had been cutting a wrong pattern, and for over half a day! There was excitement. Happily a way of utilizing my mistakes was discovered. Once or twice I paced myself against my immediate colleague. He cut a hundred while I cut seventy. I was pleasantly surprised; I thought the margin would have been much wider. So much for the debit side. When I gave notice to the foreman at the end of the seventh week I thought he would have been more than pleased to accept. I also felt there would be no need for a replacement. To my surprise, however, he wanted me to stay on for a few more weeks. When he did finally accept he asked me to help him find a replacement for me. I was flattered! True, after two or three weeks of work I thought I did detect at least a suggestion of fluency in my cutting, and also less jagged edges, I begun to feel that my work might at least be adequate. But there could never be any question of credits, honors, or distinctions!

Did I find the work difficult? Almost at the end of the first day my thumb and back were aching. Happily these aches quickly passed. However the monotony and the long hours standing were things that even at the end I found very difficult. I managed to cope, but never fully adjusted. Regulations of the Hong Kong Labour Department lay down that chairs should be provided especially for young people and women who have to spend long hours on their feet. I belonged to neither of these categories, but my colleagues did. However, no seats were provided. From time to time during the day we counted what we had cut. This gave us a few treasured seconds during which we could

sit down. When I was particularly foot-weary I concocted a reason for a recount! One Saturday evening as I stood waiting for a bus I prayed as I never prayed before: "Give me a seat, Lord. If You don't I'll never talk to You again." He did, and oh-what a sweet and soothing sensation! I was almost glad of the hours that made this sensation possible.

I said already that our hours of work were from 9 to 6. But we could also be called on for overtime and were rather glad of this because of the extra money it meant. On three occasions our section was asked to do overtime. On two of these I had already arranged to attend important meetings, and so I was readily dispensed! The third was a Sunday. I explained my Sunday morning commitments and again I was excused with very little difficulty. I promised, though, to return in the afternoon, but when I did the job had been completed. Three girls from another section were still around. This was their second Sunday in the factory. A weekly free day is statutory in Hong Kong for female workers, and if perchance they do have to work on that day the management must, within 48 hours, announce when the free day will be made up. I asked the three girls if this announcement had been made. Their answering smile seemed to say to me: "how simple and naïve you are, Father." An extra day at the factory meant more money for them. In Hong Kong there are only 6 paid holidays for industrial workers during the whole year. Another regulation states that after five hours of continuous work there must be a break of at least half an hour for young persons and women. However when overtime was declared on an ordinary working day, a bowl of noodles, or a cup of tea and some sandwiches, were ordered up from the street food stalls. These were consumed hurriedly on the factory floor, and work was under way again in less than 15 minutes.

Colleagues

Ah Ming was my most immediate colleague. For 8 hours everyday we worked shoulder to shoulder. He is a dropout from a primary school, and is now around 17 - not old enough to go to the races in Happy Valley, he tells me. From time to time he tried out his minimal knowledge of English. It is incredibly bad. He is sometimes rough in his dealings with people, myself not excluded, but beneath the somewhat uncouth exterior there lies a genuinely kind and thoughtful heart. On many occasions I was deeply moved by this thoughtfulness. What are his plans for the future? "To get a better paid job, if I can."

His interests are football, Chinese mahjong, and horse racing. One Saturday morning the clock had rung for the beginning of work, but the foreman had not turned up. Ah Ming sat down behind the racing page of the newspaper and got completely engrossed. Suddenly I notice the advancing shadow of the foreman and tap Ah Ming on the shoulder. His escape is a very narrow one. He thanks me, and I suggested a more sophisticated way of dealing with a similar type of emergency. Not all of my Jesuit formation had been irrelevant! On another occasion the foreman left a packet of cigarettes on a small table behind us. Ah Ming moved over and very dexterously removed a cigarette from the packet. There is no malice in his action - just a youthful escapade. He smiles at me, but I am not too sure how to react. On reflection, however, I am happy - he has trusted me and does not look on me as one of the administration.

My other colleague is Ah Chiu, a close friend of Ah Ming's. He is also a dropout from school. Early on his school days he used to be at the top of his class, but mysteriously began to fall back, and eventually lost all interest in school. Several times he expressed surprise that I, an European, should do "low and menial work." One late afternoon he came over and threw himself on the table where I was working, and cried: "How tired I am. How boring my work. We can't move around. And we must stand the whole time." I was more than moved, but at a loss for an appropriate word. Hopefully he could sense my sympathy. Ah Chiu's interests and plans are identical with these of Ah Ming.

Near Ah Chiu, Ah Ming and myself are Barry, Albert and Yuen Shang. Their job is to process the cloth and then use a powerful machine to cut it up - a very demanding task and requiring considerable skill. If the cloth does not arrive in time, they go home for the day and receive no pay. That happened a few times during my 8 weeks. Yuen Shang is a married man with 2 children. In one period of two weeks he was out of job for 5 days. Barry is a strikingly handsome young man. His home is not too far from the factory - a bus ride of about 25 minutes. However, if he does not wish to be caught in a traffic jam and consequently be late for work he must leave his home shortly after 7 - almost 2 hours before work begins.

Winnie is the eldest of a family of 5. She is bright, alert, optimistic, and a very eloquent speaker. However she dropped out after two years of secondary school. What a pity, I feel. With her character and

temperament she could exercise a most beneficial influence as a teacher of primary school children. One day when I mustered up courage to tell her all this she assured me that when at school she was quiet, passive, tame and with very little to say for herself. It was her encounter with society that brought out the other, and richer side of her character. Her family worships some Buddhist deity. But she has a brother who, when he was ill some years previously, was baptized a Catholic by the doctor. Because of this, Winnie and her parents feel that he should not worship with them. They want him to take a course in Catholic doctrine. However he steadfastly refuses to cooperate. "What should we do?" asks Winnie. I marvel at their high principles. This is not easily come by in modern Hong Kong.

Then there is Ah Chan - just 16. If ever a "sweet sixteen" existed surely it was this girl. She is the eldest of 4, and her family has just received notice informing them that they must move out of the city to make way for the Mass Transit Railway. Ah Chan's great interest is painting, for which she won a major prize in her primary school days. Alas she cannot cultivate this interest - every evening after work she attends an English class in order to improve her employment prospects in the city. On one pay day in the factory she came to me all excited - she had received an increase of HK\$1.00 (US\$0.20) a day.

At the end of the age scale is Ah Sam, the amah who does all the odd jobs around the place and works from 8am to 8pm. She lives in a small room with her family. Six years ago she applied for government housing, but so far there has been no response. She is number 89765 in the waiting list. Despite these cares she is unfailingly good-humored and quite an "institution". Every morning she greets me with a chirpy "good morning". She enquires about "good afternoon" and "good evening", and I try to teach her but with indifferent success. One morning she takes me to task for not responding to her "good morning" and I strongly insist that she must be mistaken. On reflection, though, I remember that on that particular morning I had been talking to three young ladies working on the sewing machines at the other end of the factory. Apparently I hadn't found those few minutes quite so boring.

I have mentioned our foreman. His manner is direct and at times somewhat brusque. But behind this there is softness and certain tenderness. Shortly after he was born his father had to leave for the

States, and has never been able to return. So they have never met, although they do speak to one another from time to time on the phone. When I asked him if my good friend Father Clancey could come and take some photos he said yes, and then - with a quiet smile - asked if Fr. Clancey could take one of himself and myself together.

There are almost one hundred workers in the factory, and I cannot possibly claim to have got to know them all. I have tried to introduce to you a few of those I did get to know. But by the end of 8 weeks I had fallen in love with the factory and all associated with it - administration not excluded. Were these feelings mutual? How was I accepted among them? The difficulties to be overcome in this delicate area were considerable. I was the only European in the whole factory. The vast majority of the workers were in the 17-23 age brackets. Most of my previous experience had been that of a university student chaplain, and thus I had grown used to language and ideas which, while fully accepted in a student milieu, would be a positive hindrance among workers. It is also useful to recall that factories are not constructed with the idea of promoting dialogue and facilitating smooth interpersonal relationships. In this context, therefore, the lunch breaks and the odd minute before work are very important. I tried to make full use of these opportunities, sometimes successfully and sometimes not quite so successfully. In general I am satisfied with the overall result. There is much to be recorded on the credit side, and the workers did in their own ways make me feel at home. But the debit side is not without its entries. One or two people in particular I would have liked to get to know, but after an unpropitious start it was just a case of a polite smile and formal nod which emphasizes the distance between two people rather than the closeness.

What are the interests and aspirations of these people? They are very basic: more money and a better job. Once I asked Ah Chiu if he had ever heard of "the rights of workers". "Who are we," he replied, "who just work for others to speak about the rights of workers?" My other acquaintances were similarly politically apathetic and socially unaware. I did however, come across two who were members of Communist Trade Unions. They did not seem, though, to be active or very deeply committed. I asked one of them why he joined. "To get some benefits," he replied, "and expresses my solidarity with workers." When he spoke of solidarity his eyes light up.

Surroundings

My working bench is at the far end of the factory, in a corner, facing a blank and dusty wall. Big nails protrude from this wall, but nothing hangs on them. To the side is a window. Sometimes Ah Ming spits through this window - the foodstalls are four storeys underneath. Behind me is a fan whose blades are caked with grime and dirt. Let us walk down the factory from my bench. First there is a long bench where Barry and his colleagues stretch the cloth and then use that powerful machine to cut it into its various shapes and sizes. The passage around this table is cluttered with small strips of cloth and anything that is not required on the table. The amah sweeps this passage once a day, but her task is an impossible one. The Labour Department lays down that “every workplace must be kept clean...accumulation of dirt and refuse must be removed daily from floors and benches... the floor of every workroom must be cleaned at least once a week, and all inside walls, partitions, and ceilings must be washed with hot water and soap every 14 months...” No one seems to know about these regulations, or even cares. Apparently they are just for the birds! Across from the long table is the packaging department. We are not half way down the factory yet. In the other half we have, on one side, about 50 sewing machines which hum with activity all day long and, on the other, the ironing department.

Before we leave the factory they let us listen to the radios. On the first day I had to listen to two, one in front and the other behind me. Both were turned to different stations and different programmes. I was annoyed, not because of the noise and confusion but rather because of the time, which was announced so frequently - far too frequently for me; it made me only more time-conscious and thus intensified the monotony. A few weeks later, though, I found myself one morning puzzled and uneasy. I searched for the reason. Yes, Ah Ming had not turned up, and his radio lay silent on the bench alongside me! The 8 weeks in the factory was my first rather full exposure to mass media. The programmes are listened to. I can still hear our amah giving a running commentary on one of the stories. I could not decide which was more entertaining - her comments or the story itself. One story in particular gripped us all. It came in installments each morning at 10 o'clock. Many years ago a Chinese couple had emigrated to California. Before doing so they had, because of their poverty, to sell one of their sons. In California they prospered and had now returned to Hong Kong

to look for their son. The search had reached a very remote village, and had narrowed down to two young men: one – admired and loved by all; the other - a wastrel. However, for a long time, the latter seemed to be their son, and they were willing to accept him. Not all the stories on the radio were quite so moving. I can now appreciate much more the 1971 Synod of Bishops' Reference to the media as forming, "not a new man, but a copy of man as he is."

Let us step outside the factory on to a narrow corridor and walk along the flights of stairs. I have never seen anyone clean these. On a few occasions I have seen them cluttered with big boxes waiting for export. I dread to think of what might happen if a fire broke out while they were there.

We are now on the street. A leisurely walk around the area will not take much more than an hour. Smoke belches out from the chimneys. Waste pours out of drainpipes on to the street. And no one seems to care. It is like a colossal slum, unimaginably filthy, the very antithesis of what the environmentalists plead for. A "Clean Hong Kong" Campaign has been mounted. One wonders where such a campaign could even begin here. I would like if some person or group could measure the coarsening effect of such surroundings on the mentality and psyche of the worker. In one of my after-lunch strolls I saw a man working among the dirt and refuse. I approach him. His features are haggard and emaciated, but the conversation comes easily. We met again the following day, and had lunch together. He came from China about 20 years ago. His wife is still there, with an only son whom he has never seen. His present job is to take care of the refuse from two factory buildings. The contract for this job is a lucrative one, but is held by a man who lives in the countryside and rears pigs. Once or twice a month he comes to town to pay Ah To. Ah To's main problem is drugs. He has been in prison several times. On one of his asides he mentions casually that in prison drugs freely circulate and can often be bought more cheaply there than outside in the city. On many occasions he says he has been framed by the police. They pass him a packet of drugs and then arrest him. If he refuses he is forced to accept 10 packages, and is then accused of trafficking in drugs. He admits that with the setting up of the Independent Commission Against Corruption two years ago the situation vis-à-vis the police has improved. At one period of his life he worked in the docks and earned a good wage. However at the end of the day he was expected to contribute half,

sometimes much more, of this money towards opium and other drugs. "If I refused," he said, "I need not report for work on the following day." His main problem now, he said, was to break his dependence on drugs. As he finished his story his eyes filled with tears.

On the outskirts of this factory area are two buildings which stand out and cannot but catch one's eye: a Catholic church and an attached secondary school. During my 8 weeks in the area, however, I did not come across any evidence of their presence in our milieu. Is this a sign of the Church's impact, or rather lack of impact, on the industrial world at its doorstep?

10th November, 1975

"Over the hump and into the second month." This is the first sentence in my diary for today. Three pages later it came to an end with, "What a day; of all the days so far this is the one that has passed most quickly."

Before work I had a chat with Martin and we arranged to get together for a cup of tea during the lunch break. There he tells his story. He had been among a Chinese community in a South East Asian city. He went to school each day from 5 am to 10 am. Then he returned home to help his father until 10 o'clock that night. After that he did his home work and retired shortly after midnight. This was his daily routine from the age of 11. He came to Hong Kong seven years ago. But life had not been kind to him and his ventures had not prospered. At one stage he left work in the evening, and after a meal somewhere in a cheap restaurant, walked the streets or went to a film until he returned "home" after 11 o'clock. At present he is ironing in our factory. Today he is ironing collars. For a dozen of these he is given 20 cents, and will iron about 200 dozen. This will bring him about 35 Hong Kong Dollars (US \$7). If the work is available and he is in good spirits he can sometimes earn 50 dollars a day. Work, however, is not always available, and good spirits are not on tap! Generally he can make about HK\$750 month (US \$150). Not too much for a man in his late twenties and hoping to get married soon. On our way back to the factory he mentions, casually, that he opens up only with those he trusts.

As I cut away at my patterns in the afternoon I realize - with a shock and a fright - that I have come to reject capitalism. This proposition

had been put to us at a student meeting in Kuala Lumpur 1973, but at that time I was not too ready for an answer. What had happened in the meantime? It wasn't that I had wrestled, consciously, with the question. However I had come to believe more strongly in the ideals of liberation, partnership, and service: liberation from oppression and dehumanizing structures; partnership at all levels - in ownership, profit-sharing and decision-making; service geared to the common good and the authentic needs of people rather than the maximization of profits and the increasing comfort of a small select group. It was with a jolt that I realized on this factory floor that in a society committed to these and related ideals capitalism must wither away. Rejection of capitalism does not mean that I have become a communist. No. Rather I see it as the task of those of us who live in the last decades of the twentieth century to travel new roads, explore new avenues, and struggle together to create a new world. These ideas were not unfamiliar to me, but I saw them with a greater sharpness and intensity in a garment factory on the afternoon of November 10, 1975.

As I left the factory that evening I talked to Albert. He is off to his night school where classes begin at 6:50 and end at 9:50. After that he will go home for his evening meal, have a bath, do some homework, and then retire. This is the daily schedule except when he has to work overtime at the factory.

As I turn the corner to get the bus a young man is standing in the gathering dusk distributing leaflets. I take one. It is an analysis of a recent "incident" with the police. I recognize the style and suddenly realize it comes from a group whose "underground" newspaper I regularly receive. I turn back and exchange a few words with the young man. He is an acquaintance of mine, who graduated a few years ago from the university with first place in all his subjects except one: one of the most brilliant results ever recorded there. He could now be occupying a chair in this university - a distinguished Doctor from a prestigious U.S university or graduate school. However, he, and one or two others, had jettisoned all this to work with the "down and outs" of Hong Kong society. I prayed for a little of this young man's commitment and courage.

About nine o'clock that night a hawker friend came to see me. A few days previously he had attempted suicide. I asked him why. A fellow hawker, a father of four children, he told me, had all his goods and

belongings confiscated by the police. He was left nothing, and in desperation committed suicide. My friend, in sympathy, tried to follow suit. "If the government continue to hound these hawkers who have no license," he shouts, "they are in fact being forced to rob and steal in an effort to make ends meet for themselves and their families."

Yes, November 10 had been a memorable day for me.

Last Day

I feared this day. When I gave notice the previous week I realized that leaving would be difficult. I asked the Lord not to make it too difficult.

Shortly after the beginning of work there was commotion at the back of the factory. A fire had broken out, but was quickly brought under control. I shudder to think of what might happen if this fire had spread. In many ways our place is a death trap, and we are not even minimally fire-conscious.

I had lunch with a few friends. We exchange addresses and telephone numbers and promise to meet again. Half an hour later I went to another food stall for a cup of tea with another group which included our amah, Ah Sam. Again we exchange addresses and telephone numbers. On our way back to work Ah Sam mentions that she will be returning to work the following day, Sunday. She is glad - "more money". I ask her if she knows when her weekly free day will be made up to her. Her answering look and its message are clear: "Father, please don't be so naïve. Don't you realize I must live?" I feel such questions of mine do not enhance my credibility.

During the afternoon I thank the foreman for being so understanding about my somewhat less than perfect work, and also for taking the risk of employing me. "I had no hesitation in taking you on, he replied, "as long as you were not looking for the wages of a European!" Again we exchange addresses and telephone numbers. A few days previously he had asked for this. A foreman is responsible for discipline on the factory floor, but I did not find this particular person a harsh demanding task-master. A few of my colleagues who had been in other factories spontaneously commented on the friendly atmosphere of our factory. With the foreman's permission I spent some time observing life at the other end of the factory - I had done so a few times this

week. Martin had a few bundles in front of him. "How many do you have here?" I ask. "About three dollars," is the reply. I time him and in exactly 2 minutes he irons dozen. He has been doing this all day. Several times he told me that he found his work quite boring. Further up the bench is another friend. He is ironing a complete dress. For doing one of these he will get 30 cents. I time him. It takes him about 4 minutes to finish one dress. In one day he can earn between 30 and 40 dollars. Today he is doing dresses. Tomorrow it may be some other garment. Across from us are the sewing machines. I watch one girl closely. She works with such speed that even looking at her makes me feels dizzy. She seems to be clipping three pieces of cloth together and then running them through her machine. I time her. It is all over in less than one minute. I would like to talk to her. But I do not know her. And she seems so intent. Would my intrusion be welcome? After all in Hong Kong "time is money". Around the corner there are two men putting buttons on to dresses. One of them had told me that in a day he can - with the aid of a machine - put on five thousand buttons. More nimble hands, he told me, can manage up to nine thousand.

I return to my bench. Literally the last lap. Teresa comes over and tells me how much she has been impressed by my 8 weeks in the factory. She has a heart of gold, and her care and concern are more than obvious. One Sunday morning earlier on I had breakfast with her brother and herself and tried to explain what I was doing. She is a "traditional" Catholic and had never heard of the priest-worker movement.

Finally it was 6 o'clock. The knowledge that I have to return a few days later with photos eases my departure. I elbow my way on to the bus and - as usual - have to stand. But today I am glad. My sentiments during the bus ride that evening were mixed. Despite the dirt and squalor of the area and all that it stood for in my mind I had come to love it and all the people in it, and now I was unashamedly lonely. I had resolved to devote the remaining years of my life to working with these people and the millions like them around the world. Hopefully I might in some small way be able to help some of them stand up and become authentically human. But above all I found myself repeating, "thank you, Lord. I made it." After a shower I read the "Te Deum": "In You, O Lord, have I trusted; never let me be confounded". So my "experiment" began where it ended - with an act of trust in God. On the night before I began I had asked myself if what I was about to do

was the biggest act of trust I had ever made in God, or just a crazy idea. Now I felt it was both! But most assuredly God had not let me down.

Evaluation and Reflections

I have no hesitation in describing my 8 weeks in the factory, and my 3 weeks looking for a job, as unquestionably one of the most unforgettable and valuable experiences of my life. This is not to say that it was an unqualified success. Its limitations are obvious even to the casual reader. It lasted for only 8 weeks, and each evening I returned to the comparative comfort of a Jesuit community. There was a workers' hostel in the area, but accommodation there is reserved for the workers in a certain very large factory. Only at the end of the 8 weeks did I think of renting a room or a bed space. This would have been difficult, but not impossible. Many more points could be recorded on the debit side.

I had set out not just merely to observe or gather new information, but rather - as I said in the beginning- "to experience in my own body and person, to some extent at least, the pains and tribulations of the less privileged among us". Some of these tribulations - their sense of insecurity, for instance, I could hardly even minimally experience. Others I did. Above all I experienced the crushing monotony of the work. Hour after hour, day after day, week after week, I cut those patterns. My mind and spirit seemed to go to sleep as I cut, so much so that I was happy, with a kind of vegetable happiness, as I worked at a particular pattern, and felt a certain reluctance when asked to change to another. There was no involvement of my inner self. I now understand what alienation means. I have tried to indicate that the work of the great majority in our factory is equally monotonous, if not even more so. But do they feel this monotony? Yes. It seems to me on reflection that one of the words I heard most frequently during my 8 weeks was the Cantonese word "moon", which can be translated by "dull", "boring", "monotonous". One worker said to me that at the end of a day he often felt "as if I am not myself, as if I don't know myself; my senses are almost numb, if not completely dead". The ordinary worker has to live with this situation for an extended period of time, if not a whole lifetime. How do they cope with it? They talk among themselves as they work, and above all they listen to the radio. Without the latter I am convinced that life would be next to impossible for many.

I find this monotony quite frightening. Pius XI was almost certainly referring to this when he spoke of “dead matter going out from the factory improved, whereas men are there corrupted and depraved”. Prolonged exposure to this type of work must inevitably crush the finest and noblest stirrings of the human heart, and reduce the person to a human automaton. I thought of an orange. Cut it in two and it looks so sweet and inviting. Squeeze the juice out of it, and it is fit for nothing but to be thrown on to the rubbish heap. In a similar way man is dehumanized by much of the work that he is given to do in today’s factory, and one wonders if we are living “in the dawn of creation or the senility of centuries”. We sometimes ask if there is life after death: perhaps we might turn the question around and ask if there is life before death. I am not trying to suggest that this monotony is the exclusive property of a factory. By no means. Unfortunately it is a widespread phenomenon. But perhaps we see it at its most frightening on a factory floor. I even feel that the carpenter of Nazareth did not have to experience this as he made tables and chairs for the people of the village.

How do we change all this? Volvo of Sweden has scrapped the assembly line, and now groups of workers assemble an entire car. Job satisfaction has increased to such an extent that the company has lost only one working day from strike action in the past 30 years. My mind races back to our garment factory. If we accept the Volvo approach then we are in fact opting for a very radical solution. The whole factory and its present set up must be jettisoned. I now understand what we mean when we speak of “the transformation of structures”. A most daunting task. But if the present age asks anything of us it asks above all for vision, courage, creativity, and the pioneering spirit.

Almost inseparably connected with this monotony is the vision of man implicit in most modern factories. Simply - he is an object. “I feel the lack of concern,” one worker from a nearby factory like our own said to me: “We use one another - the boss uses me to make money, and I use him to make a living”. One Pope stated that “society is made for man and not man for society”. Here, however I the contrary seem to hold: “man is made for the factory and not the factory for man”. “Capital disposes of man and his work life like bowls in the hands of a player.” However I think it was none other than Karl Marx who gave the most powerful and most terrifying description of this situation: “these labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a

commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market. Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarian has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workmen. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack that is required of him.” An appendage of the machine! As I read these words sitting on a bale of cloth during a lunch time break I felt that Marx must have worked in our factory! Some months ago ILO of Geneva came out with a report on the condition of young workers around the world. Many turn to drugs, it said, and a successful therapy for them demands affection and respect. This therapy is not complete, however, unless accompanied by some form of industrial democracy by means of which the worker has an effective say and vote in the decisions that affect his life. There must also be a sharing of profits. Only with the implementation of these and other reforms, however radical and far-reaching, can the worker cease to be an object, and stand up to become a person.

During my 8 weeks I learnt other lessons. I learnt, for instance, that despite all our fine talk about localization and decolonisation the “European boss” mentality is still very much with us. A foreigner from overseas like me working for HK\$16 a day does not make sense. On one pay day an elderly lady asked me how much I got. “16 dollars,” I replied. “American dollars no doubt,” was her comment!

Finally in this real life situation I seemed to be able to see things much more clearly and sharply than before. By comparison a certain haze or blur seemed to surround much of what I had previously learned in the classroom or through books. I am not suggesting that we burn our books to abandon our academic formation. But I do feel that this formation must be rounded off with a prolonged immersion in the harsh realities of life. A moment ago I quoted the words of Karl Marx. When I read them for the first time a few years ago in the quiet of my room I nodded my head in agreement. When I read them on a factory floor they hit me with the force of a thunderbolt.

I have been asked if I would recommend such an experience for others. I hope that the answer to this question is already clear. However it poses another rather disturbing question: why should we priests,

Sisters, and seminarians have to search for such an experience?

God

I have spoken about trust. A word about prayer.

St. Ignatius says that a Jesuit should be able “to find God in all things”. In the factory I did not find this difficult. In fact I found it easy to pray there, but in a very informal and rather disorganized fashion. It was certainly not according to the “book:” But I feel Ignatius would have completely approved. I found myself using all types of prayer, and praying for a great variety of intentions. Some intentions seemed to recur. The most frequently recurring one was the victims of torture around the world. I have tried to find an explanation for this. Was it the nature of my work? Or an article that I had just written about the topic? Perhaps it was a combination of both.

I completed my 8 weeks with a new understanding and appreciation of the priesthood. I had been given to understand that it might be an obstacle in my contacts with people. So for a short time I toyed with the idea of forging another identity for myself. But not for long. For one thing I could not have carried it off. But above all I felt that the priesthood of Christ in which I share should not be a hindrance. This was more than confirmed for me. In fact at the end of 8 weeks I felt it had been a positive help.

One problem did engage my mind for a week or two: how is God present in this situation and in these structures? The answer always seemed to elude me until one day the idea of “social sin” flashed across my mind. God was thus present here as He is in all sinful situations.

From here?

I have emerged from the world of industry, or the “business jungle”, as I was later to call it. Where do I go from here? I wish I could fully answer this question. However there are some things which I do see clearly. We must preach “in season and out of season” and help to create an awareness of the frankly inhuman situation in which many people live and work. At the moment neither management nor the worker are aware of these ugly realities. Perhaps after all the social

doctrine of the Church is, as one priest used to say, “The best kept secret of the Church in Asia!”

Secondly, I think we Christians, particularly those of us who are Religious, must try to set up “liberated areas”- small pockets where people can see and feel and touch the Kingdom of God, that kingdom of peace, justice and love.

Thirdly, I think I must regularly repeat this experience, and build it into the pattern of my life just as I have done with my annual retreat.

However, all these are only the first short steps in a long “exodus” march. At the moment I cannot see any further. But I am confident that prayer, discernment, scientific study, openness to the Spirit, sensitivity to the signs of the times and the aspirations of modern man, will prepare us for it.

Ours must be a pioneering spirit. Like Abraham we are being called on to leave ancestral homes and march through the wilderness into a rather unfamiliar land. It is futile for us to look for maps and guidelines. These do not exist, except perhaps in the most rudimentary form. We must make our own maps and guidelines as we stumble and struggle towards the New Canaan.

Yes, Lord, it is a good time to be alive. Let us accept the challenge with a daring trust. “In you, O Lord, we have trusted. Let us not be confounded.”

20. On Argentine, "Football Yes. Torture No", 1978

On November 25th 1976 Estela Maris Cornales and her husband Alerto were taken from their Buenos Aires flat by four armed men. Alberto is a doctor and in this capacity had helped Trade Unionists, children of the poor and political prisoners. He and his wife were driven to an unknown destination about twenty minutes from their flat. When Estela arrived at the detention centre she was handcuffed, and chains were put on her foot. She was then given a number - 103. While she was being closely questioned about herself and her activities she could hear her husband next door screaming "murderers". At the same time she could also hear the sound of water, and of loud music playing continuously. Several times that day her husband was tortured. At one stage she could hear a doctor observe, "he can't take any more if you want him to live." At the beginning of December about forty people were moved. One guard asked another where they were going and the reply was, "food for the fish." On Christmas Eve Estela was mysteriously released, but instructed not to go to Buenos Aires for some months, she now lives in Europe, but does not know if her husband is still alive.

The case of Estela Maria Cornalea is not an isolated one. Many readers will remember the story of Father Patrick Rice, an Irish missionary abducted in October 1976 while talking to a girl who had come to him for help. "You'll find the Romans were very civilized towards the early Christians when compared with what is going to happen to you", were the ominous words of his abductors. He was then beaten up and given the water torture. Later on when he pointed to his black eye and other signs of torture on his body he was told to say, "You fell downstairs. If you say anything else you'll be found in the river". After representation from the Irish Ambassador Father Rice was released. At a press conference in London he stated that he wished to focus attentions on the thousands of Argentineans who did not have the advantage of being a priest and a foreigner".

In 1975 a report by the International Commission of Jurists on the situation of lawyers in the country quoted a former President, Arturo Frondizi, as saying that "torture has become almost an institution in our country". Amnesty International in a 92 - page report released in early 1977, believes there is overwhelming proof that torture has become official policy. The most common forms of torture are, the picana, used for applying electric shocks to all parts of the body, even to its most

sensitive parts, the “submarine” - the victim’s head is immersed in water to produce a sensation of drowning; the “duty submarine” - asphyxiation with a plastic bag; “Parrot’s Perch” - the victim is given electric shocks while suspended from a bar; the “Horse” - the victim is made to endure long periods astride a sharp, outing edge of wire with his legs off the ground; rape-including multiple rape, and rape in the presence of relatives; use of rats on wounds and genitals.....

Torture is not the only grim reality of life in Argentina today. There are also the political prisoners and the mysterious disappearances. Early in 1977 Amnesty estimated that there were 5000-6000 prisoners. Later that year the Government admitted that 3067 were held in official custody. An Amnesty news release of March 1978 reckoned the real number to be nearer 8000. What about the treatment meted out to these prisoners? At least a half have not been charged, and quite a number have been held in detention since 1974. Article 18 of the Argentina Constitution states that the prisons of the nation should be “for the security and not for the punishment of the prisoners”. Evidence strongly suggests that the realities of prison life are considerably different. One young farm labourer described that while one of the guards was beating a prisoner with his gun it accidentally went off and killed another guard. A group of prisoners in another prison stated that “in the last two weeks of April 80 per cent of the prisoners were beaten”. A nuclear physicist Senor Maximo Pedro Victoria was savagely beaten during a prison transfer in September 1976. On other occasions prisoners have been removed and summarily shot. When questioned about this the usual reply of the authorities is to say that they were shot while attempting to escape. The mysterious disappearances are, perhaps, an even more frightening phenomenon. Accurate statistics are of course, hard to come by. A figure frequently quoted is 15,000 disappearances over a period of two and a half years.

An action group in England reckons that 15 people disappear each day in Argentina. Writs of *habeas corpus* are filed. In the last week of May 1976, 20 such writs were filed in the central federal courts of Buenos Aires alone. In evaluating this figure we must keep in mind that lawyers who file such writs are often discouraged from doing so, and not infrequently harassed. It would also seem that a considerable number of those people who disappear are unofficially executed. On December 8th last year Alice Domonta, a French Sister, was arrested as she left an ecumenical Church service held on behalf of missing political prisoners.

Two days later another Sister, Leonie Duquet, was also arrested. Both Sisters were working among the poorest of the city, some of whom were wives and children of previously arrested men. The Government tried to explain the disappearance of the two sisters by producing pictures suggesting they were victims of leftist guerillas. The guerillas, however, out rightly denied these allegations. According to a Swedish newspaper the bodies of the two Sisters were discovered on a beach at the end of January. The French Government is pressing the Argentinean Government for further information about the two Sisters.

A volume of repressive legislation makes such atrocities possible. In September 1974 the Security Act was passed. Severe prison sentences can be handed down for any person who attempts or encourages by any means the alteration or suppression of the established order. In November of the same year a State of Siege was declared. According to the Constitution this means internal unrest or external aggression that endangers the functioning of the Constitution, and in the meantime constitutional guarantees are suspended. The Right of Option by which a person held in preventive detention could opt to leave the country is now at the discretion of the executive power. Legislation of March 1976 authorizes a sentence of up to ten years imprisonment for anyone offending the "dignity and decorum" of military personnel, security officers and police. In the same legislation the age of criminal responsibility is reduced to 16 years. This age limit also applies to the death penalty. Further legislation of the same year empowers the police or armed forces, when investigating crimes of subversion, to arrest anyone on suspicion alone "whenever there are strong indications or half-conclusive proofs of guilt". This procedure will be known as "summary pre-trial". In April 1976 the press was muzzled when the Government forbade "the publication of all news items countering terrorist activities, subversion, abductions or the discovery of bodies, unless officially announced." The new President informed a group of English journalists that a terrorist "is not just someone who carries a gun or a bomb, but also those who spread ideas that are contrary to Western and Christian civilization".

Without such legislation, the Government said, the guerilla movement in the country cannot be contained. Guerillas are indeed active in Argentina. The best known is the Montenegro, a left wing organization which began to operate in 1969. At one time it was supported by Peron himself, but when he became President he disowned them. In December

1975 one of their leaders, Roberto Auiteo, was abducted and disappeared. Another guerilla organization is the armed wing of the Trotskyist Workers Revolutionary Party. Since the coup of March 1976 these two groups have claimed responsibility for at least ten different acts of violence, one of them being the shooting on August 19th of General Omar Carlos Actis, head of the State committee organizing the 1978 World Cup. Guerilla activity however, is not confined to the left. On the extreme right there is the Argentina Anti-Communist Alliance (AAA). Some of Father Price's interrogators said they were from the AAA. This is not the only evidence which suggests they work hand in hand with the police and military.

Such extensive guerilla activity suggests a country more than usually disturbed.

Since 1930 there have been twelve coups in Argentina. In 1955 the Peron government collapsed, and between that and 1963 there were five different Presidents (two from the military and three civilians). For the next seven years three military Presidents ruled the country in an authoritarian fashion. In 1969 unemployment and unpopular economic policies sparked an uprising in Cordoba in which 20 civilians were killed. In 1973 elections were held in which Doctor Campora was elected President, but after less than two months in office he resigned in favour of Peron. When the latter died in July 1974 he was succeeded by his widow and second wife, Marina Estela Marinez de Peron. Corruption increased and in 1974 inflation was at 335 percent. Small wonder that in March 24th 1976 there was a coup and General Jorge Rafael Videla became the new President. The latter promised stability and total war against subversion. True-inflation was reduced, but at 170 per cent it is still the highest in the world. Strikes have been declared illegal. For the first three months after the coup twice as many political murders were reported as in the three months before the coup. The number of arrests and abductions mounted, as also did the number of allegations of torture. Unquestionably the history of Argentina in the last few decades has been a very turbulent one. Such a situation provides a fertile breeding ground for massive violations of human rights.

Deeply disturbed about events in Argentina, Amnesty International, in November 1976, sent a delegation to the country. The members of this delegation were Lord Avebury, a member of the British House of Lords

and of the Human Rights Parliamentary Commission; Roberto Drinen, a Jesuit priest and a member of the House of Representatives in the United States; Patricia Feaney from the International Secretariats of Amnesty. 20 plain clothes policemen were assigned to “protect” these three delegates, but on many occasions intimidated a number of people who spoke to them. On an official visit to two refugee camps the delegates were accompanied by 16-armed men. The ensuing dialogue with the refugees was not a strikingly fruitful one! The delegations met a number of high-ranking officials, but unfortunately were not able to secure an interview with General Videla. One day Lord Avebury visited Villa Devote, a women prison in the province of Buenos Aires. There he spoke to Ana Gonzalez who told him how she was tortured. After that she was left for a period of 18 days so that - she claimed - the marks of the picana would no longer be visible on her body. When Lord Avebury was retelling this story to a group of officials one of them intervened: “her story cannot be true because everyone knows that the marks left by the picana last more than 18 days”. This was indeed a most indiscreet but highly revealing remark. We can only conclude that the picana is a familiar utensil in the prison world of Argentina. Within the country many brave men and women are not afraid to stand up and be counted. Unfortunately, however, they are speedily eliminated or disappear. On March 24th 1977, the first anniversary of the coup, Rodolfo Walsh, one of the Argentina’s best-known investigative journalists, wrote a letter to the Junta denouncing the many violations of human rights. The closing sentence of this letter is very moving : “these are the thoughts which I wished to share with the members of the Junta on the first anniversary of your disreputable government, without hope of being listened to, in the certainty of persecution, but faithful to the commitment I made a long time ago to bear witness in difficult times.” On the following day a group of armed civilians machine-gunned the front of his house, ransacked his library, and took away Walsh at gunpoint. Since then he has not been seen. In January 1978 Le Monde reported that since the coup 29 journalists had been killed, 40 had disappeared, 70 had been imprisoned, and 400 had gone into exile.

Argentina is a predominantly Catholic country. However even Church officials who opt to speak out are not exempt from summary treatment. On Sunday June 26th 1976 a Parish Priest in Buenos Aires spoke against the death penalty as a violation of human rights. In the early hours of the following Sunday a young man living in the area noticed a Peugeot with four occupants in suspicious circumstances. He reported to the

police, but his information was ignored. He returned to the spot where he saw a police car approach and exchange words with the occupants of the Peugeot. The police car then drove off. The young man returned home, but continued to observe the house of the Parish priest. Later he saw men entering and leaving the house, and at about 2:55 am he saw the Peugeot drive away quickly. The next day one of the boys of the parish knocked at the door and when he received no answer went in through a window to find all its occupants - two priests and three seminarians - shot dead. On one of the carpets in the room a slogan had been painted, "for corrupting the virgin minds of the young," and chalked on one of the doors were the words "for our dead comrades in Federal Security". The chalk slogans were immediately erased by the police when they arrived.

Such are the gruesome realities of life in Argentina today. On the occasion of the World Cup, Amnesty International will mount an international campaign to focus the attention of the world on these realities. Each national section of Amnesty is expected to participate in this campaign and elicit as much local support as possible. There is no wish whatsoever on the part of Amnesty to boycott the World Cup, and so the motto of the campaign is, "football yes, torture no"

A Spaniard Pedro de Mendoza, is regarded as the founder of Buenos Aires. It is said that when one of his followers saw the site of the future city he exclaimed, "quo buenos aires" (what good airs") this is how the city is said to have got its name. Even today Buenos Aires and Argentina have a luxurious abundance of such airs. The charms and graces of the country and its people are legendary. And rightly so. Its outstanding achievements and its contributions to the rest of the continent, particularly with regard to education, are also well known. Let us generously salute these achievements. But neither let us forget that frightening array of skeletons in its cupboard.

21. Democracy, 1991

Introduction

In 1986 the world saw the emergence of “peoples power” in the Philippines. In the closing months of 1989 we saw a similar phenomenon in Eastern Europe. This year will be truly unique year for democracy in Hong Kong. Already we have had elections to the District Boards and to the Urban Council. In September will come the climax when geographical constituencies will for the first time, elect members to the Legislative Council. So it seems an appropriate time to reflect on democracy and its implications.

Democracy: history and developments

“Democracy” is not really an English word. It is rather a combination of two Greek words which mean “rule by the people”. We saw this type of democracy emerging in the little city state of Athens. All the citizens gathered together at certain times to discuss, and the vote on matters related to their city. This was possible because it was indeed a small city. Aristotle in his “Politics” wryly comments on this type of government: “a feast to which many contribute is better than a dinner provided out of a single purse... the guest will judge better of a feast than the cook”. But we must not look on this early Athenian form of democracy as something idyllic - the slaves were not allowed to vote.

Society developed, and so did democracy. The Athenian democracy would be quite impractical in a complex national state. We can identify milestones in this development: the Magna Carta; the French Revolution; the American Declaration of Independence, and Lincoln’s famous “government of the people, by the people, for the people”. These were indeed giant steps forward, but the democracy which they introduced was not perfect - only those with property had the right vote. In 1948 came the historic “International Bill of Human Rights”. Article 21 of this Bill boldly affirms: “the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage.”

But democracy is always growing. We cannot presume that parliament and elected representatives can be the final and definitive expression

of the democratic ideal. By no means. The frontiers of democracy are always being extended. So today we have trade unions, student unions, parish councils, and peoples organizations. In still more recent years we have seen “Peoples Power”. “Peoples Power”: I find this title of considerable significance. “Peoples power” is still almost a direct translation of “democracy”. But quite spontaneously “democracy” was passed over and “peoples power” was opted for. Perhaps they felt that “democracy” was a jaded word, cheapened by extensive and indiscriminate usage, and no longer capable of expressing this altogether new experience.

Democracy will continue to grow and develop, and here I would like to indicate one particular area. In this part of the world democracy is sometimes seen as a Western import reflecting Western values. There is truth in this criticism. So it is our challenge to see that democracy can more fully reflect Asian forms, Asian values and Asian realities.

Democracy works on certain assumptions:

It assumes that the basic needs of life have been adequately provided for. One cannot expect a man with no roof over his head and no food on his table to be greatly concerned with the question of “one man-one vote” It also assumes that people are reasonably well-educated, basically decent, considerate of the rights of others, and capable of governing themselves

It believes in liberty, individual and group liberty. Perhaps not all will fully agree with this. Even the great philosopher Plato said on one occasion that people, if given too much liberty, will act like “peasants at a feast”.

Democracy does not claim to be the perfect form of government. Like all systems it has its inbuilt dangers, and sometimes its work is sloppy and inefficient. However it is significant that while other forms of government have disappeared democracy has survived two world wars.

Hong Kong and Democracy

Let us first look at the early years.

In January 1841 Captain Elliot occupied Hong Kong, “that barren island with hardly a tree on it,” and later described in an English newspaper as a “euphemious synonym for a place not mentionable to ears polite”. Elliot appointed men to help him administer Hong Kong. Street names - Caine Road, Johnson Road, Pedder Street - still commemorate these men. In 1843 a constitution was given to Hong Kong providing it with a Legislative Council(LegCo) and an Executive Council(Exco). The powers of these Councils were subject to the Queen. At first each Council had only three members –all high-ranking officials. In 1850 it was decided to add two unofficials to the Legislative Council. David Jardine and another prominent businessman were appointed. In 1858 Chinese were allowed to be members of juries and to qualify as lawyers. In the same year meetings of the LegCo was thrown open to the public. In 1880 came the appointment of the first Chinese to the LegCo: Ng Choy. He had been born in Singapore and educated at the present Queen’s college. He was the first Chinese to practice law at the English Bar and the Hong Kong Bar. The following year saw the appointment of an Indian, E.R. Belilios, to be member of the Council. In 1894 the British community tried to wrest control of the LegCo but the English government refused. In 1929 membership of the Council was increased to 17: 9 officials and 8 unofficials. 3 of the unofficials were to be Chinese.

The LegCo got its first unofficial in 1880, but the ExCo had to wait until 1896, when two leading businessmen were appointed. One of these was K.K Bell-Irving of Jardine, Matheson and Co. In 1926 the first Chinese, Sir Shouson Chow, was appointed. It was in the same year that the leaders in the New Territories formed the Heung Yee Kuk.

The present Urban Council began in 1883 as the “Sanitary Board”. Fever and dysentery were prevalent in Hong Kong, so there was need for such a Board. In 1935 the Board was reconstituted as the Urban Council with a membership of 5 officials and 8 unofficials. Two of the unofficials were elected by those on the jury list. The other 6, 3 of whom were Chinese were appointed by the Governor. There was a break in elections until 1952 when 2 elected unofficial members were added to the Council. The Reform Club and the Civic Association came into being around this time.

So much for the early years of Hong Kong. To us who live in the last decade of the twentieth century it seems a very backward society. But it is sobering to consider what people will say of us 50 years from now!

Let us move into more modern times.

In 1966 there were riots. It is interesting for us Catholic to recall that the young man whose lone protest at the Star Ferry in some ways sparked these riots was a former Mass server at one of our city parish churches. These riots were followed by a Commission of Enquiry which stated that considerably much more attention should be paid to the young people of Hong Kong. In 1967 there were more riots, this time more widespread and much more serious. After some months peace and order were restored. But the riots did reveal a big gap between government and the people. So we saw the setting up of City District Offices, staffed in most cases by young enthusiastic government servants. Their task was to help bridge that gap.

1969 was an interesting year. In June a group of 18 people – academics, lawyers, local politicians, businessmen - published a letter decrying the lack of : “democratic representation”, appealing for a “total reappraisal of the present situation”, and requesting “full internal local self-government”. This letter was published on June 4th- exactly 20 years before the events of Tiananman Square! Later in the same summer the student movement which was already sweeping Europe and American came to Hong Kong. Students sat on the steps of a post-secondary College protesting the summary dismissal of 12 students. A group of students in this College had been trying resolutely to build up a genuinely independent student union. For the next few years the focus was on students as they raised issues like the status of the Chinese language, Tiu Yu Toi... Youth was expressing itself, and honest open-minded people were beginning to listen. I recall one student of Sociology making a penetrating analysis of the then LegCo Each member was named and then followed a list of the Companies of which he was a Director, or with which he was associated. The conclusion was a devastating indictment of Hong Kong society. His lecturer advised him not to publish the paper - it would upset too many people and probably affect the student’s future career. Later such a mode of government was described as “government of the rich, by the rich, for the rich.”

1971 had its highlights. Hong Kong had a new Governor, Sir Murray Maclehoose. The normally staid and very proper Sunday Post herald (now defunct, but at that time the Sunday version of the Morning Post) greeted his arrival with an editorial headed - "out with that plumed hat". One of the first thing he should do, the editorial said, "is to toss out this feathered monstrosity". It then went on to refer to "too much decision making behind closed doors by faceless men". It also commented on the LegCo: "Government does not have to be a stuffy, dull, once a mouth Legislative Council reading contest". In November the editor of the Far Eastern Economic Review wrote an open letter to the new Governor. Referring to the unofficials he asked that "the number of silent knights who represent nobody but themselves and the companies with which they have connections, "should be kept to a minimum". Later in the same month a high-ranking member of the Government, in a talk to students of United College, referred to the "tripod of consents" on which "Hong Kong's stability rests": the consent of the Hong Kong people, the consent of China, and the consent of Britain". Remove any of these three, was his message, and the whole structure is endangered.

1975 saw the birth of a "movement for representative Government". Its aims were, 1) Direct election of unofficial member to the Leg. Co. 2) direct elections of an Urban Council with greatly expanded authority 3) broadening of the franchise. This movement aroused considerable interest, generated much support, but then faded away. In the same year a Legislative Councilor made news headlines by saying "no" T.S. Lo voted "no." to the Bill setting up the Mass Transit Corporation. The last recorded "no" had been in 1960 - 15 years previously!

In 1976 a Catholic priest, Father McGovern, was appointed to the Legislative Council. He had spent many years with workers, and his appointment was seen a recognition of the grass-roots, and an attempt to move away from the image of big business. He made the headlines when he turned up for the opening session that October, not in a comfortable limousine, but on his scooter!

Fr. McGovern's sense of justice, his eloquence, ready wit and fearlessness made the LegCo a much livelier gathering. His untimely death in 1984 was a considerable loss.

Let us jump to more recent times.

1984 was a memorable year. The single event dominated all others was the “Draft Agreement” which was signed in Beijing on September 26th. Hong Kong would enjoy a “high degree of autonomy”. In the meantime Hong Kong had begun to talk about elections to the Leg Co. In January Lydia Dunn had declared herself in favour of such elections. In July the Government published a Green Paper, “The Future Development of Representative Government in Hong Kong”. The White Paper that followed in November stated that 12 unofficial members would be elected by an electoral college, and another 12 by functional constituencies. But the way was being left open for further development. Earlier in the year China’s chief representative in Hong Kong, Mr. Xu Jia Tun warned against Hong Kong’s becoming “an independent political entity”. He also regretted that some professional people wanted to leave Hong Kong. He added, though, that if they found life abroad too difficult then Hong Kong would welcome them back.

May 1987 saw another paper on representative government, and at the same time a survey office was set up to collect the views of the public. The debate that followed was often stormy and acrimonious. Hong Kong Observers described the Green Paper as a “smokescreen thrown up to confuse rather than consult...a transparent attempt to channel public opinion away from the possibility of direct elections”. Many months later a Gallop pollster said the surveys conducted by government were “deeply flawed”. LegCo spent two days debating the possibility of holding direct election in 1988. At the end of the debate when the vote was taken 17 were for, 21 against, and 8 remained neutral. The White Paper in February of 1988 made a few cosmetic changes, but did promise that in 1991 10 members would be directly elected from geographical constituencies.

Another notable phenomenon of more recent times is the growth of political groups. Let us also note that a majority of these use “democracy” to describe themselves and their objectives.

This year Hong Kong is about to take its first tentative steps into a more democratic society. The development over ten years has not been rapid. But there has been development. Let us note one encouraging factor: some years ago, “Democracy”, “LegCo elections”, “political

parties”... were highly dangerous words. Today they have become part of our everyday vocabulary, and we now live easily with such concepts and realities. Let us praise the Lord for this progress. But above all let us pray, and strive, that it continues.

Democracy and the Church

Last June, while I was traveling through Canada, a group of Chinese from Hong Kong asked me to speak to them about democracy. I began by asking them if they thought the Church was a democratic organization. Their answer was a rather loud guffaw. Presumably many Catholics around the world would react in the same way. The Church is not seen as a highly democratic organization. And it must be admitted that in some very important aspects, by its very nature, it cannot be democratic. One example. We believe in revealed truth i.e. Truth that comes to us from above, from God Himself. This truth can develop, but no consensus - however deep and universal - can change this truth. However there are many democratic elements in the Church. The election of Mathias, the successor of Judas, seems to have been quite democratic. And we recall how Ambrose came to be Bishop. The previous Bishop had died, and the people had come together to discuss who would be his successor. It was a noisy session, and they seemed to be getting nowhere. Ambrose, a kind of local constable, heard the noise and went inside to enquire. “We are looking for a Bishop”, the people said, “and we can’t find one”. There was a silence, and then a child pointed to Ambrose and said, “You will be our Bishop”. At once there was loud applause to express the consensus that had suddenly emerged. Ambrose was at that time a catechumen, not yet baptized. Very soon he received this sacrament, and after that was ordained a priest and Bishop. He went on to become a saint and one of the great pastoral Bishops of the Church. The Holy Spirit was certainly at work in this “election”. And we must admire his democratic approach.

Then there is the phenomenon of “vox populi”, the “voice of the people” an integral part of the canonization process in the early Church. A person died with the reputation of sanctity, and without any prompting from the Parish priest or Bishop a cult sprung up. People spontaneously prayed to him, visited his grave... this cult was no mere passing phenomenon. So in due course this person was accepted by the Church as a Saint. The “voice of the people” had been heard.

We spoke about revealed truth - often defined by a Pope. But the Pope does not arbitrarily define this truth. First of all he consults the Bishops of the world to find out if the people believe such a truth. Having satisfied himself on this he gets his theologians to draw up a dogma which he goes on to promulgate solemnly. Let us give one example - the Assumption of Mary into Heaven. Between 1870 and 1940 many Bishops, priests, Religious, and more than 8 millions lay people had formally requested the definition of this dogma. In 1946 Pope Pius XII sent a questionnaire to all the Bishops of the world asking them: "Do you judge that the Bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary can be proposed and defined as a dogma of faith? And do you along with your clergy and faithful, desire it?" The replies to the questions were almost unanimous and in November 1950 the doctrine was solemnly defined. So even in this process the voice of the people is heard. The Holy Spirit speaks to us through them.

At some stages in the life of the Church these democratic elements were, somehow or other, largely forgotten. Things were held with a tight rein, and the exercise of authority could be quite arbitrary. The Superior came to be seen as the "Boss man". I remember a parish in my own country where the parish priest appealed to the people for funds to do some necessary building. In the congregation were Catholics with expertise in money matters. They offered their services. The parish priest was delighted until these people asked for a run down on the parish finances. All cooperation stopped at this point. There is the story - apocryphal no doubt - of the young Sister who opened the door of the convent one morning to take in the daily newspaper delivered by the messenger from the local store. In an effort to make conversation he asked, "Do you think it will be fine today, Sister?" to which Sister replied, "I don't know. Let me ask Reverend Mother."

Then came Vatican II with its emphasis on dialogue, coresponsibility, and participation. A few random selections from this Council. Vatican I had spoken at length about the Pope. Vatican II complemented this by speaking about the Bishops: "Just as by the Lord's will, St. Peter and the other apostles constituted one apostolic college, so in a similar way the Roman Pontiff as successor of St. Peter, and the Bishops as successors of the apostles, are joined together." In "Gaudium et Spes" when the council speaks about labour it states that "the workers themselves should have a share also in controlling these institutions either in person or through freely elected delegates. These institutions

refer to the places where decision are made concerning the life of the worker. In the same document the Council speaks about political participation and reminds citizens of their rights and duty to vote”.

The impact of Vatican II on the life of the Church has been immense. Now we see everywhere Episcopal conferences, Senates of priests, parish Councils...no final decisions can be taken without previous extensive consultation. One Religious Superior told me that the task of the Superior in a post Vatican II Church is now much more demanding. However he went on to say that extensive consultation produced happier men.

In 1971 Pope Paul VI in one of his Apostolic letters,” Octogesimo Adveniens” spoke about modern aspirations. “The aspiration to equality and the aspiration to participation,” he says, “are two forms of man’s dignity and freedom.” He went on to speak about the need for a “greater sharing in responsibility and decision-making”, and the need to devise “modern forms of democracy”. What a challenge to us to create new forms of democracy.

The Church favours dialogue and a democratic approach to life. Why? We might suggest two reasons: 1) today we are more conscious of the dignity of the human person. To make a decision without previous consultation is to trample on the dignity of that person, and often ride roughshod over deep feelings and emotions. Previous consultation, on the other hand, enhances that dignity, strengthens self-respect, and promotes integral human growth 2) we speak much about the signs of the times and the aspirations of modern man.

God speaks to us through these signs, and one of the signs of our times is a strong desire for more participation.

Democracy and the Hong Kong Church

Let us first of all take an “ad extra” view of our Church, looking at it in relation to the society in which we live.

Last October Cardinal Wu issued his pastoral letter on the 1991 elections. He urged the Catholics of Hong Kong to register as electors, to cast their vote, and to consider running for election. Parishes and Diocesan institutions, he said, should strive to form Catholics in this

area of life. At the end of the same year the Church began its 150th anniversary celebrations, and for this occasion a special prayer was composed. Among other things we find ourselves in this prayer asking God to help us build “a free and democratic society” In Hong Kong.

We recall the Government’s Green Paper on representative government in May 1987. In July the Bishop issued another letter urging the Catholics to read this paper and express their views. Responding to this appeal one Parish Priest told his parishioners, jokingly, that for the immediate future penances in Confession would be based on the Green Paper: for a venial sin he would have to read one chapter and for a mortal sin he would have to read the entire paper! During the same summer, on one particular day, almost 800 Catholics took over the front page of the Ming Pao asking that all members of the LegCo be elected, and that we begin in 1988 with the election of a certain number. In September the Justice and Peace Commission of the Diocese asked for the complete democratization of the LegCo. This should be done gradually, they said, over the following ten years. They went on spell out the details. Later in the same month a forum under Catholic auspices was held at the Diocese Centre which was addressed by priests, laity, and prominent pro-democracy activities. Three of the latter were Catholic, and one was a Protestant.

Even some of our non-Christian friends are critical of such an involvement. In December 1986 a certain Xin Weisi published an article in Ming Pao about the relationship between religion and politics. It is not known who this person is, but it is generally felt that he was close to some people at the New China News Agency and therefore might represent their thinking. He referred to the prominence of the Churches, particularly of some Churchmen, in the political life of Hong Kong. He felt that all religious should distance themselves from politics just like Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. For a fuller understanding of this article, it is important to recall the decisive role of the Church in the phenomenon of Peoples Power in the Philippines just a few months before the publications of the article. Xin’s article generated a very lively discussion, and in February of 1987 he followed up with a second article. In March Ming Pao itself featured a summary article in which it spoke about the fears of China - the 500,000 Christians of Hong Kong could become a political force.

This thrust of the Church into the world of politics is comparatively recent, and even some of our Catholics are puzzled. But we must remember that the Church is an incarnation Church, whose mission is to be present at the heart of the world, identifying itself with “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age”. So if we are authentic Christians we cannot avoid some political involvement. And let us recall that “politics” is, like “democracy” a Greek word which simply means “the concerns of a citizen.” A quite innocuous word. Admittedly there are dangers in the involvement which it implies and we must also confess that mistakes have been made by over-zealous practitioners. But danger and the fear of mistakes are no reason for shying away from such a commitment. We will also have to put much more emphasis on formation to ensure that this thrust is really understood, genuinely accepted, and fully integrated into the life of the Christian community.

Let us now take an “ad intra” view of our Church, looking at its own inner life. In my view a considerable degree of democracy is already being exercised. A few examples. We are now familiar with the Cardinal’s “March into the Bright Decade”. That started off with a group of some 20 people - men and women, lay and clerical, presided over by a layman, hammering out a consultation paper. In May 1985 this paper was circulated in the Diocese, and between then and October it was discussed at all levels. Views were submitted and then synthesized. A report and recommendations were sent to the Cardinal. Finally in May 1989 came the Pastoral Exhortation. A more recent example - the booklet on the “Permanent Diaconate”. This has already been circulated for discussion at the grassroots, and it is hoped a final decision will be made before the end of the year. More examples could be given.

A comment on parish councils. I find the new Canon somewhat disappointing. Canon 537 empathically states that “in each parish there is to be a finance committee,” The preceding Canon speaks about parish councils but much less emphatically: “if, after consulting the Council of Priests, the Diocesan Bishop considers it opportune, a Pastoral Council is to be established...This Council has only a consultative vote”. In a future revision of the Code hopefully these canons will be changed. Almost every parish in Hong Kong has a parish council. But an analysis of their structure, electorate, and scope of actual authority could be very revealing. It might remind us of some

Trade Unions which, while nominally representing the worker, in fact are controlled - sometimes very subtly - by the boss.

At this point I would like to share two experiences. In a parish where I served for some years, we set up a parish council where the parish priest had no veto power, and where the final say rested with the council. At this level the parish priest had one vote just like the other councilors. At first this was experimental - for one year, but at the end of the year we felt it could be made permanent, and we did so. But even in this set up there is danger of subtle manipulation. The councilors must be mature, and the parish priest must be aware of his own tendencies and possible desire to influence events. He must hold a tight rein on these desires, and must be willing to listen, not merely with his ears, but also with his mind and heart. The second experience. It was felt that the times of the Sunday Masses should be changed. So on one Sunday we explained the situation to the people. We gave them one week to reflect on the problem, discuss it among themselves, and pray about it. The vote on the following Sunday was not to be consultative, but decisive. A large majority voted for the proposed change, but a significant minority voted against. It was a genuine exercise in full democracy. The community proved mature and rose to the occasion. As I look back on this event I admire the process much more than the decision which it produced.

The most effective way of building up democracy in the Church will be by means of the BCC (Basic Christian Communities) or small faith communities. The Hong Kong Church in its "March into the Bright Decade" has committed itself to this most challenging of ideals. This letter stresses the value of "collective leadership" and the need to introduce "democratic elements". It then describes in some detail what these communities should be: "self-subsisting, self-governing, self-propagating". They must even have the ability "to supply their own pastoral leaders". When these communities have been set up we can then speak of a "people's Church", a "people's theology", a "People's liturgy", a "People's spirituality". "Vox populi", the voice of the people, will be heard once again, loudly strongly, and clearly. Such a church will be truly democratic, but still authentically Church. In the words of the well-known Latin American Theologian Jon Sobrino we will have "re-created the Church".

Conclusion

In this article much has been made of development. Doctrine develops. So does democracy. We have seen how democracy developed at the world level, in Hong Kong, and in the church. We are confident that the Lord of History is at work in this process, molding it, forming it, shaping it, so that the Kingdom of Justice, love, and peace is built up. Far from seeing its final stages may be we are just witnessing its first tentative steps.

The Church favours dialogue and a democratic approach to life, and we have seen the reasons for this: the dignity of the human person, the signs of the times, and the aspiration of modern man. We cannot, however, claim that the Church is in itself and by its very nature a fully democratic organization. But it has in the bosom of its being many democratic elements. Let us, while remaining authentically Church and faithful to the Spirit, use these elements to the full.

22. Social Involvement, Christ the Worker Parish, 1993

Introduction

Christ the Worker Parish came into existence in 1967. No one knows for certain the exact day or month - even the official records for this event have been lost!

The name of the parish is significant. It reflects the spirit of the Vatican Council which had just ended - a desire to dissociate the Church from any suggestion of triumphalism, and instead strongly associate itself with the more marginalized members of Hong Kong society. And according to its first Parish Priest, Fr. Howard Trube, 90 per cent of the parishioners were ordinary workers who lived and toiled at the mercy of factory bosses. Labours legislation at that time was still minimal. In addition, memories of the 1967 riots, sparked by a labour dispute, were still fresh in the minds of all. And so the name of the new parish, especially its Chinese translation, was regarded as quite daring.

I was assigned to this parish in the early summer of 1978. Originally I was to spend one year there deputizing for a priest who was on study leave. However one year became eleven years, and for seven of these I was the Parish Priest. This was my first experience of pastoral work in a parish. Before that my main work had been as chaplain to university and post-secondary students. But I was chaplain during the eventful, and often stormy, years of the student movement. This experience deepened my commitment to social justice and human rights. Shortly before going to Christ the Worker parish I had spent two periods as a worker priest, and in fact had seriously thought of permanently committing myself to this mission. However after a period of prayer and discernment I felt that this was not for me.

Early Days

Being in a completely new situation I was determined to observe, tread warily, bide my time, and not rush into things. However early on I had to make a difficult decision. 1978 was the year of the World Cup, and it was being held in Argentina. At that time the human rights record of Argentina was very very bad. Under an oppressive government there were flagrant abuses of human rights, and torture

was common. Amnesty International - of which I was a member - had mounted a campaign under the slogan, "Football yes, Torture no." On the Sunday of the final should I preach about this? The vast minority of the parishioners could by no means be considered as progressive where questions of social justice and human rights were concerned. I wrestled with this problem and finally decided to take a calculated risk. I carefully selected examples which focused on Church people as victims of human rights. I survived! As far as I know there was no unfavourable reaction!

Some months later I was asked by the local branch of Amnesty International to write a letter to EL Salvador in connection with a raid on a retreat house, and the killing there of some of the retreatants. I asked a friend in the parish whom I knew to be interested if he would cosign the letter. He agreed, and moreover, suggested bringing this matter to the attention of the whole parish. I reflected, but felt the time was not yet ripe. Some days later, in the course of a casual conversation with the Parish Priest, I mentioned this matter. His reaction was strong and positive, and felt that the matter should indeed be brought to their attention. I did so the following Sunday at Mass. The situation was explained, and they were invited to sign a letter of support. To our very great surprise almost 150 people signed. Quite beyond our expectations! That Sunday's approach also gave us ideas for the future.

All along I had been discreetly searching for people interested in joining a possible Justice and Peace group. By November 1979 we were ready, and at one of the Sunday Masses we formally proclaimed its existence. It was a small group - just four people. However over the years it grew to about ten. It has had its moments of crisis, and at one point in its first year a "cooling off" period had to be declared. However it survived, and even matured in the process. Eventually it became a quite closely knit group, and could be called a "basic Christian community".

The events stand out in those early years.

In March 1980 Archbishop Romero of El Salvador was shot dead while saying Mass. Our group responded promptly. We had in our possession a photo of the archbishop addressing a group of people. This was blown up to an appropriate size, and was placed in a

prominent position for the following Sunday Mass. At this Mass we spoke about the Archbishop - his life, his conversion to social justice, and his subsequent strong and unambiguous sermons in defense of the poor and the oppressed in El Salvador. We also prepared a letter, and asked the parishioners to sign. The response was excellent; over 400 people signed. This letter was then sent to El Salvador.

The second event was related to the declaration of Martial Law in Poland and the arrest of Lech Walesa, the founder of Solidarity. Again a letter was prepared, and signed this time by over 700 people. Cardinal Glempf himself replied thanking us for our support. This letter from the Cardinal was for many years among the most treasured possessions of Christ the Worker Parish.

Development

In its early years our Justice and Peace group had been to a very great extent concerned with issues outside of Hong Kong, but later on began to link up with other Hong Kong groups committed to Hong Kong problems. One of these problems was the question of representative government, and direct elections to the Legislative Council. Our parish group played an active part in these campaigns, participating in rallies and marches, issuing statements, and conducting surveys among the parishioners. During those years Green papers were issued by the government soliciting the views of people. We exhorted the people to participate. One Sunday I remember exhorting them to read a particular Green paper and offer their comments. I said, jokingly, that for the immediate future penances in confession would be based on this Paper: for a venial sin a penitent would be obliged to read one chapter, and for a mortal sin the complete booklet! I did not notice any decrease in the number of people going to confession as a result of this statement.

Our group also began to focus on neighbourhood problems. One of these concerned a cinema almost on our doorsteps and which specialised in Category 3 films! It was widely felt that its advertisement sinned against even the relaxed standards set by the Government. One member of our group, after consultation with his wife, regularly took photos of these offending advertisements. These were then sent to local Councilors and the relevant Government Department. Pressure was brought to bear on the owner of the cinema,

and although he was never convicted in court, on one occasion at least, police confiscated material from this cinema. It must have been a somewhat unnerving time for this proprietor. The parish had hoped to mobilize all the parishioners, and even people of good will in the area, to confront this problem. However the campaign never got off the ground. Eventually the cinema had to close its doors, but our Justice and Peace group can by no means claim the sole credit for this!

In the early 80's another socially orientated group came into existence in the parish: Amnesty International. For some years we had been looking around for people who might be interested in joining such an organization. When we felt the time was ripe the group was formally set up. But soon there was a crisis! The young man whom we had looked on as the pillar of the group declared he was not genuinely interested, and withdrew. A shock! But again we staggered along and managed to survive! Very soon AI became responsible in the parish for the commemoration of prisoners of conscience in October; the celebration of Human rights in December, and a Lenten Stations of the Cross for victims of Human Rights. It also adopted a prisoner of conscience from the Philippines, with whom we regularly corresponded. Later on one of our enterprising, with whom we regularly corresponded made a copy of the AI symbol; a lighted candle surrounded by barbed wire. We used this in our liturgies, and found it a very powerful and compelling symbol, a most effective homily in its own right!

One AI sponsored activity stands out Anthony Rogers, a La Salle Brother working in Kuala Lumpur, and Vincent Cheng, Executive Secretary of Singapore's Justice and Peace Commission, had been arrested and detained. Christmas was approaching. A girl teaching in our Sunday school and also a member of AI, organized a competition among the children for the designing of a Christmas Card. At our Human Rights Mass in early December the children with the winning designs were presented with their prizes. The parishioners were then invited to sign their names on these winning cards and sent their best wishes and Christmas greetings to Anthony and Vincent. This was a very imaginative approach about cooperation between two parish organizations.

In the second half of the 80's a new parish council was formed. According to the constitution of this council, one of the executive

committee would be entrusted with responsibility for the coordination and development of social involvement in the parish. But much more important, this new Parish Council was not merely consultative; it exercised real authority. The parish priest was a member with one vote, but no veto powers. Because this went beyond the present Code of Canon Law there was consultation with the Diocese. It was decided to experiment for one year before coming to a final decision. The year's experience was positive, and at the end of the year it was decided to make it permanent. A daring decision, but it worked out very satisfactorily.

Later on in the years the parishioners were given the opportunity of exercising genuine democracy. There was a proposal to change the times of the Sunday Masses. On one particular Sunday this was explained to the people. They were invited to spend the following week reflecting on this, praying about it, and even discussing it in their homes. It was emphasized that their vote would be genuinely decisive. On the following Sunday the vote was taken. A big majority voted in favour of the proposal. In retrospect I appreciate the process rather more than the actual decision arrived at.

Patterns

In those early years we could be described as groping for ways to express a commitment to social justice and human rights. However over the years certain patterns and fixtures has clearly emerged and some of these have already been mentioned.

In January we had a Justice and Peace Sunday.

During Lent one of the Friday night Stations of the Cross was offered for those struggling for human rights or languishing in prison because of this struggle.

On Good Friday we added an appropriate prayer for justice to the already existing intercession.

The first Sunday in May was Labour Sunday. More about this anon.

In October we prayed for prisoners of conscience.

In November we prayed not merely for the dead in general, but in particular for those who had died in the previous year because of their commitment to justice and human rights.

In December we highlighted Human Rights, and at Christmas we made a collection for poor students in the Philippines.

Some of these events were celebrated very simply. One example. The October commemoration of prisoners of conscience was just the communal recitation, before the final blessing, of the beautiful prayer for this intention. Other events were more elaborately celebrated. A Mass with special readings, prayers, and hymns was composed for the occasion. Our Mass Centre was appropriately decorated, and these decorations conveyed a message. Moreover we always insisted on some action, however simple. That action was generally the signing of some letter composed for the occasion. Its contents were made known to the parishioners before the end of the liturgy. A moment of quiet was then provided during which they were invited to make up their minds about signing. Their response was always positive, but of course sometimes it was more positive than others!! The letter was then forwarded to the appropriate agency or organization.

A special word about Labour Day. On the Sunday nearest to May 1 Christ the Worker parish was determined to emphasize its devotion to its patronal name and its commitment to the workers of Hong Kong. Needless to say this was an occasion for one of these special Masses which I have already described. All of the priest workers in Hong Kong did at some time or other preside and preach at this Mass. On other occasions a young worker gave testimony. A tenth of that Sunday's collection was put aside for some worker organization – generally YCW and its formation programmes. A statement asking for some improvement in the welfare of the workers was prepared, read out, and subsequently signed by the parishioners. One particular memory about the Masses comes racing back to my mind. We were preparing the readings. I suggested chapter 5 of St. James, a passage where the apostle vehemently denounces the rich and those who oppress the poor workers. The members of our Justice and Peace group looked up this passage, and came to the conclusion that it was too strong!! However, a year later they were ready to use it.

In addition to these fixtures we tried to respond to special cases. An example. On one Sunday the Second Reading was from St. James where he speaks strongly about equality. Apartheid was then a very hot issue. So we sent a letter of support to Archbishop Tutu in South Africa. Some months later the question of economic sanctions against South African Government arose. Quite a few groups in Hong Kong took up this issue. So did we. I recall that Sunday homily. A layman, a member of our Justice and Peace group, described the economic and political situation in South Africa. The presiding priest then followed with a Gospel reflection. A beautiful exercise in co - responsibility! Later on it was pointed out that the bank where we deposited our parish money had close links with this apartheid regime. Should we withdraw our money? Alas this question was never seriously tackled. Maybe it was a failure of nerve on our part, and refusal to look at the full implications of our action!

Frequently we helped individual parishioners in matters related to justice. I recall helping one elderly lady who had been permanently but not seriously injured in an industrial accident. This involved my visiting hospitals, Government Departments, lawyers, and finally the Courts. It was a long, tedious, and often highly exasperating process, but I saw the realities of Hong Kong first hand, and am deeply grateful for the experience. In the end I was astounded at how much of the compensation money went to the lawyers. I kept notes, and when the case was closed I thought about writing them up with my reflections. I failed! Another resolution that has fallen by the way.

On another occasion one of our parishioners - the father of a family - was killed in an industrial accident. We offered our help, but the family declined. The Bishop, on one of his pastoral visits to the parish, called on the family. This was greatly appreciated and greatly consoled them.

Before I pass on I must state that when I arrived in the parish there were three social service teams. One had already ceased to operate, and soon died. Another was active for a while and then faded out. Almost all the members of the third Team were non-Catholics, but highly motivated. This team went from strength to strength. Its most noteworthy project was a wide-ranging sociological survey of the Ngau Tau Kok area. They published their findings in a booklet which was released at a press conference - the first press conference ever

called by a parish organization. Four days afterwards the phone kept ringing with people and organisations asking for copies of the booklet. No such demand had been anticipated, and very soon the supply was exhausted! The parish did manage to salvage one copy !

Reflections

Eleven exciting, and exhilarating years! Much activity. But what about results? At the end of the day what had we to show for it all? We did have letters from Philippine students thanking the parishioners for the financial help without which they would have been unable to continue their studies. We had Cardinal Glemp's letter thanking us on behalf of the people of Poland for our support. We also treasured the letters we received from a Philippines prisoner of conscience. We know that our letters strengthened and supported him, and probably helped towards his final release. Other examples could be given. But we cannot claim any credit for dramatic changes in an unjust world structure. However changes did take place in the members of these socially orientated groups. Their commitment to justice was deepened and enriched. All were very well informed, and some were excellent at social analysis. But what about the ordinary parishioners? Their social awareness was more basic and fundamental. But it was a genuine social awareness. I recall one example. At mass on Friday mornings we usually said the prayer for prisoners of conscience, but for some reason it had been omitted over a period of weeks. Imagine my surprise and joy when one morning a quite elderly lady asked why we hadn't been saying this prayer. Ostensibly - a reproof! But it revealed a definite awareness on her part. Another point. The many statements of our groups on various issues were always published in the *Kung Kao Po*, and so we became very well-known in the Hong Kong church. Whenever I had to introduce myself at some gathering the invariable reaction was - "Christ the Worker Parish. The place where they have that very active Justice and Peace Group". However these words of praise have to be qualified. The Diocesan Convention in 1971 asked that a Social Concern group be set up in each parish. But in the period covered in this article not more than twelve of our almost 60 parishes had such groups, and even some of these were just "one-man buses"! So let us be modest about our achievement!

In two areas we were weak: spiritual formation, and follow up. Each meeting did begin with a reading from Scripture, and most of these

readings were related to justice. The reading was followed by a period of quiet, and then came the prayer. This process was helpful, but by no means enough. More could have been done, and I must admit to some responsibility for this situation.

We should also have paid more attention to the formation of our catechumens. Surely it is here in the catechumenate that the foundation for social awareness must be laid. And follow up? I can recall many letters sent out to e.g. Government Departments. These Departments always replied, but the matter generally stopped there. We let them off the hook altogether too easily! Perhaps we had got involved in too many issues.

Liturgical Purists will look askance - at the treatment which the liturgy received e.g. composing Masses for special occasions. And these occasions were not too infrequent. In defence, however, we must emphasise that these liturgies were exceptional, and there was genuine loyalty to the annual liturgical cycle. Moreover we had consulted an eminent and highly respected Asian theologian about these problems. The Church has often said that liturgies must express a commitment to social justice and human right. But, in fact, in some countries the liturgists and social activists seem to move along parallel lines. There is yet no genuine dialogue, no meeting of minds and hearts. Happily Hong Kong has begun to take its first tentative steps in this area.

The role of the priests is still of major importance, and without his active support these groups will not flourish. However, one may ask if this is a desirable situation? Perhaps it points to a Church which is not yet fully adult and has yet to come of age. To build up social awareness in a parish we need vision, courage, daring and a resolute spirit. But we also need:

Patience: social awareness does not come like “instant coffee”

Sensitivity: we must challenge but not alienate.

A large heart so that the mistakes which will inevitably be made, can be more easily accepted and made the occasion for further growth. We recall that saying attributed to the famous G.K. Chesterton: “the man who says he never made a mistake you will find that he never made anything else either!”

Conclusion

So much for a rather personal and subjective account of one parish's commitment to social justice. Hopefully other parishes with similar experience will also write them up. In this way we can get a much more objective and comprehensive view of what is happening in the Church of Hong Kong. Planning for the future will thus be more realistic and effective.

In his Pastoral Letter "March into the Bright Decade", Cardinal Wu speaks of the "servant and prophetic roles" of our Church. Let us resolutely commit ourselves to the building up of this servant and prophetic Church.

23. Some Memories and Final Reflections, 2008

Bishops I have known

Francis Hsu. My first contact with Bishop Francis was not too happy! The student movement in Hong Kong had just begun, and because of my involvement in one quite significant event I was being referred to quite a lot in some newspapers. Bishop Hsu asked to see me. I arrived at his office to find a few notable Diocesan personalities sitting with him. A daunting sight! Bishop Hsu spoke at length and was quite obviously deeply concerned at this turn in events. I tried to explain, but not very successfully. I left the office feeling that I was going to be relieved of my job as chaplain to university students. Imagine my surprise when some days later Bishop Francis rang me saying that he had been talking to my Jesuit Superior, and now understood my stance much better. He said I should write to the newspapers explaining the situation. Which I promptly did.

And this was the beginning of a long and indeed memorable relationship with Bishop Francis. After that we met together about once every two months to discuss student matters, especially events in the student movement. Our meetings always lasted at least one hour, and sometimes two. And on occasion these meetings were spirited! But I will always appreciate these conversations, and the time which he so generously gave me. When I received news of his sudden death – yes - I did shed tears. Later on when he was subsequently criticised in the then famous “Far Eastern Economic Review” I wrote a letter in his defence, which the “Review” published. I am quietly proud of this letter.

I should also add that Bishop Hsu was often consulted by non-Catholic student leaders in the student movement.

Francesco Claver, familiarly known as “Cisco”. I met Cisco for the first time in late 1972 when he came to the East Asia Pastoral Institute to give a short course in Anthropology. I was then attending its 9-month course with some 90 other students - most of us priests, Brothers, and Sisters. I recall his first day with us - a Sunday lunch. He was dressed in an open shirt, crozier and mitre far away, nothing to indicate he was a Bishop. After lunch I introduced him to a fellow student, a middle-aged priest. This priest was quite surprised, even mildly

shocked, finding it hard to accept that Cisco was an authentic Bishop! Cisco's lectures were indeed lively. Questions about the recently introduced martial law were accepted, and frankly answered. In fact he and a few other Bishops and Major Religious Superiors had published a statement mildly critical of martial law, and hoping it would soon end. I might also add that Cisco played a vigorous game of basketball!!

I spent a major part of my Christmas break with Cisco in his Bukidnon diocese...This was a new Diocese, and Cisco was its first Bishop. He told me that while studying for his Doctorate in the USA he received an official letter informing him that he was to be the Bishop of Bukidnon. He showed this letter to his tutor, and subsequently realized that in doing so he had broken a rule! He smiled as he told me this story! He also told me about the annual celebration of Christ the King in his diocese : a big procession traditionally led by the landlords and wealthy members of the diocese. Cisco, however, decided that it would in future be led by the poor farmers. Yes, a revolution, but truly Christian. "You shall put down the mighty from their seat and exalt the lowly". This was, indeed, a perfect example. Alleluia. Some weeks after Christmas I met Cisco once again, and asked him how the Bishops meeting went—at that time they met twice a year. On this occasion the people were hoping that they would make a statement about the recently introduced martial law. "We voted on this" said Cisco, "but by a small majority decided not to speak out". And then he laconically added, "we Bishops have no conscience". Later on, some years down the road, they did speak out, and this trenchant statement of theirs did hasten the end of martial law in the Philippines.

After Easter of 1973 I returned to Hong Kong, and lost contact with Bishop Claver. But he has been a major and most unforgettable influence on my life.

Prison friends

Let me begin with Johnie. When I was Parish Priest in Ngau Tau Kok Christ the Worker parish in the seventies one day a mother came with a request: would I visit her son who was on remand. I did so, several times, and that was the beginning of a long and dear friendship. Johnie had joined the triads as a teenager. He was accused of shooting another man, escaped to the Philippines, but was brought back to Hong Kong under police escort. The trial came up and was held in the present

“High Court of Final Appeal” in Battery Path. This building was of special interest to me because I started my life in Hong Kong in this very building! It was then the GHQ of the : Paris Foreign Missions in South East Asia. Later on the Fathers sold it to the HK Government, and we Jesuits had to leave.

Every day I went to Johnie’s trial with his mother—she was afraid of the triads who she said were also attending the court proceedings. Johnie was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to 15 years in prison on Lantau Island. There I went to visit him 3 or 4 times a year. Because of good conduct he was released after 12 years. I was present at his release, and together with him and his family we went to the parish church to pray. After that we had a modest celebration. Weeks later I asked Johnie if he would be willing to share some of his experiences with our Sunday congregation. His answer was affirmative. I remember that Sunday quite well. As he came forward to speak I was indeed quite nervous and apprehensive—how would our parishioners accept this most unusual sharing? The result was quite remarkable. The parishioners took him to their hearts. Despite his prison background he was invited to join the Legion of Mary, and for the next few years was one of its dedicated members. Alleluia! Subsequently he met a girl in our parish, and I was very happy to preside at their marriage. They are now the parents of two lovely and most loveable children. Johnie is a remarkably talented man, but he has no academic qualification whatsoever, not even the most basic. So life so far has not been that kind to him. But he perseveres. Breathe a little prayer for himself and his family.

A point of interest: when Johnie was being tried in Battery Path his younger brother was being tried for lesser crimes in a room on the ground floor of the same building! What a “trial” for his poor mother!

My next prison friend is Jackie.

I met Jackie while working in a factory at San Po Kong. Jackie operated a small food stall to which I often went for a quite Spartan mid day meal. One Sunday he came here to Wah Yan with his girl friend to visit me. The three of us sat in the parlour, and during the conversation she rather casually mentioned that Jackie had a gun in his pocket. He didn’t deny this, nor did I ask him to produce the evidence. Some weeks later I got a call from a police station saying that Jackie

was in their custody, arrested while attempting some crime. They said he wanted to see me. It was already quite late at night but I decided to go. The police brought me to a room at the top of the building where other policemen were busy at work. Suddenly there was a sharp cry of pain from a room on the other side of the corridor. At once the man in charge in our room told an assistant to go over and tell A (I will not reveal the name) “not to be so noisy”. At once there was silence. I was suspicious, but said nothing. Some weeks later I was visiting Jackie in prison, and had an opportunity, a very brief second, to ask him what happened that night. “Yes”, he said “I was beaten up”. I followed up this case, and two of the police officers I met seemed to realize what had happened, and genuinely wished to pursue the case. However nothing came of our efforts. Later I wrote to the “Hong Kong Standard” which led to an editorial entitled “Mysterious voices in a Hong Kong police station”.

Regrettably I have since lost all contact with Jackie, but do treasure that brief friendship, and occasionally say a little prayer for himself and his girlfriend.

I would like to meet them once again.

My third prison friend is Martin.

Martin belongs to the troubled decades in the north of Ireland—my own country.

At an early age he joined the IRA—Irish Republican Army, an illegal organisation committed to drive the British out of his province by force. This problem has by now been substantially solved, but for many years it seemed quite intractable and insoluble. Martin escaped from prison on one occasion. On another occasion he was on hunger strike for some 50 days. I met Martin on one Sunday when I went with a group of priests to say Mass for these IRA prisoners. Martin served my Mass, and did so very well. At the end of the Mass we chatted together, and he asked me to visit his family. Which I did. And that was the beginning of a long friendship. Finally Martin was released. Whenever I went to Belfast I always visited Martin. On the last occasion he was very anxious to share with me a quite special experience—an experience of reconciliation with an “enemy”. On one occasion Martin was arrested and very badly beaten up. The officer in charge of that

particular operation went back to England after his tour of duty, and there he reflected on his Belfast experiences. As a result he returned to Belfast and through a third party contacted Martin: would he be willing to have a reconciliation? Martin discussed this with colleagues and decided to go ahead. This reconciliation took place in a hotel room and was videoed by the BBC. At the end of this reconciliation both embraced and Martin presented his former enemy with a special gift—a belt which he had made while in prison.

As I watched this video in Martin’s home I was moved, yes, deeply moved. I have since used this story many times when I preach about reconciliation. And I will continue to use it.

Martin went on a holiday last year with his good wife, Breeda. On his return he announced, “next year to Hong Kong to visit Father Hurley”. Alas Martin has since died of a heart attack. I was most distressed to hear this news, but I am resolved that on my next visit to Belfast my first stop will be at Martin’s grave.

Social Doctrine of the Church - some ideas that particularly appeal to me!

A. The Prophetic Voice

During my years studying theology in preparation for the priesthood I did encounter these prophets. But my interest then was largely academic. Decades later there was a momentous and somewhat sudden change in my outlook. It happened one night when Bishop Perez of Imus (near Manila) was driving myself and a group of students from the first meeting of the Asian Bishops in Manila. It was also the time of the student movement. The bishop mentioned that the students were then the prophetic voice of the Church and society. Yes, this was for me a moment of “revelation”. At once I thought of some student friends back in Hong Kong, unquestionably disturbing individuals, but challenging in a way that I had never before experienced. I then thought of Amos, that shepherd of Israel, his fiery social sermons, deleted to the civil authorities by the priests of the time and finally banished to the fields from which he had come. Many more examples could be given. I particularly like one description of the prophet: “he comforts the disturbed and disturbs the comfortable”!

This is a theme that I would like to delve into more fully if the Lord gives me a few more years!

B. Social Sin

This again is a comparatively new idea. In my seminary days we did speak a lot about sin, but never about social sin. Yes, we discussed problems of society, but never classified them as sin. However social sin is now an accepted idea, and the official Catechism of the Church has a section on it. When giving the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius I do speak about this, but one can easily see that it is quite a new concept for most people, and will take some time for many Church members thoroughly to digest it, and become familiar with it.

C. Liberation Theology

Some decades ago this was a very popular theology, but now it seems to have been put on the back burner! Admittedly there were some unfortunate aberrations, but what system of theology is without its inbuilt dangers? When I was a student at the East Asian Pastoral Institute in the early seventies I wrote an article about this topic, and I think the reader can easily pick up my interest and enthusiasm. I am still deeply interested, and hope that one day it will be fully reinstated.

And this reminds me of Karl Marx and his “Communist Manifesto”. Many years ago I read this booklet in the comfort of my room. My reaction then was rather academic. I read it again while working in a factory, and then my reaction was altogether different! Here I felt was a man who really understood the plight of the worker. As a committed Christian I cannot accept Marx’s criticism of organised religion, but nonetheless his trenchant observations on this subject are not without some foundation. Unquestionably our Church has a wonderful body of doctrine on these matters, but to what extent is it enthusiastically preached and vigorously implemented? I recall what one veteran and highly respected priest said on one occasion: “the best kept secret of the Church in Asia is its social doctrine” !!

Whenever I go to London I always try to visit the grave of Karl Marx, and pray that someday, hopefully, we can meet in Heaven!! I am confident the merciful Lord understood him!!

So much, dear reader, for my meandering reflections!!

Vatican 2 proclaimed that “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially of those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ”. (Gaudium at Spes, 1)

Let us, dear reader, vigorously proclaim and implement this stirring ideal!!

Appendix I Chronology of Fr. James Hurley SJ

October 1, 1926:	Birth.
October 1944: (Jesuits)	Dublin: Entrance into the Society of Jesus.
1946:	Dublin: First Vows.
1949:	Degree in Classics at University College, Dublin.
1950:	To Hong Kong as Scholastic. (With three other scholastics and a Priest)
1952-1954:	Language Studies at Cheung Chau. (Former Protestant Villa House bought by Jesuits)
1954-1955:	Teacher at Wah Yan College, Kowloon.
July 31, 1958:	Ordination to the Priesthood, Dublin.
1960:	Returned to Hong Kong by ship.
1960-1961:	One Year of Cantonese Language studies.
1961-1969:	Taught at Chu Hai - Post Secondary College, Kowloon.
-----:	At the same time worked as Chaplain to College students, the birth of the student movement.
1972-1973:	Attended renewal course at East Asian Pastoral Institute, Ateneo de Manila University.
1973-1976:	Appointed Master of Novices.
1976-1978:	Worker Priest (Around four to five months of actual work as an ordinary

worker in a garment factory.) Likewise, around this time, I was requested to replace Tissa Balasuriya. My superior however insisted that they wanted me as a Master of Novices.

- 1978 to Present: Parish pastoral work, always with a keen emphasis on the social dimension, collaboration with a Social Justice Group
- 1978-1989: Christ the Worker Parish in Ngau Tau Kok.
- 1989-1993: St. Vincent's Parish in Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon as experimental parish for Basic Christian Communities. A poor parish where interfaith work with Buddhists was initiated. Again, work with a Faith and Justice Group.
- 1995-1998: Star of the Sea Parish in Chai Wan, Hong Kong.
- 1998 to Present: St. Ignatius Pastoral Zone, Waterloo Road, Kowloon.

Appendix II
Interview with Fr. James Hurley SJ by Roberto Reyes
April 18, 2007

1. I was born 80 years ago in a village called Arbor, a place beside the sea. It's a very saintly spot, a lot of history.
2. We are two boys, two girls. I was the youngest. The other boy became a Jesuit as well.
3. And the home was a very good home. The mother was a saint, the saint of the village. She had to work. The times were very hard. The father put together a business.
4. I was educated in the National School. A nice school in the countryside. I like that. Then I went to Mellery, a place where there's the Monks, the Cistercian monks. They came from somewhere in France. They were driven out and they came to Ireland. And that was their first foundation. They started a school there. You know the Cistercians don't have a school.
5. There was a Cistercian monk there. Column Cille. There was a famous Irish Saint called Column Cille. He loved the country. He was involved in the first recorded case of plagiarizing...he went to exile in Scotland...there were monasteries as well...
6. Anyway this monk Column Cille had us for history in second year. We were supposed to finish the text book but he spent most of his time talking about contemporary Irish politics. He had a very interesting story. He was pro-IRA(Irish Republican Army). We discovered something only years later when I was a Jesuit. A man came to lecture to us and he told us about his brother, Column Cille. And a town closes to where I live, there was a shooting incident there one Sunday night. The IRA had come in to look for somebody who had given information to the police. And they went to the big barn. And his mother told them that he was in the big barn. And they called him out. And he ran across the road to the Parish priest's door and he was shot dead. He was the so-called informer. He was accused of being an informer by the IRA. So the IRA drove off anyway. One of the people arrested was a brother of this monk Column Cille. He was tried and sentenced to be shot on the day that his brother was to be ordained a priest. The judge at that time did something that I suppose he could not do at that time. He

commuted the sentence to life imprisonment. So that man at the end of the Second World War came out of prison and he joined the Cistercians as a brother. I presumed he could not join the Cistercians as a priest because he was involved in a shooting incident. So he finished off in the Cistercian monastery in the north of the country. He was Column Cille's brother. The interesting thing was...I had a distant cousin who was high up in the Irish police, a very good man. He visited that monastery. He was a friend of the abbot there. But during the war he was often looking for his brother, a member of the IRA.

7. My years at Mellerey were good years. It was a tough school. It was good. I was happy with that. And to the surprise of everybody, I applied to join the Jesuits. That was a surprise because there was trouble in the school. There was some kind of a strike on the last year and I was identified as one of the leaders. In fact when I went to Ireland recently I came across this letter which I had at home. The head of the school, Fr. Finbarr wrote my father complaining about my behavior. Anyway, they thought of expelling me. (see P.192)
8. So anyway to the surprise of many, I joined the Jesuits and I was accepted. Then, two years novitiate. That was uneventful. Then three years at the Dublin National University (studying classics) to do my degree. And at that time I got interested in the writings of a man called Patrick Pierce. Pierce was one of the great Irish patriots. Because in Ireland, in 1916 there was a big rebellion which lasted for a Week. It was suppressed and the 16 leaders were shot. One of them was Pierce. Pierce was a great writer, a great poet. He had a great influence in my life. One of those shot, Michael Mallin, had a son(Joseph Mallin), a priest in Hong Kong. That had a big influence on me.
9. (1952) Then I went to Philosophy. I applied to go to the missions. I was keen on China. Five of us left on a boat. We studied the language for two years then one year of teaching. One of the students then was Martin Lee who is now a famous politician. We were told that we will never go back to Ireland. But after three years we were sent back to Ireland for theology. Then I went to Dublin for four years of theology. I was ordained in 1958. Then one year of theology as a priest. Then 1960 we did Tertianship. Then after that they were thinking of sending me to study scriptures because I knew Greek that was the main reason. Anyway I came back in 1960 and we were told again at that time that we will never go back to Ireland.

10. I applied to teach in one of the refugee Chinese universities called Chu Hai (Star of the Sea). I was there for six or seven years. There were two other Jesuits there as well. I was teaching there and that was my first brush with activism. This was a place for Chinese Nationalism. But there was a group of students there. They were already influenced by the student movement. They were talking about the inadequacies of this place. They wrote an article, a very scientific critique of this college. And the school took action and they expelled 12 students. So I knew some of them. They came to see me. These kids were thrown out without any reasons given. This built up. There was a demonstration at the college and I visited them there. I promised to talk to the administration. The reasons had not come out. For expelling students there should be reasons. So I went to interview the people in the colleges and I was always brushed off. The issue got to the papers and my name was not mentioned. But there was mention of a certain Foreign Buddhist monk. Because at that time, the Buddhist monks in Vietnam were rather active as well. If I were named, there will be legal problems.
11. So that was my first beginning then. The bishop called me. Bishop Francis Hsu wanted to see me one day. The papers had been following this issue. There was a nationalist press at that time which was very much in favor of China. So they were highlighting the case. I went to see Bishop Francis Hsu. I went to his office. There were other people there high up in the church. He was very angry about the whole thing, so I defended myself. ...they were expelled; no reasons were given...So I left the office anyway. I was chaplain of the Federation of Catholic Students at the time. I left the office anyway, and felt that things were pretty bad, that I was in trouble. The thing was the Bishop was a great friend of our superior then Fergus Cronin. And Cronin defended me. In fact at one stage, there was a press conference. I was invited so I asked Fergus what I should do. He answered, "Go Jim that's where we want you, which was the best act of obedience that I have ever seen."
12. So I was at this press conference (around 1969, 70 maybe), my first press conference that I have ever attended, and of course I was a kind of a key figure. So from then on, I was a well known figure around there. Cronin defended me and the bishop came over to defend me. He spoke to Cronin and said, "I understand what you are doing. Write to the papers and explain what you have done."

13. So that was good, and that was the beginning of a great friendship with the Bishop. The bishop himself was a man from Shanghai, Oxford trained and spoke beautiful English and Mandarin, not so good in local Cantonese...He was an outstanding Bishop but that was the beginning of a good friendship. After that, the student movement had begun...I would see Bishop Francis Hsu about four or five times..every two to three months. And you see him in his office. He would always tell me to come over at 5:00 p.m. Our meeting went from one to two hours. And he generally was sympathetic. And leaders of the student movement had come to me to ask if I can arrange a meeting with Bishop Hsu. The Bishop had become a public figure, a well known public figure. So, he was very supportive in general about the whole thing.
14. And then that went on for a while but it kind of died down since then. Then I decided that it was time to hand on the work to a Chinese priest. At that time, Stephen Tam came along. We had lots of seminarians in the student movement and the federation. The idea was that someday some of them could take over. The seminary was cooperative. Everybody thought that Stephen should be chaplain. So I decided to move out.
15. So I went to the Philippines. I went to do a renewal course at the East Asian Partoral Institute. I was there for seven or eight months. During that time Martial Law had begun in the Philippines. I went to the Philippines 1972-73. When I left, Bishop Hsu had arranged that three people take over: Stephen Tam, Jack Clancey and Sr. Beatrice Leung. So I was in the Philippines when Martial Law came. Those were exciting times. I remember one time when they came to the Ateneo. They surrounded the buildings there. I saw that with my two eyes. That was my first brush with Martial Law. Then we met Ed de la Torre. He was a chaplain in the student movement. I had meetings with him before. In India, I went to Ed. At that time Ed was in trouble. He was on the run at that time. We met him next door to the EAPI, at the Maryknoll School. He was in a room there and he went off secretly at night.
16. Then the best thing there was our contact with Bishop Claver. There was the effect of Martial Law on EAPI. There were some people there who were very partial to Marcos. But one, Fr. Doherty, a sociologist. And he would be rather critical of Martial Law. He did a study of Martial Law that came out shortly after Christmas. During the

Christmas holidays I had a break from the EAPI. If you want to know the Philippines, you have to go out. So I went out to Bukidnon. I stayed with Bishop Cisco Claver. He was very good to me. He drove me around for two days. That was a very good experience. He shared some of his experiences with me as well. He was the first bishop of Bukidnon. He describes the procession of Christ the King. Before, it was always led by the landlords. He decided that this time it will be led by the farmers. So this was a revolution in the Philippines.

17. 1973. At the end of EAPI, I went back to Hong Kong and stayed in this house (Wah Yan College), and reported to the Provincial here. At that time there was talk that I will become the Asian chaplain, to take the place of Tissa Balasuriya. Then I met the Provincial who says, "I want you to be master of novices." So the next three years I was the master of novices. But I was in contact the whole time with the Federation of students. There were strikes and demonstrations.
18. So then we ran out of novices. Initially, I had two or three. Then, I applied to work in the factory to see how it was. So I was in the factory, two periods, two months each time. And that was a great experience for me, working on the factory floor as an ordinary worker. I didn't announce who I was. But when they ask me. I told them I was a priest.
19. Then after that, I went on retreat and decided to go to a parish, the Christ the Worker parish. It was a down and out area. I wanted to work with the grassroots. I went out there to work. They were very welcoming. So we started the faith and justice group there. Then Amnesty International group also. I was one of the founders of Amnesty International. I informed the Police of the formal set up. So I set up these groups at Christ the Worker parish. From that point of view it was a very active parish. I became parish priest eventually. So we had a very active parish. We had a workers group, faith and justice and Amnesty International. That was a very good experience. I was eleven years there. Then it was time to get out, you know. Then I took a sabbatical, went home to Ireland.
20. 1991. Then I came back from Ireland and worked in another parish, at Wong Tai Sin. Again that parish was in a deprived area. We did very well from the point of view of Basic Christian Community. At that time the Basic Christian Communities had started in Hong Kong. This parish was picked out as some kind of a pilot. And we worked with the Pastoral Center.

21. 1996-98. I was shipped out to Chai Wan, Star of the Sea Parish. Just before the turn over of Hong Kong. I stayed there for four years. I was ready to spend another ten years in the parish. This was a Jesuit parish. There were three of us there. We left one by one. And I have been here since then.
22. 1998. Pastoral Zone of St. Ignatius, Waterloo Road. I have been here ever since. It is quite a contrast to the other parishes where I have been. There is no public housing. All the other parishes where I was there was public housing, government housing. There is private housing all around here.
23. You have planted many seeds. What has happened to the seeds?
At the beginning the work was rather western. Now it is very local. They were all talking about active violence then. We were concerned about “prisoners of conscience.” Recently, in one of the parishes where I was they were talking about “abortion.” I am totally against that. It’s a kind of violence.
24. The man of Westminster, Cardinal O’connor. They used to come down to our place before the war. The father was a doctor. There were five boys there. He was the youngest. They were very fervent. Mass every morning. We wrote him a letter and he answered. My sister wrote a book about the village. And he read it from cover to cover. He was a kid there. He lived across the road. There was a kind of a guest house there and he used to come in and play the piano. He is a musician. My father asked him, “What do you like to be when you grow up?” He answered, “I want to be a pope.” He wanted to say pope.
25. Well about the seeds. Many of them have grown.
Students. Talking about students. The Federation of Catholic Students were socially committed then. As a student movement, they kind of petered out and other groups and other activists have taken over. There is across the road. The workers...they have more or less taken over.
The Justice and Peace Commission. They were very active before. There was one lady, Mary Yuen. She was very active, a very interesting woman. She went to the school of Sacred Heart. Sacred Heart was very conservative. But she came in and was very vocal and articulate. And for ten years she worked well on the Justice and Peace Commission. Then she went for study in Berkeley in the States. She was now a member of the Justice and Peace Commission. Then she

became the vice-chairperson. She was very much in the news. Very vocal, very articulate, very admirable.

Wong Tai Sin ceased to be a parish. The Basic Christian Communities that we started there is not as active as it was before.

Here (St Ignatius) we have a Justice and Peace group, a social concern group. They are ok...but not the same as those we had at Christ the Worker parish. We meet on a regular basis. They are more concerned about the immediate poor people. They are not concerned about the other issues...the more macro issues. I should remind them of the macro from time to time. I discovered something in the Catholic directory, 2007, the other day. They put something that every parish can do. They have it in Chinese but not in English. But could be done in a parish justice and peace commission. They put two pages. I'll be using that in my own group here anyway. Pages 622-623. 「關社使命」 So they do things here alright but not as active as the other parish. Anyway those were interesting times.

The Jesuits also have a Justice and Peace group. We used to invite two to three speakers each year to speak to the local Jesuit communities.

I am concerned about the rights of workers. Nothing much is being done there. What to do to improve their situation.

The four Jesuits which include me, who worked on the Justice and Peace Commission, are tending our resignation. We hope to see a new group take our place.

On the Basic Communities again...I had hope that groups that tend to be pious associations could become a community. The choirs for instance can become a community. The question of how vital and developed the BCCs are has to be looked into. There is a BCC commission in Hong Kong. It's headed by a lady from our parish. But it is not that active. I was hoping that the pious organizations could become the BCCs as well. But they're on the way to it. It takes some time.

26. Helping someone in prison. When I was still at the Christ the Worker Parish, there was this man on remand. His story was that he was a member of the Triads.

He was involved in some kind of a killing. He escaped to the Philippines. He had some kind of liaison with some girl there. He was brought back and was awaiting trial. So when the trial went up, the mother asked me to accompany her. We went to the place which is now the High Court at Central. We went there for the trial that lasted for two weeks or so. The Triad was there and so the mother wanted me to go with her. She was afraid of the Triads. The thing was, another brother

was on trial downstairs for rape and robbery. We got off and were tried for murder but got off on manslaughter. He was sentenced to fifteen years and was sent to the Islands. So I would visit him for three to four times a year. It took most of the day going there and coming back. I got to know him fairly well. I got to know that he was a very talented guy. Every year they had some kind of a big celebration in prison. He was picked three times to be MC (Master of Ceremonies). He accepted the first two but declined the third invitation. When he came out of prison, I was there on the scene with the rest of the family. We went back to Wong Tai Sin. We went to the chapel and said a prayer of thanksgiving. We went upstairs, sat and had some tea and celebrated. He started working and things went bad for him. I asked him to share at Mass one morning. I asked him to share about being a prisoner. So he did. He spoke about the Gospel. But really I was afraid that morning. Because that was a poor parish and they will be somewhat against prisoners. So he stood up and he spoke very well. And really I was moved by it. So.....at the end of the Mass, they crowded around him, welcomed him, invited him to join the legion of Mary. Then he was with the Legion of Mary for three years. But interesting enough. There was somebody from the press that morning and wrote something on the South China Morning Post which was a complete distortion of the truth and said that he was not received and that people went off for coffee. But there was no coffee there at all. That was one case of misrepresentation and I should have written something about it. But you could see he was a very gifted speaker. He spoke very well. I said he was in prison for twelve years. Then became a member of the Legion of Mary. Then he went to business and things didn't go too well. And he lent money to people. He became heavily indebted. Then he got married. I performed the marriage for him. Then the big debt accumulated and I got some friends who had some money. So I went to them and asked if they would be willing to help this man. Their reaction was, "Father we trust you, I will give to you, but are you sure this man can be trusted." I said, every time he pays the debt I will be with him to supervise the payment. So I was every payment. I was and supervised that. And so we cleared the debt. When we cleared the debt, eventually we danced on the street outside. He was so happy. Then he went on. Then he was in contact with other businessmen. There were great prospects there but he was short of money. So you speak to this businessman. You know now. For eighteen months you looked over this money. You have done very well. And tell him a little bit about your past and see what happens. He went and ...the bank got rid of him. He was in a very bad way for a while. But things began to pick up.

Now he is in Indonesia. His family originally came from Indonesia. He has a big project there. And he is earning HK\$ 30,000 a month. A very big thing. He is a very bright kid. Thanks are to God. When he comes back to Hong Kong, he comes straight here to report. He sits on that chair where you are on right now. The prison experience, going to prison that was another experience for me. When I went to the parish I did not expect that experience but I got that.

27. Helping other poor people. There was another man. He is not a prisoner. But he was very involved with the student movement. And he was studying in two colleges. He was found out and was punished for that. He got out of that but now he is blind and getting a blind pension. But he is still working. But when he got down and out, I raised some money. I asked some of my friends. He is alone and does not have any kind of relations in Hong Kong. These are the people I have contact with. And I appreciate it very much. Contact with the grassroots. It makes me more human to have contact with them.
28. The other man who sees me is the one who made that stole behind here is from Shanghai. George came to Hong Kong from Shanghai in 1958 or 59 and he went to Chu Hoi College. That college took all kinds of students. Some of them top notchers and some at the bottom of the ladder. George never had a regular employment. He was involved in shady business. He was going to the Star Ferry. And ...he was bringing the girls. And why he was never arrested, I never know. Was he helping the Police? I don't know. But he always came to see me anyway and he still comes to see me. He is married now to a Filipina. They are happy. He is really a talented man. He never had a chance of developing. He did that stole for me. He has a bit of a prayer. He says a prayer from time to time. A minimum of prayer. He washed dishes for a protestant pastor and earned HK\$ 800 a month. Sometimes business was good. He had enough money. Sometimes it was not. But it is good to be in contact with this people.
29. Johnny, he still comes. He does well a very good speaker, but no qualification whatsoever. Never given a chance. He joined the triads, was caught, put into prison. When he came out of prison, he suddenly found himself. When he came out, the Triads gave him a big sum of money. He wanted to get rid of it. He gave it back to the Triad. Now he has two children. But with my past...there is a good job as policeman now in Hong Kong. But if their father has a record in the past, they are just out. Automaticly, they will not be considered. He has the kids. And

the kids don't know his past yet. So he is doing well for the moment. He has been both in the Philippines and Indonesia. He met his wife at Wong Tai Sin parish. So that was Johnny. That contact with the prisons, I found that very helpful.

30. Spirituality. Even as a master of novices, I was trying to make up for the lack of the social aspect of spirituality. I would give long retreats to people and I would always emphasize the social as well. When I speak about the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius I always mentioned sin, social sin. The official catechism put out by John Paul II had social sin. So I would explain what social sin is. And it takes a while for that to be grasped. And so I talk about redemption. Think with the church. There is the social teaching of the church. That is why I want to contribute to the idea of the Social Teachings in the Spiritual Exercises. I have done the annotated 8 day retreat. I don't ever remember that they talked about the social doctrine of the church on Justice. They mention the poor al'right. But they stop there and that is disturbing. Justice, how this will be realized at the grassroot level. In some places yes. But in all the retreats done throughout the year I don't remember any talk on social justice. That is disturbing.

I went to Latin America. I went to El Salvador. Spent a few weeks there. I visited the place where Rutilio Grande and the six Jesuits were killed. I spent time praying and reflecting on the spot where they were killed. And there I met Jon Sobrino. It was a great experience to be in the place where Rutilio Grande and Bishop Romero were killed.

Appendix III Call Me James

By Basil Fernando

Asian Human Rights Commission, August 18, 2007

The first time I met Fr. Hurley was sometime in 1969. I was a University student. I came for a students' conference, a Pax Romana Conference as a delegate from Sri Lanka. During this time, Fr. Hurley was the chaplain of the students in Hong Kong. And this conference was organized by the Hong Kong chapter of Pax Romana. There were people from several countries. We struck a long standing friendship during this meeting. This was a time when the themes of Vatican II were very much alive, and church reform was very much part of the discussion. I and the chaplain of Sri Lanka, Fr. Tissa Balasuriya had our radical views. When we express these views in Sri Lanka, we got into difficulties, and there was little appreciation of our point of view. But I found when I expressed these views in the presence of the person of Fr. Hurley and his students in Hong Kong, there was immediate sympathetic and encouraging response which left a very lasting impression on me. For the first time, I began to experience a climate which encouraged the freedom of expression and respect for individuals and young people who are expressing their opinion.

So this meeting was a very significant meeting for me. And one of the highlights of the meeting is that I came across two people with whom I was to have a very long standing relationship. One is Fr. Jim Hurley, the other is Jack Clancey, now practicing as a lawyer in Hong Kong.

Now out of this meeting they selected two people to represent Asia in the first ever Bishops' Conference to be held in Asia. This was held in Manila. Pope Paul VI also participated in this meeting. I and a certain Peter Wong from Hong Kong represented Asian students during this meeting. Now Fr. Hurley accompanied the students' group and he participated in all the activities together with the student groups.

This was also a time of crucial importance to the Philippines. There were talks in quiet corners of possible authoritarian developments in the Philippines, particularly the power that was gained by the First Lady (Imelda Marcos). And various rumors about possible Martial Law and various things in the Philippines. Philippine students were very concerned at this time. They were also extremely critical of some

of the Church hierarchy, among them was Cardinal Santos which the students seem not to take to very much.

In the morning, we had the students holding placards in front of the conference hall. "Viva il Papa, Down with Santos!" This was a very big protest, and the students had their own meeting and was wondering how to express themselves. During these meetings we drafted a small resolution. The title of this resolution was "The Bishops of Asia." During the last two days, you have spoken well but your voices will be like tinkling cymbals unless they are accompanied by action, particularly through the identification with the poor. So the students called upon the bishops to dispossess themselves and to identify with the poor.

This statement was issued on the day that Radio Veritas was to be opened for the first time. The ceremony was presided by Pope Paul VI. So when the Pope was being carried around, the students distributed pamphlets and were able to give a pamphlet to the Pope. This attracted some reporter, Reuters, who gave out the whole statement to the whole world. So the next day, everywhere, this received attention.

During all this time, Fr. Hurley was very supportive of the students. He did not try to obstruct or to take the orthodox view. Or try to warn students. He knew that the students were speaking their conviction and that he was there to be their chaplain and to encourage them to express themselves. And I think he was himself touched by the reform spirit of the times.

So, we started a very close relationship. I used to write him a lot. And there was also a number of students around him, girls and boys who kept in touch with us. Thereafter Fr. Hurley made a visit to Sri Lanka on his way to Ireland. He spent a few days in Sri Lanka. He spent a lot of time with me. It was of course becoming a very difficult time in Sri Lanka, as you know in 1971 there was an insurrection and around ten thousand (10,000) young people were killed. And this was a shocking experience to all the students of that time. And I think during this time, Fr. Hurley began to see a changing Sri Lanka.

I remember a young painter whose painting I presented to him. He kept this painting for a long time. And so we kept in touch. At that time, I was in leftist politics as a young man. Later, when I had a

difficult time in Sri Lanka as a practicing lawyer, I had to leave the country. The first place I thought I would visit was Hong Kong. Part of the reason is I knew I had a very close friend, and I knew I can rely on this friend, Fr. Hurley.

Actually, I did not even write to him. I just came because there was a lawyers' conference. And when I reached his house, he had gone off for his regular holiday. Very soon he contacted me.

During that time because of my circumstances, I stayed on in Hong Kong. That was in 1989. I worked here for three years before I worked in Cambodia. During this time we used to meet very often. Then when I worked in Cambodia, I used to come to Hong Kong and always met with Fr. Hurley. We used to discuss lots of things about Cambodia and similar places. Then once again I came in 1994 and from then on I stayed until today. He knew about the human rights work that I was involved in. He was always encouraging and participating, getting the documents we had and keeping the discussions going.

We met very often, Fr. Hurley, Jack Clancey and myself. One very touching moment of recent times, is when a Jesuit in India got into a serious problem and was expelled from his order. We who heard about it learned that the expulsion was not just. We took up this case and tried to make representations to the Jesuit authorities. Of course, Fr. Hurley knew about this. Through out he was very positive, telling us to fight for what we believe is justice. I think he himself would have written to his superiors. He will always ask me when we met, "how is that priest, who was an anthropologist in Kerala? How is his health and things like that.." So he took a stand on even an issue like that. Another issue, which we were very close was the issue of Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, the issue of the "Excommunication of Fr. Tissa Balasuriya."

Now, the Asian Human Rights Commission played a very big role in the issue of Fr. Balasuriya's excommunication. We led this campaign. A lot of the work for his campaign was done by the Asian Human Rights Commission. We published a book on this whole issue which is still available, "Power and Conscience." The book was widely circulated.

Fr. Balasuriya was also known to Jim Hurley for a long time. He was very concerned about this case, not only as friend but also because of all the issues involved. We believe that this kind of things can help to improve the discussion.

Now you see our relationship, a long standing relationship brings in a lot of things. On the one hand, Vatican II has been a disappointment for people like us. For many of us, our intellectual life was influenced by the spirit of Vatican II.

Recently, I once more read “The Shoes of the Fisherman” by Morris West. I recalled all these issues, and how much they were a part of us. For example, the whole issue of going beyond generalities, into the more particular. For instance, our localities, our people. Not just to go on the basis of some abstract universal, but to find our way to the people, as the way you find to God. This is an essential message of this time. It sunk into us.

Of course with that, we came across serious disappointments. We found that in many places the church leadership depend on this (the tendency towards abstractions and universals). But for us the message of light (Vatican II) has not been lost. We are not living that message through institutional means, not as a part of a church organization, society or something similar. We are living it in the open world, being part of the world but not of it. This phraseology stuck in me. It came from a book of Hans Kung at that time. I think the books name was “Open Church.” Kung said, we should be in the world but not of it.

I don't think that people have grasped that this created a new generation of people, who will not easily lose it or give up because some church head or somebody is putting some pressure. We learn to go beyond the formal, into the substance. We learn the message of what Bishop Robinson of the Anglican Church, in the book “Honest to God.” He says to live our relationships as if there is God, in other words, we play our responsibility in a serious way. External worship is not the essence. We make our life commitments. We were very young then, but we made our life commitments during these days. We have not given those things up. Some people may say that we are far away from the institutional church. We may not be seen kissing bishops hands or things like that. We just want so see credible leaders who stand by their message by living it. And wherever we see it, we respect it. We do not pay attention to the external garb worn.

What Vatican II brought was a tremendous internal conversion. I was one of those converted to what Vatican II taught. And after all these days, in spite of my limitations I am trying to live that. I respect Fr. Hurley as one person who understood this. One of my mentors was a Dutch priest, who came as a worker priest in Sri Lanka. His name is Henk Schram. He was also known to Fr. Hurley. He was a leading figure who introduced the concepts in the theology of Karl Rahner long before Vatican II. In the fifties, he was already a far thinking priest. Later he went back to the Netherlands and died there.

These people form our souls and the commitment that we were to live. The whole generation that was going in this direction, the Church was unable to live with them. The Church was demanding obedience to formalities. They cannot understand the message of commitment in the act of defiance, defiance of what is corrupt, defiance of what is wrong and the search throughout for what is true. It does not mean that we are correct all the time, that we know the truth all the time, but that there is a church...and that we all have to answer to God one day. It is not our bishop who will answer for us or someone else who will answer for us. We have to answer for ourselves. We have to answer for our children. We have to answer to humanity. And that is the way. The answer we give to humanity is the answer we give to God. You cannot separate, the answer we give to humanity from the answer that is supposed to be given to God. And we learned to think in that way during that time.

We are grateful to this people who shaped our thought, who encouraged us to think, they who were able to appreciate the young people's genuine desire to find their way in the world. So that is why one of the few people I hold in the highest regard in my life. I rank Fr. Hurley as one. He is not just another friendship. It is a very deep friendship. I used to call him Father. He would tell me call me "James." Of course in Sri Lanka, the feudal traditions remain. People always wanted to be addressed by their formal titles. But I have seen Fr. Hurley not only in the light of the traditional church, but also the tradition of Ireland.

Ireland is one of the countries that in my work as a human rights person, and democrat, which has made tremendous contributions. The Irish were a free and independent people, struggling for their liberty,

for their thought, for all these. And here again you see again a man who symbolizes the best things of his country.

So it is a blessing for humanity that from time to time you have people like these walking the earth. Of course he will be very uneasy if you describe him in these terms. He just wants to be treated as just more person. But the fact is that here are genuine human beings walking the earth. By their complete commitment to humanity, they are fulfilling their commitment to whatever religious ideals they believe. So it is my fortune that I came across one such person.

Today as I look back at those times shortly after Vatican II, I feel very sad because the majority in the clergy and hierarchy did not grasp the tremendous change that the council proposed. What a tremendous opportunity was offered. During those times, there were very strong elements in the church, people who taught and expressed themselves as clearly and strongly as possible. That was the strength. There were living, dynamic individuals who expressed the dynamism of the church. In the years to come, we are seeing less of them. And in the years to come, their loss is being seriously taken by a world that is quickly changing.

When I read back the book “Shoes of the Fishermen,” the character that comes very strongly is the character of this Jesuit Philosopher whose views were rejected. People say that this is really the character of Teilhard de Chardin. Teilhard de Chardin understood the years to come far better than anyone else in the church. It was Teilhard de Chardin who foresaw what we are experiencing in the nineties and today in the communication revolution.

Now these people saw that there are tremendous opportunities for human beings to love each other, to serve each other, to help each other for a better world. But somehow that understanding was lost to the “bigger” people, with small minds and small ideas, small world visions. Small minds occupying bigger places.

I suppose as they say, all revolutions have counter revolutions and all progressive steps sometimes have regressive steps. We have seen in the last decade’s regression, the inability to understand man’s role in this planet. These are things that cannot be killed. Whether these things will arise in the institutional form, I no longer really care. As

Bonhoeffer and others enfolded these ideas in a different context. It was institutionally an opportunity lost. Many people preferred to sing their songs in Latin or secure petty advantages they can get from this or that regime than understanding how they can make the world a happy place. The attraction to this may not be in the church in the formal sense. But they are where they should be, and they pursue these goals. And it is up to the institutional church to look back and see what these are. Whether they will be able to do or not, I don't know. History is very peculiar. And history is full of people who cannot understand great opportunities. From an institutional point of view, it is a sad picture but from the human point of view, it was not lost. It has been lived. People like Fr. Hurley and especially the young people who are in various fields who may not be wearing the cross or going to Sunday Mass but who live in the midst of life, of the world.

Appendix IV
Interview with James Clancey by Roberto Reyes
April 11, 2007

1. I came to Hong Kong in 1968. And then I studied Cantonese Language at New Asian College from October 68.
2. I was originally assigned to work in a Parish, St. Patrick's in Wang Tau Hom...I was working with many, different projects in the Parish.
3. Fr. Hurley and I made contact...he originally asked me to help say Mass at the Chinese University, Polytechnic University and a few other places and then eventually he assumed as a chaplain. At that time the student movement was very radical. Many priests did not want to work with University students. They were afraid of that as being too radical.
4. At that time it was 1970-71 when I began. And then he eventually asked me to help at the Polytechnic University. And I would have lunch with the students. And discuss various things with them.
5. I developed what I called "Review of Life." This method by Cardinal Cardine. I was trying to introduced that with students, and how to deal with problems in life. Talk about the problem, ask the group to do something about it, then come back and reflect about it.
6. It was after Vatican II, that I was coming out of the seminary at that time, the big emphasis on the involvement of the laity in the world, and the focus should be on change in the world. And so I used to go with them, and form study groups, scripture reflections and try to get them involve more in social issues. The main issues at that time range from...helping to paint the homes of some widows who just couldn't afford to paint, visiting orphanages, being involve with big social movements, attending demonstrations, and then marching...and coming back and reflecting on that. Reflecting, not only to see whether it was successful or not but reflecting on their faith in the light of their involvement.

7. So I got to know a lot of the students. I still remain in contact with some of them.
8. Shortly after that, around 1973 I have been going to the meetings of the Federation of Catholic Students, the then umbrella organization. Each campus, each university, college or secondary school had a Catholic society. Then they made a federation of Catholic students, Hong Kong wide.
9. It is something similar to the Student Catholic Action in the Philippines, except that we are trying to go beyond the Catholic action model, the pre-Vatican II approach and to get involve more in a post Vatican II laity movement.
10. And so I was attending those meetings and I was writing some articles for the Chu Fai 「曙輝」, the student publication at that time. I wrote articles on a whole range of things. At that time, English was a very ordinary language for University students. So I wrote articles in English, often using pseudonyms.
11. One day I got a call from Bishop Francis Hsu asking me if I would agree to be chaplain together with Fr. Stephen Tam and Sr. Beatrice Leung, a chaplaincy in this Federation of Catholic Students. And the reason was that Fr. Hurley had given his resignation and he was doing other things. And he was there for a number of years.
12. And the short time I was there, Fr. Hurley was involved in a number of movements, one of which was “making the Chinese language” the official language of Hong Kong. At that time English was the official language. So the students were in that movement, I think 1970, so I went to rallies.
13. So Fr. Hurley was very involved, even emotionally. Because as a young man, coming in from Ireland, they were trying to get the Irish language to be the official language of Ireland, and so he had very much identified with this movement in Hong Kong. In a number of speeches he made, I heard him made references to that, the struggle at the time of his youth in Ireland.

14. Fr. Hurley was very charming kind of personality. He was a person who, unlike me, remembered people's names even if he only met them once. And so he could walk up to any student in a room and greet that student by name. Sometimes I have to think and very embarrassingly ask what are their names. So he was very good that way. He was very good in making people feel at ease. So he was often invited to perform marriages and baptisms for his students. And his diary was always full. He never had or seldom had an empty slot for lunch or supper. He was always meeting with students or chaplains and regularly keeping up with people...what their doing ...and reflecting with them. So he was a very pastoral man. Very pastorally concerned about the individual as well as being concerned with the social movements that were taking place in Hong Kong.
15. And so I think because of his experience as a student in Ireland, the setting up of the Republic, he was very concerned about being anti-colonial. And so he was very much in connection, in contact and supporting the various groups, usually the young student groups, and those who have graduated and moved on doing things...in publications and setting up organizations. And he frequently met with them, had contact with them and supported them.
16. My impression again then, both from talking with Fr. Hurley, as well as observing, sometimes I went out with him to meet with his people. They had a great respect for him as an individual. As I mentioned in the beginning, that the student movement was considered very radical, not so much when I was there. But it was getting radical towards the end of his term. But he was very well respected and his presence was very much appreciated when he was out with students and demonstrations.
17. One time he had a discussion with Bishop Hsu. Whether the role of the chaplain should be just sitting in the office or whether he should be going out with students when they were going on demonstrations...
18. So that set a very good precedent for people like myself because it made it easier for us to the same kind of work, to be marching

with students, and encouraging students to be involved and then reflecting with them.

19. We (Fr. Stephen Tam, Sr. Beatrice and Jack Clancey) were called three persons with one body. One time the Bishop called us in and asked, “how can you make the students, allow them to do that?” My answer was, “ we are trying to train leaders and they have a democratic vote. And we chaplains only have one vote. And even with one or two, we cannot stop them. The Bishop said, “but you are the chaplains, you should have a veto vote?”
20. Our approach is, the students make a decision, they give the reasons why they are doing that and several months later, we come back and reflect on it and let them decide themselves whether they think that decision was a bad decision or a good decision, and the reasons for it and the subsequent developments that flowed from whatever they did. So the Bishop accepted that kind of reasoning. But I think we were able to do all of that because of the preliminary work of Fr. Hurley.
21. It is an education in developing democracy and developing a sense of responsibility in the students and a sense of developing a vision that will guide their whole lives. And what they want to do, a vision of what they wanted for society. So we are always inviting people and challenge them. I don’t want to say to push them, but I think it is more to challenge them and give them inspiration.
22. Fr. Hurley helped to do fundraising and everything for developing the Caritas, the student movement...at Caritas...
23. Key moments. One was the protection of the Tiu Yu Islands. Recently there are similar campaigns. They claim that these are Chinese territory, not Japanese territory. (1973-74). The Catholic students got involved with other students in that.
24. The Catholic students also got involved in the anti-corruption movement, again around 1972-73. Fr. Hurley was still the chaplain but I was also getting involved at that time because I was already the chaplain of Polytechnic and I was invited to all the

meetings. And I think you know they were arrested in those parts. In the end they were found out guilty.

25. Then the students got involved in the Golden Jubilee School. I know a lot of teachers there, a team of very young idealistic teachers. And they were very disappointed to know that there was corruption going on. Essentially it was happening in almost every school in Hong Kong. But then you have a group of idealistic teachers who did not know it was happening. And so the student movement got involved in that. And there was a real split in the Church about how that should be dealt with. There are those saying that if you looked the other way...the Government had the same attitude, but then the more idealistic students were very much involved in saying, this kind of thing should not be allowed to happen. There is plenty of documentation in that.
26. I should briefly mention that around that time, when Fr. Hurley was not available, I became the Asian Chaplain for Catholic Students. It was called the International Movement for Catholic Students. I was invited by Bishop Labayen shortly after that to become Secretary for Education and Student Chaplains. And we tried to get the support of the Bishops for some funding proposals that we had. And they agreed to it and in the end they persuaded me to do this...I was not willing to work with Bishops at that time. I didn't want to be corrupted into the system. But Labayen talked me into this, and Dennis Murphy was also there at that time. I didn't want to be corrupted by the system. Labayen and Dennis Murphy...and we had a good boss in the person of Bishop Perez of Imus, Cavite. And he was, a very good boss. I worked for six years in the office of Education and Chaplains. The office was in Hong Kong and the Bishop was in Manila.
27. One of the things I did at that time was...to...because the bishops had this terrible image of students and the students had a terrible image of the bishops, so anytime the bishops wanted a meeting of this committee, I would ask to allot some time for a dialogue with student leaders, to let the bishops know what the students were doing and why they were doing it. And whenever there was a training program for the students, we have one or two week program, I would invite one bishop to be present. So we had Cardinal Steven Hamao of Yokohama. He is now in Rome

working for Migrant workers. He was a student chaplain himself. So he was very often present in the meeting with the students, and he had a very nice way with them. Even Capalla, he was down in Mindanao at that time, he came for a weekend meeting in Bangkok. I remember a student saying after one or two days, “you know, after all, bishops are like ordinary people.” Because they thought bishops were like semi-gods on pedestals.

28. I think that was one of my biggest contributions at that time, to get the dialogue going. I think, especially Bishop Perez, he funded everything we were doing in our office as well as what the students were doing, our publications, our meetings and anything students sort of needed. And I always try to have this understanding going on. So during that period, we had a lot of training programs. Sometimes, we had one, two or three weeks meetings, on the National, Regional or Asian levels. Parallel to that, under specifically the office for Education and Chaplains, training programs for priests and sisters. And we would have the bishops come to those meetings as well. This was from around 1976 to 1981 when I resigned.
29. Part of the second contribution...was in 1975 or 76 in the summer, we had a training program of three weeks, the first time we did it. We had a three week training program for student leaders. Altogether we had about 40 University students. We spent the first two weeks working in a factory and I myself worked and lived in a factory. Terrible conditions. In the evenings we arranged to live in a shack area. We had a couple of shacks where people stayed with families, to experience the lives of poor people, in the shack areas. The main one was in a Government sponsored area where people were allowed to build and put up their own shacks. The experience of living in a public place, and going to a public toilet, and getting water in a public place and all that. And then going to the factory with the workers. Then after two weeks of that, we went to a camp, then we used social science tools to analyze what was happening in Hong Kong. So talks from people in Universities, in Sociology, Economics, Political Science and try to understand what was happening in Hong Kong at that time. In the end we had a couple of talks on scripture and theology. And so I replicated the same approach all over Asia, for Chaplains and students.

30. So for example, in Thailand, in the Cambodians border, you have students planting rice there. Then we come back to the talks and reflections. Towards the last three days, we go through...the following exercise: this is what you experience, this is what the Academics is saying, this is what scripture and theology said, how do you respond as a student and as a young intellectual. The process: here's the reality, what can you do as a young Christian, and how do you continue this? Some of them who came out of that got into very valuable work. Some of them became lawyers, some principals of schools...this is like the parable of the seeds in the gospel...Some fell on good ground, etc.
31. Then the third thing is more publication. To get into the idea of students to learn more, read more to develop their analytical skills that they were learning in the University..to apply to society and to themselves. And to see where they fit in. And there were various things going on at that time: the Marxist approach, the democratic approach. It impressed people how to really listen to others and to see how they fit into the whole scheme of things. Whether they can do something or nothing. Behind all of this is organization.
32. I wrote a book, "Review of Life," which I am being asked to update now. It was a very humbling experience. I want to make a new edition, a new "Review of Life." There are two reviews on the cover, mine and a sister, because she has written an earlier book. And we agreed that each of us will write half of the book.. In the end she couldn't find the time, so I wrote the whole book.. I met a Catholic student in Korea one time who said, "that book changed my life." A number of students also said that the book was very helpful to them. I think I can put out a better edition now after I have had a better experience. So those are probably the main things.



Ordination - July 31, 1958



First Mass - August 1, 1958



Visiting in Rome, 1955 Derek Reid, Gerry Keane,
Pope Pius XII, Peter Brady, James Hurley
(Left to Right)



Photo at Hong Kong, 80's James Hurley, Peter Brady,
Derek Reid, Gerry Keane (Left to Right)



Celebrating Mass with Young Christian Workers, 80's



Press Conference, Student Movement, Boundary Street



Radicalization of Asian Chaplains, Bangalore, India, 70's



Student Baptisms in
St. Teresa's Parish, 70's



Student Baptisms in
St. Teresa's Parish, Kowloon



Thanksgiving to those who
manned trains during a Strike
that summer, 1969



Annual General Assembly,
Hong Kong Federation of
Catholic Students, 1969



Management Committee, Student Centre, Late 70's

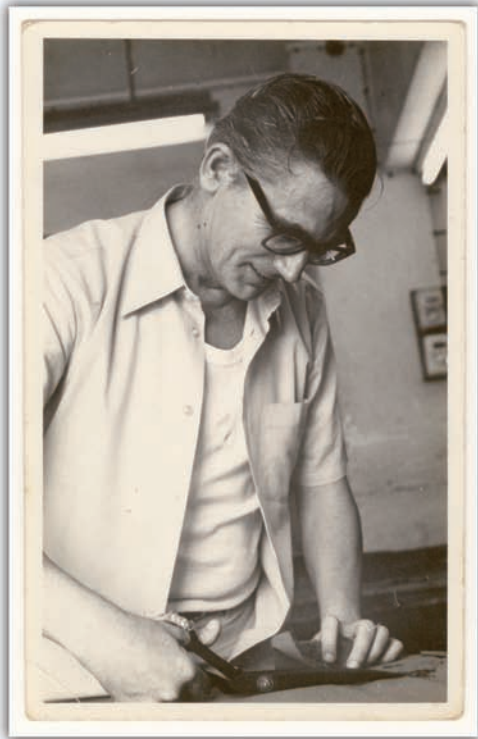


Legion of Mary, Late 70's

**St. Michael's Seminary,
Corrymeela,
Co. Galway.**
November 17th, 1943.

Dear Mr. Hurley,
I regret to have to make a complaint about James Hurley, having considered under certain circumstances, the difficulties and expense of travelling to Christmas and St. Michael's College. Some of the boys that had been very badly and behaved most defiantly. James took an active part in the matter. I think under the circumstances, but after what we have tried to do for him, he showed the boys an ingratitude. I am sure Michael would be very displeased if he heard it.
I hope Mr. Hurley is fairly well; it might be better not to tell her this as it would upset her. I am sure it will help the others.
Best wishes to you all,
Yours sincerely,
J. Finnan.

Complaint letter about student James Hurley, 1943



Working in the Clothes Factory,
1975





Working in the Clothes Factory, 1975



Photo with the Supervisor, 1975



Cut by Fr. Hurley, 1975

姓名姓名及地址
 部门 _____ 工种 _____
 姓名 余理谦 _____
 工作日数 162 天
 本类件 347.86 勤工件 22.1
 加班件 _____ 捕假件 _____
 津贴件 _____ 捕上勤件 _____
 共银件 369.96

Staff Card of the Clothes Factory, 1975



Photo with colleagues, 1975



Photo with newspaper vendor, Ngau Tau Kok, 1989



Photo with Cardinal Wu Cheng-chung, 1977



Photo with Martin Mechan,
former member of IRA(Irish Republican Army)1995



Photo with Peter Beninson, Founder of Amnesty
International (2nd from the left) Wong Tai Sin, 1993

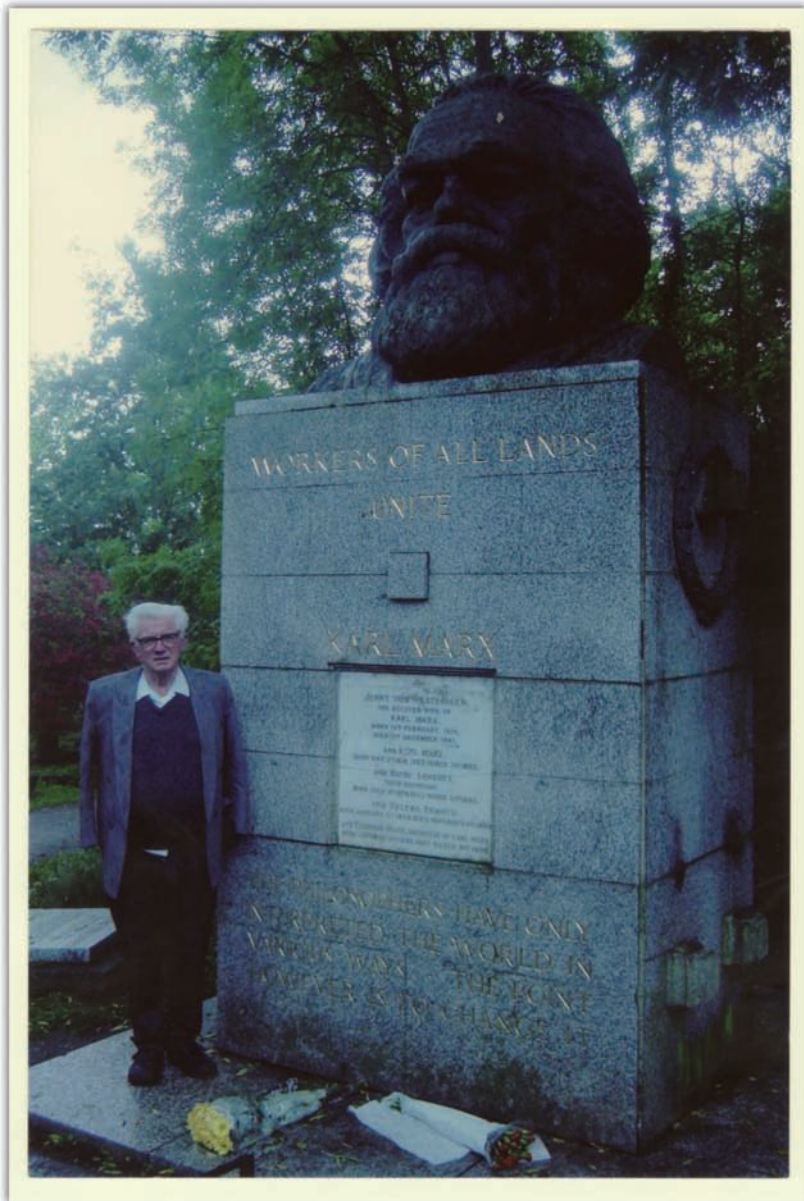


Photo at the Grave of Karl Marx, 2005

Index

A

Alves, Rubem 87
Ambato Diocese of Ecuador 102
Ambrose (St.) 98, 137
Amnesty International 2, 5, 125, 130, 145, 147, 167
Amnesty International delegation to
 Argentina 128
anti-war demonstration, USA 45
Aquinas University College, Colombo 87
Aquinas, Thomas (St.) 99
Arealon, Catalino (S.J.) 79
Argentina Anti-Communist Alliance 128
Argentina Constitution 126
Argentina, Montenegro 127
Argentina, Right of Option 127
Argentina, Security Act 127
Argentina, State of Siege 127
Argentina, Trotskyist Workers
 Revolutionary Party 128
Argentina, uprising in Cordoba 128
Arrevalo (Fr.) 73, 85
Asian Catholic Students 27, 58
Asian chaplains 52, 58
Asian civilizations 24
atheists 92
Avebury (Lord) 128, 129

B

Balasuriya, Tissa 87, 162, 167, 173, 175
Basic Christian Communities 142, 162, 167, 169
Beirut Conference (1968) 36
Bell-Irving, K.K. 133

Berrigan, Dan (S.J.) 70, 72, 74, 76, 77, 78, 90

Berrigan, Phil 75
Blake, Eugene Carson 34
Blenkinsopp, Joseph 89
blind issue 46
Bolivia 82
Bonhoeffer, Dietrich 78
Brazil 34-35, 82, 83, 87, 89
Brazilian Presbyterian Church 87
Buenos Aires 125, 126, 129, 130

C

Camara, Helder (archbishop) 34
Capuchin fathers, U.S.A. 102
Carama, Helder P. (archbishop) 89
Caritas Hong Kong 7, 13, 183
Catholic Post-Secondary (newspaper) 25, 28
Catholic student movement 26, 28
Camara, Helder (archbishop) 34
Capuchin fathers, U.S.A. 102
Carama, Helder P. (archbishop) 89
Catholic student movement, Bangalore 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 60
Catonsville Nine 78
Chardin, Teilhard de 178
Cheng, Vincent 147
Chesterton, G.K. 152
Chinese language movement/ Chinese as official language 22, 44, 46
Chow, Shouson 133
Choy, Ng 133
Christ the Worker Parish 5, 144, 146, 149, 151, 155, 162, 167, 169

Christ the Worker Parish, Amnesty
 International group 167

Christ the Worker Parish, Justice and Peace
 Group 5, 145, 146, 147, 149, 150, 151, 169

Christ the Worker Parish, parish council 147,
 148

Christian poverty 93

Christian-Marxist dialogue 92

Chu Hai College 4, 11-13, 15

Church and politics 18

Clancey, James (Jack) 165, 175, 180, 183

Claver, Francisco (bishop) 89

Clifford, Richard (S.J.) 75, 76

College Student Association of Hong Kong
 11, 12, 14, 16

colonial church 85

Colonialism 61, 62, 85

Communism 62, 97, 98, 99, 102

Communist Manifesto 104, 159

Cornales, Estela Maris 125

Couvreur, Gilles 100

Cox, Harvey 87

D

democracy and the Church 137

democracy and the Hong Kong Church 139

democracy, Asia 24

democracy, development of 131

democracy, Hong Kong 132, 136

demonstrations 11, 44, 46, 90, 167, 180, 182

development 1, 22, 24, 26, 33, 36, 55, 65, 68,
 79, 91, 100, 104, 131, 136, 143, 146, 148,
 173, 183

dialogue 1, 12, 16, 29, 31, 40, 42, 43, 47, 53,
 75, 80, 90, 92, 102, 113, 129, 138, 139,
 143, 152, 184, 185

Diocesan Convention (1971) 151, 18-21

domestic export 107

Domonta, Alice (Sr.) 126

Drinen, Roberto (S.J.) 129

Duff, Edward (S.J.) 77

Dunn, Lydia 136

Duquet, Leonie (Sr.) 127

E

East Asian Pastoral Institute, Manila 105,
 161

ecumenical collaboration 91

education for justice 91

El Salvador 145, 156, 172

Elections 18, 24, 128, 131, 133, 135, 136,
 138, 139, 146

emancipation 101

European Convention of Human Rights 33

expulsion of students 15

F

Far Eastern Economic Review 135, 154

Feaney, Patricia 129

Federation Bimonthly 25

Francis of Assisi (St.) 77, 78

freedom of speech 41, 42

French Bishops Commission on Labour 103

Fribourg meeting (1971) 82, 85

Fronzizi, Arturo (president of Argentina)
 125

G

Golden Jubilee School 184

Gaudium et Spes 138

German Reformed Evangelical Church 87

Ghandi, Mahatma 95

Glempf of Poland (cardinal) 146, 151
global student community 51
Graham, Billy 66
Greeley, Andrew 75
guerilla movement 127
Guindon, William (S.J.) 73
Gutierrez, Gustavo 87

H

Holy Cross Quarterly 74, 75, 77
Hong Kong College Students Social Service
Team 12
Hong Kong Federation of Students 11
Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students
13-14, 25-32
Hong Kong Observers 136
Hong Kong, Civic Association 133
Hong Kong, Executive Council 133
Hong Kong, Legislative Council 22, 39, 44,
47, 131, 133, 135, 146
Hong Kong, movement of representative
Government 135, 136, 140, 146
Hong Kong, Reform Club 133
Hong Kong, Sunday Post 30, 135
Hong Kong, Urban Council 22, 39, 40, 133,
135
Hong Kong University, student union 16-17
Hsu, Cheng-Ping Francis 154, 165, 166, 181,
182
human rights 5, 13, 14, 16, 24, 33-39, 42, 43,
91, 103, 128, 129, 131, 144, 145,
147-149, 173, 175, 178
human rights in Brazil 34,35
human rights in Rhodesia 34-36

I

ideal/ idealism 8-10, 13, 16, 19, 27, 30,
45-47, 51, 59, 62, 64, 66-68, 91, 117, 132,
142, 160, 178,184
Ignatius of Loyola (St.) 123, 159, 162, 168,
169, 172
ILO, International Labour Organization 122
incarnation Church 141
Independent Commission Against
Corruption 115
industrial labour force 107
inequality in Israel 70
institutionalized violence 30, 52, 83
International Commission of Jurists 125
International Movement of Catholic
Students 85, 87
Ireland 3, 4, 8, 49, 50, 73, 74, 157, 163, 164,
167, 174, 177, 178, 181, 182
investment of Church funds 94

J

Jerez, Caesar (S.J.) 92
Jesuit New England Province 73
Jesuits 2, 3, 73, 83, 90, 92, 156, 161, 164,
165, 169, 172
Jesus Christ 39, 57, 87
John Chrysostom (St.) 98
John the Baptist 77, 89
Justice and Peace Commission, Hong Kong
140, 168, 169
Justice and Peace Commission, Singapore
147

K

Kickham, Charles J. 74
Kim of Korea (cardinal) 89

King, Martin Luther 78
Kingdom of God 124

L

Latin America 82-85, 88, 95, 142, 172
Lamont, Denal (bishop) 89
leadership training 16
leftists 4, 16, 41
liberation 26, 54, 79, 82, 84-89, 92, 94-96,
103, 117, 159
liberation spirituality 94
liberation theology 79, 82, 85, 95, 103, 159

M

Maclehose, Murray 135
MacNamara, Robert 83
Magna Carta 13, 131
Marcos, Ferdinand 5, 101
martial law in Philippines 5, 101, 155, 166
martial law in Poland 146
Marx, Karl 121, 122, 159
Marxists 92, 102
Medellin Conference of Latin American
Conference (1968) 84
Ming Pao 140
Misereor Conference, Baguio 94
Moltmann, Jurgen 86, 87, 92
Myrdal, Gunnar 67
mysterious disappearances 126

N

neocolonialism 85
Northern Ireland 50

O

Octogesimo Adveniens 139
oppression, denunciation of 84

P

partnership 117
Pastoral Exhortation on March into the
Bright Decade 141
pastoral letter on 1991 elections 139
Paul VI (pope) 66, 100, 139, 173, 174
Pax Romana 36, 173
people's forum 24
peoples power 131, 132, 140
Permanent Diconate 141
Philippines Federation of Free Farmers 88
Philippines, National Union of Students 37
Pius XI (pope) 18, 121, 138
political action of the Church 91
political development 24
political involvement 55, 141
political prisoners 35, 125, 126, 127, 131,
140, 141, 163, 175
politics 17, 18, 50, 54, 55, 59, 63, 91
prisoners of conscience 5, 147, 148, 149,
151, 168
private property 97-103
Prophet 28, 57, 70-72, 74-80, 85-90, 153,
158
Prophet, Isaiah 72, 78
Prophet, Jeremiah 72, 78
public opinion 40, 41, 89, 136

R

reconciliation 57, 96, 157, 158
religious life of students 25

Report of the Commission of Inquiry into
the Kowloon Disturbance 68
Republican Fenian Movement 74
revolutionary changes of violent form 92
Rice, Patrick (S.J.) 125
riots of 1966/67, Hong Kong 16, 20, 26, 29,
39, 64, 134, 144
Rogers, Anthony (Bro.) 147
role of chaplain 56
Romafial Council for Justice and Peace 35
Romero, Oscar (archbishop) 145, 172

S

Scripture, book of Amos 70-74, 76, 78, 86,
88, 89, 158
Scripture, book of Exodus 85, 95, 104
Scripture, book of Samuel 71
Simpson, Anthony 50
Sobrinho, Jon 142, 172
social action, at international level 91
social doctrine of the Church 158, 172
social ownership 97
Sri Lanka (Ceylon) 52, 173-175, 177
strike/ sit-in 3, 8, 12, 15, 16, 27, 34, 90, 121,
128, 157, 164, 167
student movement 2, 4, 5, 13-15, 22, 26, 28,
29, 43-55, 57, 58, 60-65, 68, 134, 144,
154, 158, 161, 165, 166, 168, 171, 180,
182-184
student movement, defects 48, 49
student movement, obstacles 47, 48
student rights 13, 42, 43
student union 13, 14, 16, 17, 42, 43, 48, 132,
134
Sunday Examiner (newspaper) 28, 38, 61,
63, 104

Synod of Bishops (1971) 85, 92, 115

T

textile industry 107
Tiu Yu Toi (Diaoyutai) issue 44, 46, 49, 134
torture 35, 82, 123, 125, 126, 128-130, 144
Traber, Michael 35
trade union 13, 38, 73, 113, 125, 132, 142
Trube, Howard (Fr.) 144
Tubingen 87
Tutu of South Africa (archbishop) 150

U

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 13,
33, 36
University of Hong Kong 16
University of Lima, Peru 87
Upsala Assembly (1968) 92

V

Vatican Council II 78, 20, 25, 26, 100, 144
violence 17, 20, 30, 49, 52, 63, 83, 92, 93,
128, 168
voice of conscience 45, 46, 65

W

Wah Yan College Kowloon 4, 27, 161, 167
Walesa, Lech 146
Walsh, Richard 49
Ward, Barbara 66
will of people 24, 39, 40, 42, 131
worker priest 144, 161, 177
workers 8, 18, 54, 61, 68, 73, 94, 102,
105-108, 110, 113, 120-122, 128, 144,
149, 167-169, 185
World Assembly of Youth 37

World Bank 83

World Council of Churches 34, 44

writ of habeas corpus 126

Wu, Cheng Chung (cardinal) 139, 153

X

Xin, Weisi 140

Y

youth policy 67

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