

# Convention News

## LAITY

ON May 14, Group 4 resumed its meetings which had been temporarily suspended to allow the drafting commission put the finishing touches on their document. The discussion continued from paragraph 15 of the draft: the Convener stated that those who wished to add further suggestions regarding chapter 1 were welcome to do so in writing.

Questioned as to why evangelisation is mentioned in c.2, a member of the drafting commission explained that the document follows Vatican II, which takes sanctification and evangelisation as the two basic elements of the individual apostolate—the concern of this chapter: the omission of evangelisation here might give too narrow a view of the layman's apostolate. A suggestion was made that instead of quoting directly from the Council documents it would be better to take the substance of the idea and put this in simpler words. Another suggestion was that more stress should be placed here and elsewhere in the draft on the penetration of all levels of society with Christian principles.

One speaker sympathised with the drafting commission: it is not easy to gather together the principles concerning the lay apostolate and from these to draw practical recommendations for Hong Kong. The draft on the Liturgy succeeded very well in doing this for the liturgy: the method used there could be a model for the Laity document. An example was given: the document states that charity is the mark of every Christian: what then should we recommend as our attitude to other Christians, to non-Christians, to Communists? Another speaker pointed out that the draft speaks only once (§16) of justice. He asked: is not a strong sense of justice also the sign of every Christian? does our concern for the needy spring from charity or justice? can you have charity without justice?

A delegate stressed that politics and "the conduct of temporal affairs" were within the competence of lay people, not of the Church hierarchy. Again a plea was made for more concrete indications as to how the laity can participate in the renewal of society and political life.

When it seemed that sufficient had been said about the section under discussion the Convener suggested moving on to c. 3 (Apostolic Communities). The first sections of this chapter deal respectively with the family and with youth. Some felt a discussion of youth in a chapter dealing with apostolic communities to be out of place; others asked whether youth should be treated apart from the family. The general feeling seemed to be that the question of youth is so important that it deserves separate treatment.

The observation in the draft that "the formation of a sound Sino-Christian philosophy is highly desirable in order to distinguish eternal realities from their changing expressions" led to some confusion, as the Chin-

ese translation of the term Sino-Christian seemed ambiguous to some. The authors explained what they intended: we cannot speak relevantly about the family in Hong Kong without mention of traditional Chinese attitudes towards the family and the family virtues. The document should aim at producing a synthesis of Christian teaching and the traditional Chinese values which still have meaning today.

## SOCIAL MISSION

At the last meeting (May 19) of Group 7, much of the time was taken up with an exchange of views on the best way to proceed with the discussion of chapter IV (Employment and Working Life Conditions). One delegate proposed that, instead of going through the chapter paragraph by paragraph, the Group should examine first the social teaching of the Church with regard to the rights of workers and then see how these can be applied to the local situation. This view was opposed by another delegate who argued that the actual situation should be treated first before dealing with doctrinal principles. This same speaker felt that in this way workers would have a better opportunity of speaking out for themselves and to their employers. A worker-delegate warned the Group against assigning a passive role to the workers and or taking the view that improvements must come from above without the active involvement of the workers themselves. Drawing attention to the phrase in the draft, "the average worker," he appealed for greater clarity: who, in fact is the average worker? He pointed out that it is not altogether true to assert that "many workers force themselves to work long hours of overtime"; more often it is the employers who force their workers to do overtime on the plea that the machines cannot be let come to a halt. Another delegate contended that the document was "full of misconceptions and fallacies." He stated that some of the proposals may sound good, but they should be carefully examined before being adopted. It sounds good, he said, to state that Government should establish a minimum wage; but, he added, in other places where this had been done, employers had taken this minimum wage as the standard wage and gave no more. Another speaker asked that the notion of worker here should be broadened to include all who suffer injustice and bad working conditions. Many workers, he said, are better off than many poorly paid clerks, and he gave the example of a F.5 teacher in Tsuen Wan who earned only \$150. The chairman of the drafting commission pointed out that although the emphasis in c.4 is on industrial workers, others (e.g. shop assistants, white collar workers, etc.) are not excluded. A long other points made were: this is a Catholic Convention: we should let all know where the Church stands on social justice: hence the need to set out clearly Catholic social

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## Programme of Meetings for the Coming Week

Religious	(No meeting)
Social Mission of the Church	Tuesday, June 2
Communications Media	Wednesday, June 3
Ecumenism	Thursday, June 4
Government of Diocese	Friday, June 5
Evangelization	Saturday, June 6
Place: Caritas Centre, Boundary Street, Kowloon	
Time: 8 p.m.—10 p.m.	

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teaching; Vatican II studied man's concrete situation first and in the light of his actual situation developed the relevant principles; it is through his human circumstances that God speaks to man; but God also speaks to man through a well-informed conscience: and to form his conscience in this area a Catholic must first listen to the Church's social teaching; the Church in her official documents wants "a hundred times more" for the worker than the draft document, e.g. industrial democracy; to do justice to the Church's social teaching would require the study of at least 7 encyclicals: it would be more practical to go through the 14 pages of chapter 4 of the draft; the principles mentioned in the draft are sufficient: these alone ought to be discussed.

After a resolution had been passed to end the discussion, the motion was put to the vote. As a result, it was resolved (by 46 votes to 37, with 3 abstentions) that the Group should examine social principles first and later see how these can be applied to Hong Kong. Another motion, that these principles be set out accurately and concisely, was passed without opposition.

It had been hoped that before the next meeting it would have been possible to send Working Group members a statement on the social principles of the Church regarding workers' rights; unfortunately this has proved impossible, due chiefly to insufficient time to prepare a Chinese translation. Therefore at the next meeting (June 2, Kowloon Caritas) the Group will discuss c.5 (Living Environment) and later return to c.4.

## COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

At the last meeting of Group 8 (May 20), discussion came to an end on the rewritten Introduction. The final paragraph (n. 15) was criticised as being negative, derogatory and preachy, needing to be changed and redone. These and other comments made at the previous meeting will be taken into consideration by the redrafting committee. On this understanding the paragraph was passed without opposition, three persons abstaining.

The Group then moved on to debate the section of the original draft entitled *Catholic Publications*. Invitations had been sent to 11 persons closely connected with various publications in the diocese to attend the meeting and give the Group the benefit of their experience. Some of those invited did attend. At the outset a delegate queried the appropriateness of the title of the section, *Catholic Publications*: this is out of line with the other section titles in the document where the adjective is not used. The same delegate proposed a new scheme for this section: (a) short introduction on the print media; (b) general survey of the Hong Kong situation; (c) survey of the efforts of the Church in this area.

Another delegate pointed out the importance of this proposal: it would in fact alter the whole trend of the draft, which seems to concentrate on a rather narrow, strictly Catholic, view of the communications media. Not all agreed however with thus widening the scope of the section: an introduction to each section would needlessly multiply introductions; too much time would be needed to make a survey of the secular press; our responsibility was more immediately to Catholic publications; if the trend implicit in the proposal were accepted, how would the Group differ from the (then) current IPI Congress?

Those in favour of widening the scope of the document pointed out that the Catholic press could not remain an island cut off from the secular press; Catholics read the secular press before the religious press; the Convention aims at penetrating the diocese with the spirit of Vatican II: the Council painted a picture of a local Church at the service of the people of the place: in Hong Kong the vast majority is non-Catholic: we must place ourselves at their service too, through press, radio and TV; it will be difficult to draw up a general survey of the press situation in Hong Kong, but a way must be found to overcome this problem. A motion to change the title of the section, with all that this implied for the scope and trend of the whole document, was then put to the vote and passed by 15 votes to 6, with 1 abstention recorded.

At this point it was decided,

in deference to the invited guests, to discuss the Catholic press. The debate opened with the question: what is the function of the Catholic newspaper? One delegate drew attention to a statement issued at an international conference at Bergamo Centre, in which the role of the diocesan paper was defined as enlightening the Catholic about his world and his role in it, with nine ways of doing this. Several practical suggestions were offered in the course of the ensuing exchange of views: all those connected with Catholic publications in the diocese should get together from time to time to exchange ideas; our diocesan papers should comment on local news items and criticise the local press; the editorial of the *Kung Kao Po* need not necessarily be a translation of that of the *Sunday Examiner*: the setting up of an editorial board might help here. A final question, how to widen the appeal of our existing publications, produced no noteworthy suggestions.