

The Most Reverend John Baptist Cheng-Chung Wu, Bishop of Hong Kong, on behalf of the Catholics in the local diocese, has sent to the Government of China, through the Hong Kong Branch of the Xinhua News Agency, a statement of the Catholic's position on the future of Hong Kong.

This statement was prepared after half a year of careful reflection and careful discussion of information and ideas. The draft was revised again and again.

In the past two years, the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong has expressed its position on the future of Hong Kong on various occasions and in various media. This, however, is the first complete statement officially discussed and issued.

In offering this statement, Bishop Wu, the leader of over 270,000 Catholics in Hong Kong, has at heart not only the Catholic community but the whole of Hong Kong. It is hoped that the statement will help all the people of Hong Kong, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, to reflect upon and to strengthen their confidence in and their hopes for the future of Hong Kong.

The full text of the statement follows.

**Statement On
The Catholic Church and the Future of
Hong Kong
by
The Most Reverend John Baptist
Cheng-Chung Wu
Catholic Bishop of Hong Kong**

1. In 1997 China will resume sovereignty over Hong Kong and make it a special administrative zone. Facing this historical change, I, as Catholic Bishop of Hong Kong, have consulted separately with my Diocesan Board of Consultors, the council of Priests, Pastoral Council, Executive Committee of the Central Council of Catholic Laity, Chinese Priests' Association, and the Association of Men and Women Religious Superiors. We reflected on and discussed this matter together in the light of faith and in the spirit of the Gospel, and now I make the following statement and express our sincere desire to continue to work with and for the people in freedom and in harmony.
2. As Chinese, we are proud of our heritage - of our long history and our rich culture, which we treasure. Its high moral values and noble ideas have been repeatedly admired and praised by the Catholic Church which respects and embraces all the positive elements present in every culture.
3. As people of Hong Kong we want to work, in solidarity with all fellow members of the community, for the good of Hong Kong and for the well-being of society. Our special concern and love go out to the weak, the poor, the sick, the elderly and the lonely, and those in any way deprived or disabled. We are particularly committed to improving the quality of life - a quality of life which promotes the total development of the human person - body, mind and spirit. In short, we will continue to strive to make

Hong Kong a better and more humane place in which to live.

4. As Catholics we worship God and love our fellowmen. We believe in Christ who is the Mediator between God and man, the Redeemer of mankind. He preached and suffered, died and rose again. He founded the Church on Peter to teach all nations and bring good tidings to the world. We are called to continue this mission of preaching Christ and proclaiming the Gospel by loving service to all people.
5. As the Catholic Bishop of Hong Kong, I assert unshakably the right to religious freedom. This is a basic human right, given by God, and is now enjoyed by all people in Hong Kong. This right is demanded by man's dignity and is inherent in the very nature of man. It is essential that this basic right, and the free exercise of that right, which has been solemnly declared by the United Nations, be clearly enshrined, explicitly expressed and effectively guaranteed in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and in the Basic Laws of Hong Kong. This will help to strengthen the confidence of the people.
6. Religious freedom and we enjoy it in Hong Kong includes the following rights :
 - a. The right to have or to adopt a religion or belief of one's choice, and to manifest it in worship, observance, practice and teaching.
 - b. The right of the individual to worship in private

and public, alone and with fellow believers.

- c. The right to make one's religion known to others, and to instruct those who are interested in this religion by the spoken and written word.
 - d. The right of parents to provide religious instruction in bringing up their children.
 - e. The right of religious communities and associations and to hold meetings and to promote educational, cultural, charitable and social activities.
 - f. The right to appoint personnel, to train them and to send them abroad for specialized studies and at the same time the right to utilize, if and when necessary, the services of personnel from abroad.
 - g. The right to erect and/or use building for religious purposes and to acquire such property if necessary.
 - h. For the Catholics, in particular, the right to maintain their existing links and their existing unity with the universal Church, though union with the Pope and also with the Bishops and Catholic communities in other parts of the world. This unity is basic to the Catholic Church's belief.
7. The Catholic Church has been established in Hong Kong for over 140 years. Inspired by God's love for the world and for mankind, we have tried to fulfill Christ's Mission of Evangelization and to follow His example – to serve and not to be served. Throughout those years we have been working with and for the people of Hong Kong, doing our utmost to contribute

in the fields of education, medical care and social welfare, without discrimination of sex, race, or creed. This is evidenced by the fact that over 95% of those who have availed themselves of the services provided by the Catholic Church are non-Catholics. Now and in the future we will continue to contribute actively to the all-round well-being of the community in the same spirit of love and service within the limits of our competence and our resources. We will keep on striving to help in building up Hong Kong into an even more dynamic and even more highly developed and just society of which we shall always be proud to be members. We believe that a genuine and faithful Catholic is also a genuine and good citizen.

+ John Baptist Cheng-Chung Wu
Catholic Bishop of Hong Kong

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
15th August, 1984