

# Convention News

## SOCIAL MISSION OF CHURCH

THE entire two hours of the last meeting of Group 7 (September 8th) were spent discussing procedural matters concerned with the setting up of a redrafting committee. The rather modest result of the evening's debate was agreement that Chinese should be the language used in rewriting the draft document; that the two secretaries of the Working Group should be ex-officio members of the re-drafting committee; that the Convener should not be an ex-officio member; that three other persons should be elected to the committee; and that voting for these three members should take place at the next meeting.

It is all the more regrettable that so little should have been accomplished at this last meeting in view of the fact that the previous meeting, scheduled for August 25th, had been cancelled. Working Group 7 has held 11 meetings so far. But at only three of these can it be said that a fruitful exchange of ideas took place. If the Group wishes to finish its work by the Easter deadline, it will have to put resolutely aside all further time-consuming discussion of procedural matters and get seriously to grips with the draft document.

## COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

AT a meeting on September 9th, Working Group 8 discussed a) the possibility and b) the desirability of publishing a Catholic daily newspaper in Hong Kong. On the financial aspect of the question, one speaker said he assumed a daily paper would have to pay its way, and hence would have to enjoy a very large circulation, large enough to attract advertisers in sufficient numbers. Another delegate pointed out that a Catholic daily would be welcomed in Hong Kong (many parents, he said, do not bring home the daily papers they buy on the way to work because they are unwilling that their children should see them); however, to produce a daily paper

requires the services of a large team of professionals, editors, feature writers, reporters, businessmen. A third delegate stated that the diocese would have to be prepared to make a large outlay to subsidize a daily paper; but if the diocese had that sort of money to spare, he went on, it could use it far more usefully in improving the present weekly papers. Another speaker stated that he thought in other parts of the world Catholic daily papers are proving a bit of an embarrassment, and added that it is most unlikely that any other diocese in the world is thinking of starting a daily newspaper at this time.

If it is necessary to correct wrong impressions resulting from inaccurate reports in the secular press, another speaker pointed out, it is precisely in these secular newspapers that the correction should be made hence it would be far more practical to recommend gathering together a group of lay people with a talent for journalism who would write for the secular press either special articles or letters to the editor, correcting slanted or inaccurate reporting of news concerning the Church.

Among the points made by the supporters of a Catholic daily in Hong Kong were: many now successful newspapers started off with an act of faith and without a guaranteed circulation many items of news about the Church get twisted when reported in the secular press, and weeklies, of their very nature are unsuitable for dealing with this problem; a Catholic daily would be a splendid vehicle for both evangelisation and pre-evangelisation; it is not difficult to recruit personnel for a meaningful and worthwhile enterprise; a Catholic daily need not be too overtly Catholic; it would be sufficient if it advocates where necessary the Christian view of things.

A delegate suggested that the *Sunday Examiner* and *Kung Kao Po*, if given a slightly different orientation, could serve as a bridge between the present Catholic weekly press and a possible future Catholic daily. This

new direction would consist in a process of de-clericalisation and the addition of a number of features that would go into a daily paper. In this way the diocese could make a pilot study to discover what response a Catholic daily paper would meet with.

As a result of the debate a motion was passed recommending the setting up of a committee of "competent, interested and experienced persons to investigate the whole question of the feasibility and desirability of a Catholic daily paper." After a short discussion of Catholic magazines in the diocese, two recommendations were made: a) since it is felt that there is no need for more Catholic magazines, our energies should be directed towards improving the existing ones; and b) the editors and publishers of religious magazines in the diocese should organise themselves into a group and hold regular meetings to discuss matters of common interest.

## ECUMENISM

ON Thursday, September 10, the Ven. Archdeacon James Pong of the Anglican Church attended the meeting of Group 9 and spoke of his reactions to the draft document. In the course of his address, the Archdeacon brought up many interesting points: he expressed the hope that the diocese would apply for full membership of the Hong Kong Christian Council (the draft speaks only of representation on the Council); he urged that careful consideration should be given to more sharing of church buildings by Christian bodies of different denominations (a good deal of this kind of sharing goes on at present) and he hoped that no more single-denomination churches would be built, especially in new resettlement areas where land for building purposes is so scarce. The week of Prayer for Unity, he continued, is always a crowded time; he suggested

therefore that the kind of events that take place at that time should be held also at other times of the year; here he mentioned that prayers for Christian unity are offered every Sunday in Anglican churches at Matins and Holy Communion.

The draft document recommends that the new catechism being prepared for the diocese should include a chapter on the ecumenical movement: Archdeacon Pong stated that all candidates for baptism and confirmation in the Anglican Church are specially instructed in Church unity. The draft also speaks of "dialogue at top level, e.g. official discussions between the Churches concerning baptism, marriage and religious terminology, especially Chinese."

The speaker pointed out that nothing is said about "conversations and negotiations," which he saw as further steps going beyond mere dialogue. He is convinced that the Anglican Church has an important role to play in this connection as a bridge between the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. He expressed appreciation of the fact that books and paperbacks by Protestant authors are on sale at the Catholic Centre and that space is given in the *Sunday Examiner* to the doings (in Hong Kong and elsewhere) of Anglicans and Protestants. He called the attention of his audience to the fact that the Anglican diocese produce a Chinese weekly paper similar to the *Kung Kao Po*.

Archdeacon Pong fully supported the draft document's understanding of true ecumenism as demanding absolute loyalty to one's faith and complete rejection of indifferentism; he hoped that Christians in greater numbers would attend the religious services of denominations other than their own. In this regard he remarked that he had the impression that more Protestants attend Catholic services than the other way round.

Concerning mixed marriages the speaker stated that the diffi-

culty raised by the Catholic Church's attitude to this problem still remains, although the situation had recently improved, following on the publication of recent instructions by the Holy See. In his opinion the religion of the children of a mixed marriage should be left to the free determination of the parents or to the preference of the children themselves if of an age to make a choice in this matter.

At the end of the talk the Convener, Father John Tse, thanked Archdeacon Pong for his kind and helpful remarks which, he said, would be of real assistance to the redrafting committee in their work of revising the document.

## Programme of Meetings of Working Groups during coming week

Religious	No Meeting
Evangelisation	Monday, September 21
Social Mission of Church	Tuesday, September 22
Communications Media	Wednesday, September 23
Ecumenism	Thursday, September 24
Government of Diocese	Friday, September 25

Place: Catholic Centre, Hong Kong  
Time: 8 a.m. — 10 p.m.

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