

# Convention News

**A**N important meeting of the members of the Steering Committee and the Conveners of the Working Groups took place shortly before Christmas. The agenda sent out beforehand had this to say about the Convention documents:

## DOCUMENTS IN PERSPECTIVE

"... it is important to view the documents in the right perspective. We would be making a mistake if we were to judge the success of the Convention wholly, or even chiefly, by the documents that will emerge from it. Much benefit has already come from the meetings. The very fact that there has been a Convention at all has helped to shake people out of their complacency and to awaken many in the diocese to the realization that the Church here must renew itself and its structures in view of the rapid transformations that have occurred and continue to occur in the world around us.

"The Convention has been for many an introduction into the difficult art of dialogue which, please God, will bear fruit in the years to come. Catholics — laity and clergy — have found in the Convention the opportunity of doing something together on an equal footing; lay people have even dared to contradict flatly what priests have said — and both priest and layman have lived to tell the tale! Many people have heard new ideas for the first time and have gradually come to accept them or, at least, no longer to fear them.

"Perhaps most important of all, through the Convention we have exposed ourselves; we have revealed to ourselves and to others the quality of our Catholic life: the apathy and enthusiasm of priest and people for renewal; our fears and

hesitations; our boldness and imaginativeness; our knowledge and our ignorance; our strengths and our weaknesses; our aptitude for dialogue and our emotional blocks; our charity and our intolerance. There it all is, an objective picture of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong reflected above all in the discussions (or lack thereof!) at the meetings. This — for better or for worse — is us, warts and all!

"All this is sheer gain and represents what probably will prove to be the most lasting result to come from the Convention. The documents are of course important — but documents have the habit of remaining unread and of quickly becoming out of date".

## PLenary SESSIONS

The agenda later spoke of the Plenary Sessions:

"... it seems utterly out of the question to have any kind of discussion of the documents by the full assembly of 420 delegates. You have only to reflect on how little we accomplish in two hours at a meeting of fairly manageable proportions. How long would it take to discuss in any really helpful way the 11 documents at a meeting of 420 persons?"

"Even if it were technically feasible, would the results be worthwhile? Presumably those interested in, say, liturgy, already attend the discussions of Group 1 or have sent in their views in writing. An open discussion by the 420 delegates would only mean that the arguments that have been heard and considered at the Group meetings would be rehearsed once again to nobody's profit.

"Moreover, it is well to bear in mind that if we want a sizable proportion of the 420 delegates to attend the plenary sessions, we just cannot ask them to come together too often."

After the views of those present at the meeting had been heard, the following decisions were taken:

1. The work of the 11 Groups must finish by Easter 1971.
2. Each Group will decide how best to bring its work to a conclusion by that date.
3. There will be just one plenary meeting of the 420 delegates.
4. Before this plenary meeting
  - a. the Redrafting Committee of each Group will be asked to take out of each revised document the practical recommendations. These will then be sent to the delegates;
  - b. delegates will be requested to mark each recommendation *yes / no / yes with reservations*. If a recommendation is marked *yes with reservations*, the reservations must be written out;
  - c. reservations that receive 10 per cent of the number of votes cast will be recorded in a footnote to the document.
5. At the Plenary Meeting the results of the voting will be made known, the revised documents will be handed over to the Bishop and the Diocesan Convention brought to an end with a Mass of Thanksgiving.

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From now until Easter there will be a few changes in the regular programme of meetings. Two Groups, n. 7 (Social Dimension of the Church) and n. 10 (Government of the Diocese) will meet every week, on Tuesdays and Fridays respectively. Group 11 (Evangelization) will continue to meet fortnightly, but will change from alternate Saturday to alternate Wednesday evenings.

Group 5 (Priestly Life) and Group 8 (Communications Media) have suspended meetings until their redrafting committees have put the finishing touches to their revised documents.

(A lengthy report from the Evangelization Commission has been held over for next week—New Year necessity.)

## Programme of Working Group Meetings during Coming Week

Liturgy and Sacraments	Monday, February 8
Religious Instruction	Tuesday, February 9
Social Mission of Church	Tuesday, February 9
Education	Wednesday, February 10
Laity	Thursday, February 11
Government of Diocese	Friday, February 12

**Place:** Caritas Centre, Boundary Street, Kowloon.

**Time:** 8 p.m.—10 p.m.