

# Convention News

**I**N consultation with the Conveners of the Working Groups, the Steering Committee has decided that there will be a break in the meetings of the Convention during the summer. Accordingly all meetings of the Working Groups will be suspended from July 19 to August 16. The July meetings will take place in the Catholic Centre, those in August, in Caritas Centre, Kowloon. The meetings will recommence with Group 1 (Liturgy) on Monday, August 17.

In response to a large number of requests, identity cards are being prepared and will shortly be sent to all delegates. They should be brought to all meetings that delegates attend after June 21.

## PRIESTLY LIFE

At the last meeting of Group 5 (May 29), the Convener read an answer he had received from the Steering Committee in reply to a query concerning delegates who regularly absent themselves from meetings. The reply suggested that the secretary of the Group write to non-attenders to enquire whether they wish to continue as delegates to the Convention; if a delegate has not been attending because he has no interest in the discussions of the Group or if the evening on which the meetings are held does not suit him, he might like to change to another Working Group. If a communication of this sort elicits no response from the delegates concerned, it may be necessary to go further and inform them they are no longer considered delegates.

Miss Judith Yuen was chosen as English secretary to replace Mrs. Alice Wong, who had requested to be relieved of her responsibilities as secretary.

Discussion was then resumed on section 7 of the draft: The Priest as Servant. Here it is stated that "the ministerial priesthood is service to God's people—a gift not to the person of the minister but through him to the community." This view provoked a good deal of discussion. A member of the drafting commission explained that the point the authors of this section wished to bring out was that the priesthood is a service to the community; they were interested in the reason *why* this gift is given rather than in *to whom* it is given. It was finally decided that the sentence should be rewritten to express clearly that the ministerial priesthood is given to the person of the priest for the sanctification of man.

Objection was taken to a statement in the same section that "the priest must live his life . . . washing the feet of the faithful and taking the lowest rank." While acknowledging that this sentence aims at expressing the attitude of humility that should characterise the priest, a delegate stated that this is too much of an exaggeration. It should be understood that priests are ordained for the service of the community but were not *at* their service. A motion was passed that the section be rewritten with a more positive view of the servant role of the priest while omitting anything that seems exaggerated; an amendment to this motion proposed that discus-

sion be given to other services of the priest, such as care of the poor and the sick.

The section headed: The Priest in Relation to Other People, was then discussed. A delegate pointed out that the title of the section was wider than its contents; the section deals for the most part with relations between priests and their bishop. Hopes were expressed that the revised draft would pay equal attention to the relations of the priest with his fellow priests with the faithful and with non-Catholics.

The Group has now completed its discussions of the first, more theoretical, part of the draft. At the next meeting (Friday, June 12) it is hoped to move on to the more practical issues proposed in the second part of the document.

## SOCIAL MISSION

At a previous meeting of Group 7, it had been decided not to go through chapter 4 (Employment and Working Life) paragraph by paragraph, but rather to discuss first the social principles of the Church as they affect the rights of workers and then to see how these can be applied to the Hong Kong situation. In the fortnight between the last two meetings, a special drafting committee had been hard at work drawing up a statement of Catholic social teaching to serve as a basis for discussion. As it was apparent that this statement, together with a Chinese translation, would not be ready in time to allow the delegates to study it before the meeting on June 2, the chairman, in drawing up the agenda, decided that, in order not to waste a whole meeting, the Group should move on to discuss chapter 5. As it happened, preparing the statement took more time than was anticipated, and it was not ready even in its English version for the meeting.

At the outset of the meeting a worker-delegate proposed a motion that any further discussion by the Group should be on chapter 4 and, if chapter 4 could not be discussed in the absence of the statement on the Church's social teaching, that the meetings of Group 7 should be suspended for the time being. This motion was seconded and accepted by the chairman as many seemed anxious to discuss it. Various opinions were then expressed on the occasion of this motion until about 9.15, when

another delegate proposed that the Group proceed at once without further discussion to vote on the motion. This was accepted almost unanimously. However at this stage a delegate asked for clarification of the motion as it seemed to him to contain two contradictory elements. The chairman read the motion again but the delegate was still not satisfied. Some others then spoke or attempted to speak. For a few moments a certain amount of confusion reigned and several people left the meeting. The vote was then taken and the motion defeated by three votes to 34, with 16 abstentions.

Thus after debating for one-and-a-half hours what should be the topic for discussion that evening, the Group finally got down to an exchange of views on chapter 5 (Living Environment).

A delegate expressed the view that it was not for the Church as an institution to put forward recommendations on matters such as housing and public transport; this is the duty of individual Catholics; it is on this level that we must influence society; the institutional Church should not interfere in politics. Another delegate expressed his regret at the amount of time that had been spent in trying to decide what the meeting should discuss; the problems dealt with in chapter 5 — housing, transport, moral environment — are of vital importance; one million people live in resettlement estates in appallingly crowded conditions — 24 sq. ft. per adult (indeed most enjoy much less); all workers are very conscious of the disgraceful transport services; we are aware of how corruption strikes at the life of the poor every day. "If these aren't problems that we can discuss now, what kind of Christians are we?" he asked. Another speaker brought up the problem of youth enticed into gambling dens and consorting in playgrounds with teddy-boys; prevention is better than cure; more attention therefore should be paid to developing soundness of mind and body. In keeping with this are the recommendations in the chapter concerning the provision of more open space for outdoor games and of more places where students can study in peace and quiet. This same speaker then proposed introducing a motion that the problem of youth morality should be treated in a special chapter. A member of the public who takes a special interest in youth problems hoped that the motion would not be pressed at this stage when it might be more useful to debate ideas rather than motions. He added that although Hong Kong undoubtedly has a youth problem, it is not so serious as that of other large cities.

Another speaker suggested that there is no such thing as a youth problem; we should speak rather of an adult problem. No child is born, he said, with delinquent tendencies; it is adults who run the dens without which there would be no gambling and sell the drugs without which there would be no problems of addiction; the summer youth programme does not get to the heart of the problem; in effect it separates good youths, who avail of the opportunities provided, from bad ones, who do not. There is a serious need, he concluded, to help juvenile delinquents by helping adult delinquents.

## Programme of Forthcoming Meetings of Working Groups

Religious	(No Meeting)
Evangelization	Monday, June 15
Social Mission of the Church	Tuesday, June 16
Communications Media	Wednesday, June 17
Ecumenism	Thursday, June 18
Government of Diocese	Friday, June 19

Place: Caritas Social Centre, Boundary Street, Kowloon  
Time: 8 p.m.-10 p.m.