

On Crossing Bridges: One Church, Two Faces

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The Catholic Church in China is growing rapidly. The Catholics are faithful to God, and they express their faith in different ways. But as a mission country, we should always remember some lessons taken from the Chinese Catholic Church history. The Church will have to find ways to accomplish the work of evangelization in China, indeed, methods which recognize the peculiar situation and history of the country.

It has been several hundred years since the Gospel was first introduced to China in 635 A.D., and the Catholic Church in China has undergone various trials and tribulations at different stages of her history. There were, however, intervals of respite. The Church was able to take root in China during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), and it flourished rapidly during this period. The Church suffered persecutions many times under different dynasties which followed. Especially after 1949, the Catholic Church in China started a new history and faced a new reality and challenges as the Communists took over the entire Mainland China, probably the most difficult period of the history of the Church in China.

After 1978, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, and with his open door policy, freedom of religion was granted once again. Since 1980,

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the Church has been growing very fast, and surprising the Western countries who were otherwise experiencing grave difficulties. However, on account of some historical reasons which we hope to discuss later, symptoms of what will become the source of serious divisions begin to appear within the Church in China. The Chinese Catholic Church divides into two segments: commonly known as the “Open Church” and the other the “Underground Church”. The very sad thing is that this division has created a lot of difficulties to the Catholic Church in China, obstacles that continue until today.

In 1981, Pope John Paul II had spoken to China on many different occasions addressing the Catholic Church in China as a whole. He emphasized the unity between the universal Church and the Chinese Catholic Church. On June 30, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI wrote a pastoral letter entitled “*Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China.*” The constant theme throughout the Papal Letter was that the Catholic Church in China is one, not two.

On 1 October 1949, Mao Zedong declared the establishment of the People’s Republic of China with the famous words, “The Chinese people have stood up.”¹ The People’s Republic of China was established by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Mainland China. Mao Zedong became the first president. Since 1949, the Catholic Church has been facing different challenges. Now the situation of the Chinese Catholic Church (CCC) is still very complex. This Church presents many serious theological and missiological challenges to our traditional ideals of Church structures and organization. If these challenges are not seriously addressed, the result could have far reaching effects on the future of the worldwide Church. Over the centuries, Christianity have attempted on several occasions to take root and flourish in China, but each time these attempts are met with very limited success. When foreign missionaries were expelled in the early 1950’s, the prevalent idea was that once more Christians would soon disappear from China. What a surprise then, that thirty years after 1980, the West discovers that the Christian faith not only had survived but it actually has been

¹ See Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity* (London: Found Paperbacks, 1988), 187.

growing rapidly. In 2007, data from the *Holy Spirit Study Centre* in Hong Kong show that there are presently more than 12 million Catholics in China. In 1949, during the coming to power of Mao Zedong, there were about 3 to 4 million Catholics. According to *Asian News* source, in China “there are over 150 thousand newly baptized people yearly, most of which are adult. The important factor is that many of them come from various cultural spheres of the cities, universities and business world.”²

Here, one must know that after 1980, although the Chinese Catholic Church has been developing very fast, and indeed a matter of surprise and wonder to Western countries, because of some historical reasons, some divisions among the faithful were already beginning to appear within the Church. The Chinese Catholic Church was being divided into two segments. People call one the “Open Church”(OC) and the other the “Underground Church”(UC). At the same time, some very sad things have been happening within the Church in China. Especially for some people who do not really know the reality of the Chinese Catholic Church, it is very easy for them to think that there are two churches in China at present because they only get very limited information about the Open Church and the Underground Church in China. Therefore there is an urgent need for people to understand the reality of the Open Church and the Underground Church in China. People should know there is only one Catholic Church in China.

The Problem of Understanding the Problem

The history of the Catholic Church in China has been for a long period of time filled with hardships. Many centuries have passed since the Gospel was first introduced into China. The development has been distinct during different periods. Different problems have appeared in every age. In 1949, the whole heritage of the past fell on the shoulders of the Chinese Community. Looking today at what that small and unaided community has achieved and considering the agonies that it has had to endure, its performance can only be described as heroic. Heroic perseverance, long heroic suffering, and heroic fidelity to the message of the Gospel. Today, that same Church which has survived decades of persecution is striving to find acceptance in China, by its people as a Chinese Church. At the same

² “Statistics for China’s Catholic Church” in *Tripod* 27, no. 144 (Spring 2007). 21.

time it is striving to be accepted by the rest of the world as a true and legitimate local Church.

On January 19, 2007, a special meeting was held in the Vatican. Its theme was "The situation of the Catholic Church in China." Some Chinese bishops attended the meeting. During the meeting, an official statement was released by the Vatican Press Office about the Chinese Catholic Church. The statements highlights that the Open Church (almost in its totality) is in communion with the Pope. "The Church notes with particular joy that almost all the bishops and priests are in communion with the Holy Father." At least 85% of the bishops from the Open Church – registered and recognized by the government – have been for years in contact with the Holy See, contrasting the work of the Patriotic Association bent on creating a Church independent of Rome.³ An influential Vatican official has insisted that there is only one Catholic Church in China. "There is only one Church with two faces," said Cardinal Roger Etchegaray. "There is not one 'patriotic' Church and one 'Underground' Church." Rather, he said, the different groups constitute "two faces of the same community, which seeks to be both faithful and at the same time patriotic."⁴

So, in order to get the answers to the main problem and to deepen the understanding of what we hope to achieve in this paper, it is necessary to answer the following questions:

1. What was the history of the Chinese Catholic Church from 635 A.D. to 1978? What is the special situation of the Chinese Catholic Church after the Communists took over China?

³ "Vatican-China." Retrieved January 20, 2007 from <http://www.asianews.it>

⁴ "Cardinal declares that China has "one Church with two faces" Retrieved 20 July 2007 from <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-religion/1012959/posts>. Cardinal Etchegaray was a former president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, who since his retirement from the post has frequently served as a special diplomatic envoy for the Pope. He was in China 2003, from September 22 to the beginning of October. He visited China for he was to participate in ceremonies honoring Father Armand Davis, a 19th century missionary and scientist who was born in the same French-Basque village as Cardinal Etchegaray. But during his stay in China the Cardinal also was invited by government leaders in Beijing, and was an official guest of the government at the celebration of the October 1 national holiday. Retrieved July 20, 2007 from <http://www.cathnews.com/news/310/164.php>.

2. What is the situation of the Chinese Catholic Church after 1980? What divisions appeared between the Open Church and the Underground Church? How did the division develop? What are the responses from different groups to the division between the Open Church and the Underground Church?

3. How are we to understand the Open Church and the Underground Church in China today? What are the Open Church and the Underground Church doing for reconciliation and communion? Is there one Church or two Churches in China?

Towards an Open Community of Faith

With the approach of the Holy Year in 2000, Pope John Paul II sent a message to the Catholic community in China, in which he said: “I rejoiced when I learned that you intend as your most precious gifts, on the occasion of the Great Jubilee, to bring unity among yourselves and unity with the successor of Peter.” He urged the Chinese Catholics, who are members of the Open Church and the Underground Church, to respond to the Holy Spirit by forgiving one another whatever needs to be forgiven, by drawing closer to one another, by accepting one another and by breaking down all barriers in order to overcome every possible cause of division. Yes, he asked them to face the complex situation of the Chinese Catholic Church. If we want to really understand today’s Chinese Catholic Church, we have to understand the situation of the Open Church and the Underground Church objectively.

After Vatican II, the Church has experienced a big shift in ecclesiology. The Church of Asia is continually being challenged by the universal Church and by the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) toward a “new way of being Church in Asia.” Inspired by the spirit of Vatican II, the whole Church is moving from being a “sealed house” to being an open community of faith. The Holy Spirit is moving everywhere in the Church to renew the faith. In this way, the Church can open the window to get some fresh air and open the door to the wider world, to share and dialogue about God’s salvation. Similar to other sister Churches all over the world, the Chinese Catholic Church specially needs to be strengthened and renewed by the spirit of Vatican II.

The Church has interpreted and carried out her mission through the ages in different manners and with different paradigms. We can only understand this by perusing the facts of history, the changing Chinese context, and the present situation of the Church in China.

The historical study covers a period of 28 years (From 1980 to the present). This paper hopes to address the authentic, the practical or the effective means of evangelization in the situation of China. It is especially focused on helping people understand the Open Church and the Underground Church objectively and to improve the means to reconciliation and communion within the Chinese Catholic Church, and to find new ways to develop the Chinese Catholic Church. The social transformation that has taken place in Mainland China since 1949, after Chinese Communist Party took over China, will be seen as background in order to explain and understand the modern Chinese Catholic Church. On account of varying social and political changes, the Church in China has experienced significant changes. Based on the complex situation of the Chinese Catholic Church in modern China, this paper will also present the reality of the Catholic Church in Mainland China, and its need for renewal in the spirit of Vatican II.

To guide my readers in perusing my paper, I find it necessary to introduce at this point some backgrounder of some terms I will be using:

Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association: Established in 1957 and re-founded in 1980. It is a Chinese Catholic political organization and an arm of the Communist Party in China. It is absolutely not the Church and also cannot represent the Chinese Catholic Church even though it has often acted as the mouthpiece of the Chinese Church or local Church in the past.

Chinese Catholic Bishop's Conference: The official Chinese Catholic Bishop's Conference was founded in 1980 with the Chinese government's encouragement and permission. The Underground Chinese Catholic Bishop's Conference was founded by some underground bishops in 1992 without the permission of the Chinese government. The Holy See has not officially recognized either the Chinese Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Open Church or that the Underground Church.

Open Church: Often called "official church," "registered church," "public church," "patriotic church," "above church," and so on. Since its

religious activities are sanctioned by the Chinese Communist Government, the term “open church” is used in this study.

Underground Church: Often named the “unofficial church,” “unregistered church,” “loyal church,” “silent church,” “suffering church,” and so on. Since its religious activities are limited by the Chinese Communist Party, the term “underground church” is used in this study. The terms “Open Church” and “Underground Church” are used in this study without any value judgments.

Religion: A basic attitude human beings should take toward God their Creator and Redeemer. The moral virtue of religion expresses itself in adoration and wholehearted service to our loving God.⁵ Therefore religion is a living socio-individual realization, in doctrine, conduct and ritual, involving a relationship with something that goes beyond or enfolds human beings and their world, and that prolongs itself in tradition and in a community. Religion is something that is always understood to be the ultimately true reality, be it in God. It is lived in the hearts of human beings; a conscious-unconscious believing view of life, an attitude towards life, a way of living life. It is an expression of a relationship with one’s God.

Mission: Mission, from the Latin word *missum* (meaning “sent”), is defined as a duty that involves fulfilling a request. In its broadest sense, “mission” is everything that the church does in service of the kingdom of God. However, in a more restricted sense, mission refers to “missionary activity,” the preaching of the gospel among peoples and cultures where it is not known. It is used particularly to indicate the “sending” by God, with the task of carrying his message with its purpose of conversion and planting the church.⁶ It is mostly exercised in certain territories recognized by the Holy See.

Nestorians: Christians who entered China by its western land border as early as around 635 AD, to bring to people the knowledge of Christianity. Their presence in China is attested to by a “stele” or stone monument with inscriptions, brought to the attention of Jesuit missionaries

⁵ *A Concise Dictionary of Theology*, 2001 ed., s. v., “Religion” by O’Collins and Farrugia, (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2001).

⁶ See Vat II, *AG*, no. 6.

in 1625. The monument was erected in 781, during the Tang dynasty. The Nestorians were influential in China until the fall of the Yuan or Mongol dynasty in 1368.

The Nestorians are followers of Nestorius who refused to call Mary *Theotokos* (God-bearer); according to him, she should only be called Christotokos (Christ-bearer). This is a consequence of the teaching that there were “two natures” in Christ. The Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, in 431, rejected the teaching of Nestorius as heretical. There is nothing in the Chinese Nestorian stele that is characteristic of the Nestorian heresy.

Dialogue: Any form of meeting and communication between individuals, groups or communities, to bring about a better grasp of the truth, and to achieve better human relations in a spirit of sincerity, respect for persons, and mutual trust. It is an intrinsic dimension of the single but complex articulated reality of the Church’s evangelizing.⁷

Cultural Revolution: The Chinese Cultural Revolution which was carried from 1966 to 1976. It was primarily a revolution aimed at the superstructure of the Chinese communist state. In 1966, the Cultural Revolution, seen as an ideological struggle as well as a power struggle, moved from the state of purging the “Black Gang” of intellectuals and writers, to the stage of “rectifying” party leaders and the educational system, and, finally, to the stage of the rise of the Red Guard crusade.⁸ When the Cultural Revolution broke out in 1966, its wrath fell directly on those church officials who had always obeyed the government. They had made compromises hoping to gain something for the church by bowing to government demands. They thought that by being obedient to the Communist Party, they could preserve a lifeline for the Church’s existence.⁹

Chinese Catholic Church: In this paper, this term mainly refers to the Catholic Church in mainland China. This study excludes the Churches of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. The reason is because they have

⁷ See Gerald O’Collins, and Edward G. Farrugia. *A Concise Dictionary of Theology*. (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2001).

⁸ See Edmond Tang and Jean-Paul Wiest, Eds., *The Catholic Church in Modern China: Perspectives* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 19.

⁹ See Anthony Lam. *The Catholic Church in Present-Day China: Through Darkness and Light* (Leuven, Belgium: Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation, 1997), 45.

different situations from the Catholic Church in Mainland China under the communist government. The Catholic Church in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau has more religious freedom than the Church in Mainland China. So the term *Chinese Catholic Church*, in this paper includes two groups: the Open Church and the Underground Church.

Tracing the Footsteps of Catholicism in China

Anyone who sincerely wants to understand the situation of the Catholic Church in China (CCC) today must try to study the events, policies and attitudes of the people involved in all these historical events. Therefore, this portion of our paper will present some background of the Chinese Church history to help people understand today's CCC. The first part will narrate the entry of the Gospel to China from 635 A.D.(when Nestorianism entered the country) up to 1949 when the Chinese Communists took over. Some important events in the Chinese Catholic Church history during these years will be highlighted. The second part will also be a brief overview of the history of Catholicism in China from 1949 to 1977. This will be a very useful historical background to help people understand the Open Church and the Underground Church in China after 1980. Amid the reigning confusion that exists in Christian and Catholic Circles about the Open and Underground Church, this second part will hopefully help them to have a clearer vision of the global problem.

The Catholic Church in China has passed a long and hard journey since the Gospel first entered China in 635 up until 1949.

Jesus Christ, the core of the Christian faith, was first introduced to China by East Syrian Christians in the 7th century, during the early years of the Tang Dynasty(唐朝618-907). It happened when Nestorian missionaries from Persia were welcomed in Chang'an, the capital of the dynasty. During a period of 200 years, more or less, they translated the Scriptures into Chinese and established a number of monasteries. The first opening of Christianity allowed the Nestorian Church to develop until the year of 698-699 when the Buddhists and later the Daoists arose in opposition. The subsequent persecution of Manichaeism in 843 and that of Buddhism in 845 entwined the Christian leaders in Chang'an, so that the imperial edicts against the other two groups uprooted Christianity from the capital.

This remarkable record of the fact that Christianity flourished in medieval China is proven by the existence of a huge stone about ten feet high. Carved dragons and a cross adorn its summit, and its main shaft is completely covered with some two thousand Chinese characters. It stands now in the Peilin or "Forest of Tablets" in Si'anfu (今中国陕西省西安市碑林博物馆). Nestorianism¹⁰ never stuck deep roots in Chinese soil. The cause of death of this budding Christian community was due to the perception that it was a foreign religion. What reinforced that impression was the fact that converts often convened with foreigners from Persia and Syria.¹¹ It was most appropriate that Christians flourished in China during the Tang dynasty(618-907), but they had competitors, namely the Buddhists and Confucianists.¹² Centuries later, the Mongols became the rulers of China. This is when Catholics managed to have a foothold in the empire. The Mongols established the Yuan Dynasty(1271-1368) better known to Western people as the Mongol Dynasty.

It is difficult to follow the ups and downs of Christianity in China. Centuries later Christianity erupted, so to speak, with certain impetus. This happened around 1245 when Pope Innocent IV(1243-1256) sent the Franciscan John Plano Carpini to China. This is the first time the Catholic Church and China contacted each other directly. Because the Mongols invaded many parts of the world, the Pope sent John Plano Carpini to China, searching for understanding for the Christian cause. The Pope also asked the Great Khan Ugedey (1229-1241) for help against the Moslem danger in the Middle East.¹³ But this time, John Plano Carpini's embassy was a failure. The contact between the Vatican and China had blossomed, but bore no fruit.

¹⁰ Nestorianism is a Christian Church that says that Jesus has two persons. Mary is the mother of the human person. The divine person is Son of God, or Logos. Mary was not Theotokos, mother of God. The heresy is named after Nestorius. Mention has been made before. Nestorius died in 451 AD. The Council of Ephesus was convened in 431 to address the issue and pronounced that Jesus was one person in two distinct and inseparable natures: divine and human.

¹¹ See Motte Joseph, *History of the Catholic Church* (Taipei: Guangqi Press, 1965), 50.

¹² See Charles F. Horne, ed., *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East*, (New York Parke, Austin, & Lipscomb, 1917), Vol. XII, *Medieval China*, 381-392. Retrieved May 30, 2007 from <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/eastasia/781nestorian.html>.

¹³ See Lucio Gutierrez, The "Affair" of China at the End of the Sixteen Century: Armed Conquest or Peaceful Evangelization, *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. XX. 334.

The Catholic Church for the first time had a foothold in 1294, when another Franciscan Giovanni Montecorvino(1247-1328) arrived in China. He was welcomed by the Emperor Timur Kahn(1265-1307), the grandson of Kubilai Kahn(1215-1294) who had died some months before the Franciscan's arrival. Montecorvino tried to reconcile the Nestorians to the Latin Church, but he failed in that endeavor. They bitterly opposed his work. Since Montecorvino spoke Persian, Armenian and Mongol very well, he was able to communicate with a wide range of people. He worked so hard to introduce Jesus Christ to the people in China. In 1299, Montecorvino built a church in Beijing; by 1305 he had already baptized about 6400 people.¹⁴ Pope Clement V(1305-1314) appointed him to be the Archbishop of Beijing and Patriarch of the Orient. But again Christianity soon disappeared for not trying to go deep into the life of the people.¹⁵ When Montecorvino died in 1330, there were about 10,000 converts in China. Catholics in China, at the end of the Yuan Dynasty, may have numbered as many as 30,000. All this took place under the patronage and protection of the Mongol rulers of China. When the Mongol Yuan dynasty fell in 1368, the Catholic community in Beijing disappeared. All Christians were expelled by the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Three hundred years later when missionaries were able to come again, they could not find any mark of Christianity. It must be pointed out that the Franciscan success was principally with the Mongols and foreigners, not with the Han, the majority of Chinese, because they mainly preached the Gospel among the Mongols and foreigners. The strength of the Church depended so much on the clergy, but they did not train indigenous clergy. Thus, the real local Christian community had not yet been established.¹⁶

After the fall of the Yuan Dynasty and the subsequent disappearance of the Beijing Catholic Community, a Catholic Community in Quanzhou in Fujian Province continued to preserve its identity. However, when the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) established itself in China and adopted a closed-door

¹⁴ See Camps Arnulf and McCloskey Pat, *The Friars Minor in China* (Published and Distributed by Order of Friars Minor in Hong Kong, 2000), 3.

¹⁵ See Anthony Lam, *Shui Zhu Chen Fu: Zhong Guo Tian Zhu Jiao Dang Dai Li Shi Fan Xing* (Who Controls the Rudder: A Reflection of a Contemporary Chinese Catholic) (Hong Kong: Holy Spirit Study Center Publications, 1994), 8.

¹⁶ Uhalley and Xiaoxin, *China and Christianity: Burdened Past, Hopeful Future*, 16.

policy to outsiders, this Quanzhou community could no longer continue to exist.¹⁷

Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) in China

After the emergence of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Christianity reappeared in China again in the 16th century. This time, through the Jesuit missionary, Matteo Ricci and his companions, the Church took root in China. Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), who opened the first sustained Christian mission in China, arrived in Macao on 8 August 1582, and began to study Chinese. Ricci was more adept, and with a few years, he was able to translate into Latin the Four Books (The Confucian Analects, the Book of Mencius, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean). In 1583, Ricci and his companion Ruggieri established a residence in the Southern city of Zhaoqing.¹⁸ But he dreamt of going to Beijing.

After several years, in 1601 Ricci finally reached Beijing. He made a favorable impression on the imperial court.¹⁹ "To win the favor of the Chinese, Ricci adopted Chinese culture and appeared in the guise of a Confucius scholar."²⁰ With indefatigable zeal, he exercised a fruitful apostolate, both by spoken word and by numerous writings. Ricci made a deep impression, with his knowledge of astronomy, mathematics and geography, "on the intelligentsia of China and ultimately on the court itself of Ming. It was the beginning of the introduction of Western scientific learning to China."²¹ Here, I would like to mention one person, Xu Guangqi, who was very important to the establishment of the Catholic Church in Shanghai. In 1600, Xu Guangqi²², one of China's outstanding Confucian scholars, from Shanghai to Nanjing, met Ricci. Three years later he was

¹⁷ See Anthony Lam, *The Catholic Church in Present-Day China: Through Darkness and Light* (Leuven, Belgium: Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation, 1997), 4.

¹⁸ See Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity* (London: Found Paperbacks, 1988), 60.

¹⁹ Joseph Motte, *History of the Catholic Church in China*, (Taiwan Kuangchi Press, 1992) (台湾光启社1992年四版), 48.

²⁰ Chang, *Historical Sketch*, 9.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Xu Guangqi was a very important person in Chinese Church history because he was a government high official. With his help the Catholic Church started to develop in Shanghai, and later developed very fast.

baptized. He became a high official at court and China's most famous Catholic. His commitment to Christianity was soon to be shared by a number of other prominent intellectuals of the time, including Li Zhicao and Yang Tingjun. Li first met Ricci in Beijing in 1601, and two years later sought baptism, although in fact he was not received into the Church until 1610 as Ricci insisted that he must give up his concubines before baptism. Yang was converted in Hangzhou in 1611 by Lazzaro Cattaneo. The three converts became known as the "Three Pillars of the Early Catholic Church in China."²³

Ricci's life in Beijing was hectic by any standards. He was very busy and welcomed by Chinese people. On some days he had barely time to snatch a meal. His visitors included many eminent officials and also relatives of the imperial family itself. The governor of Guizhou republished his world map and wrote in the preface: "Ricci has been so long in China that he is no longer a foreigner, but a Chinese."²⁴

After he reached Beijing in 1601, slowly, a small Christian community was formed and in a few other places such as Baoding, a city in Hebei just south of the capital, where by 1607 there were several hundred Catholics. When Ricci died (1610), the 25,000 Catholics in China included many from the educated class. Ricci insisted on the incarnation of the Gospel in Chinese native culture as well as the introduction of the Chinese native culture into the life of the Church.²⁵

One thing the reader should note is that during this period, Jesus was presented in clearer features and was accepted in the framework of cultural exchange and in the contextualization of a properly Chinese liturgy. Unfortunately, more than a hundred years later, as a result of the Chinese Rite Controversy, Jesus gradually became not only a stranger but also one who was disliked and even loathed by many Chinese.

Soon after the death of Matteo Ricci in 1610, a bitter dispute arose among the missionaries. Shortly afterwards, this quarrel became known as

²³ See Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity* (London: Found Paperbacks, 1988), 62.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Chang, *Historical Sketch*, 20.

the Chinese Rite Controversy. I will not discuss this at length and in depth, but I have to present here some basic points. The origin of this quarrel was in the different understanding of the rites paid to Confucius and the ancestors as well as the Chinese name used for God. The Jesuit missionaries thought that the ceremonial rites of Confucianism and ancestor worship were primarily social and political in nature and could be practiced by converts. The Dominicans, Franciscans, and the Foreign Missionary Society of Paris had a different understanding of the situation and the nature of these rites. They charged that these rites were idolatrous and contradictory to Catholic teaching; all acts of respect to the sage and one's ancestors were nothing less than the worship of demons. The Dominican Morales carried the case to Rome. At first the Holy See's position was very ambiguous and a decision was long postponed. In 1645, Pope Innocent X (1644-1655) promulgated an edict denouncing the rites. In 1656 Pope Alexander VII (1655-1667) promulgated an edict permitting the rites. In 1704, Pope Clement XI (1700-1721) proscribed the ancient use of the words Shang Di (上帝 Supreme emperor) and Tian (天 Heaven) for God. In 1707 a special delegate, Charles Thomas de Tournon, was sent to China. He forbade the rites once again.²⁶ He issued his "Decree of Nanjing" on February 7, 1707. It condemned the rites and ignored the Emperor Kangxi's personal viewpoint on the matter.²⁷ From then on Kangxi gradually lost patience.

In 1715 Pope Clement XI published the encyclical letter *Ex Illa Die* reinstating the prohibition of 1704. The emperor Kangxi discovered the Pope's prohibition, seeing the contention taking place among the missionaries, he lost confidence in the Catholic Church. In 1721, he issued an edict prohibiting missionary activities. However, persecution only began after Kangxi's death in 1723. The Chinese Rite Controversy influenced the Chinese Catholic Church for many years. It is sad, but history can not be reversed. Only on December 7, 1939, the Rite Controversy was reversed when Pius XII rescinded the prohibition.²⁸

²⁶ Wei Qingxin "French Policy Towards Missionary Work in China," translated by Huang Qinghua, (Beijing: The Chinese Academy of Science, Nov.1991), 6.

²⁷ The Emperor's Kangxi's expectation was that the policies of Ricci would be followed.

²⁸ See Lam, *The Catholic Church in Present-Day China*, 7.

In 1723, the Emperor Kangxi died. After his death, his son Yongzheng became the Emperor. He was hostile to Christianity. His Edict of 10 January 1724 demanded the closure of all churches, and that Christians renounce their faith. He persecuted harshly the Church. After the death of emperor Yong Zheng, his successor emperor Qian Long was friendly to the missionaries and engaged many highly talented artists, like Joseph Castiglione and Denis Attiret, to serve in the palace. Yet it did not change the missionary activities.

Although again in Beijing worship continued – in 1743 Beijing was said to have forty thousand Christians and a thousand people were being baptized each year. The severe persecution started, as in the past, in Fujian, and in 1747 Petrus Sanz, Vicar Apostolic in the province, was arrested and executed, together with four other Dominicans and many Chinese Christians.

In spite of increasing restrictions, some foreign missionaries continued to enter the country, often with great difficulty, and always at great personal cost. The Jesuit Bishop of Nanjing, Laimbeckhoven, consecrated in 1756, only reached the Nanjing area in 1760. He was to live in poverty, in hiding near Shanghai, for twenty-seven years. In 1784 he made a secret visit to Suzhou where he ordained four Chinese priests. He died in 1787 and is buried in Suzhou.²⁹

We are presenting only a few features of the history of the Church in China. This is necessary to retrace the unfolding of events and enable all readers to understand the process.

After the Opium War

After the death of the Emperor Qianlong in 1799, His son Jiajing became the Emperor. After more than forty years, the Chinese Catholic Church finally became a legal entity. It is connected with an ignominious event: the Opium War of 1840. Catholic missionaries were able to enter China again, this being the third time, following the signing of Unequal

²⁹ See Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity* (London: Found Paperbacks, 1988), 80.

Treaties³⁰ in the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1849 China was forced by Unequal Treaties to accept foreign missionaries again after the defeat in the Second Opium War.³¹

The Religious Toleration clauses forced the official legal recognition of Christianity on the (unwilling) Chinese and so implicated the missionaries in the treaty system. Missionaries, who were citizens of the foreign powers signing the treaties, gained two important privileges: (1) the right of residence in the treaty ports and later anywhere in the country, and (2) the legal protection of their own country's laws within the treaty ports. The colonial powers were able, on behalf of the missionaries, to have included in the treaties what is called a Toleration Clause, whereby Christian converts could receive the legal protection of the foreign power in whose territorial concession they were converted.

There is ample documented evidence that some missionaries, Catholic and Protestant, took advantage of the Toleration Clause to promote their own Churches by offering legal protection to people if they, with their whole family, became Christians. This was seen by the Chinese people as a serious infringement on their own sovereignty which did not earn the Churches any love. Moreover, when a missionary's life or property was endangered, he was entitled to seek the protection of the Chinese authorities. If he did not receive protection, or the protection was insufficient, so that he suffered harm or loss, he could bring the matter to the attention of his government representative. Invariably the foreign government representative

³⁰ In 1842 after the first Opium War, China lost the war and was forced to sign the "Nanjing Treaty" which opened five ports in southeast China to foreigners. The "Nanjing Treaty" was an unequal treaty imposed by colonial powers. Foreign missionaries within these treaty port areas were able to operate freely. This situation ignited hatred towards the church. Later, Britain, France and the United States used this treaty to bring their citizens under their protection. In 1844, China and France also signed another unequal "Huangpu Treaty" which offered protection to missionaries in China. See Lam, *The Catholic Church in Present-Day China*, 8. In 1858, China signed "Tientsi Treaty" with Britain and France. Similar treaties were signed with the United States and Russia. Every treaty included religious toleration clauses, which differed somewhat in wording. These clauses forced the legal recognition of Christianity upon an unwilling people and implicated missionaries in the treaty system. See Brown, G. Thompson, *Christianity in the People's Republic of China*, (John Knox Press, Atlanta, Georgia 30365, 1985), 26.

³¹ *Guide to the Catholic Church in China*. 2000. (Singapore: China Catholic Communication. 2000), 23-37.

could demand that material compensation be paid for the harm done and could also insist on proper punishment for the wrong-doer. There are many recorded instances of excessively large indemnities being demanded and received, especially by French Catholic missionaries. Some missionaries also demanded reimbursement for properties confiscated hundreds of years previously. Some religious orders are recorded to have not only demanded the return of their former properties but also rent for the preceding hundred years. In many communities the missionaries were seen to have more power than the local Chinese officials because they always held the weapon of fear, being able to call on their government's representative for help in difficult circumstances.³²

It is true that many missionaries did protest the worst aspects of the colonial system in China, especially the opium trade. However, at the same time, they continued to enjoy the protection of treaties that protected the trade. Very few, at that time, raised their voices against the treaties themselves. Early in the twentieth century, many missionaries called for the repudiation of the Toleration Clause and all other special privileges for missionaries. However the opium trade only came to an end in 1917 and the Unequal Treaties was abolished in 1943.

In 1846 the Church became a legal entity after the emperor Daoguang issued an edict nullifying the prohibition against missionary activity.³³ After 1875 the Qing Dynasty sought to establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican. The French government objected; relations were never established.³⁴ Following the forced opening of China by Britain and other European powers by means of the Treaty Ports, there was a mass movement of foreign missionaries to China from Europe who assumed for themselves the responsibility for the evangelization in China. This great missionary movement resulted in a remarkable increase in the number of conversions. By 1912, in the early years of the Chinese Republic, there were 1,430,000 Catholics in China, an increase of almost nine times the number at the beginning of the nineteenth century.³⁵

³² See Brown, G. Thompson, *Christianity in the People's Republic of China*, (John Knox Press, Atlanta, Georgia 30365, 1986), 25-29.

³³ See Lam, *The Catholic Church in Present-Day China*, 8.

³⁴ Luo Guang, *A History of Sino-Vatican Relations*, (Taiwan: Guangqi press, 1960), 35.

³⁵ Motte Joseph, *History of the Catholic Church*, (Taipei: Guangqi Press, 1971), 127.

The Shanghai Synod and the Establishment of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy

The writer notes that after the second Opium War (1856-1860), the Catholic Church in China in the nineteenth century came to be dominated by fundamentalist missionaries. The Church was under the protection of foreign governments. One would like to mention one missionary Fr Vincent Lebbe, a member of the Congregation of the Mission, who arrived in China in 1901. Lebbe and his friend and colleague, Father Antony Cotta, refused the protection of the French, and in 1916 Lebbe denounced the French consul in Tianjin for interfering in a land case, with the result that his superiors banished him to Ningbo.

The French domination of the mission to China was not only political. The majority of foreign priests and bishops were French. By 1922 of 1,438 priests from overseas, 680 were French, and twenty-four out of fifty-six bishops. The Vatican had been seeking direct relations with the Chinese government since 1886, but France had intervened to thwart any moves in this direction. In late 1922, Archbishop Celso Constantini was appointed as Apostolic Delegate to China. His arrival inaugurated the first moves in the formation of an indigenous Chinese Church. The French protectorate was finally brought to an end. The Catholic Church in China remained, nevertheless, directly under the control of Rome with the country still divided into apostolic vicariates.³⁶

In May 1924 the first plenary Council of the Church in China was held after seven regional synods had been convened. It was an important step forward, even though its findings were not published until they had been approved by Rome.³⁷

The number of Chinese Dioceses continued to increase. In 1926, four Apostolic Vicariates were established: Xuanhua in Hebei, Fenyang in Shaxi, Haimen in Jiangxi and Taizhou in Zhejiang. Fathers Zhao Huaiyi, Chen Guodi, Zhu Kaimin, and Hu Ruoshan were named apostolic vicars.

³⁶ See Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity* (London: Found Paperbacks, 1988), 161.

³⁷ Ibid.

The two prefects of Puqi (the Franciscan Father Cheng Hede) and Anguo (Father Sun Dezhen) were also made Vicars apostolic. Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) consecrated six Chinese Bishops at St Peter's on October 29, 1926. These six were the first Chinese bishops consecrated since the days of Bishop Luo Wenzao in the seventeenth century.³⁸

Then the six Chinese bishops came back to China to serve their dioceses. Then in the year of 1946 another two important things happened in the Chinese Catholic Church history:

On February 18, 1946, the vicar apostolic of Tianjing, the Divine Word Bishop Tian Gengxin became the first cardinal from the Far East.

On April 11 of the same year the Pope (Pius XII) promulgated his apostolic letter establishing the Chinese Hierarchy and dividing the whole China into 20 ecclesiastical provinces and 137 dioceses. Vicars apostolic became bishops of regular diocese. Archdioceses were also established among the twenty ecclesiastical provinces. Cardinal Tian became the archbishop of Beijing and Bishop Yu Bin the archbishop of Nanjing. Bishop Zhou Jishi, originally of Baoding Diocese, became the archbishop of Nanchang in Jiangxi Province.³⁹

After the establishment of the Chinese Hierarchy in 1946, the Catholic Church in China experienced tremendous progress. But after the declaration in 1949 of the People's Republic of China by the Chinese Communists, foreign missionaries were once again being expelled from China and the church, already beset with difficulties, was about to meet its greatest challenge – the atheistic Communist government.

After 1949, the Catholic Church in China started a new history and faced a new reality and a set of challenges because the Communists already took over the entire mainland and this is probably the most difficult period of the Church in China in its history. We can divide the time line from 1949 to 1977 into three periods:

³⁸ See Lam, *The Catholic Church in Present-Day China*, 11.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 12.

Period 1: The Period of Probing (1949-1957)

Period 2: The Period of Conflict: (1958-1966)

Period 3: The Period of Darkness (1966-1976)

The Period of Probing: 1949-1957

In 1949 the Chinese Communist Party won the civil war that had been going on for four years and established the People's Republic of China on Mainland China. The new political power, dedicated to promoting atheism, was to become the Church's fiercest enemy. We can say that 1949 to 1957 was a period of probing for the Chinese Catholic Church, because both the Chinese Catholic Church and the Communist Government were probing each other's strengths and weakness. The Church knew little about the Communist Party because the majority of Chinese Christians and foreign missionaries had no direct contact with the Chinese Communists. Few knew what to expect when the Communist armies arrived to "liberate" them, but most of them were apprehensive and many expected the worst. The Communists' knowledge of the Church was very sketchy. They lumped the Church together with the Western imperial powers, overlooking the fact that the great majority of Catholics were Chinese and not foreigners.

There were several reasons for the Communist hostility towards the Church. Its atheistic ideology was naturally antagonistic. In addition, there was its foreign appearance, its relations with the Nationalists, and its wealth. The Church had very good relationships with the Kuomintang which was the legal government in Mainland China before 1949 and the Communists treated the Nationalists as enemies.

Initially, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) sought to establish its domination over the country it was aware that it could not bring all the country under its control in one full sweep. It first had to win the support of various groups. At the beginning, even non-party-members were allowed to hold important posts in the government.⁴⁰ The party was well aware that power can be quickly grasped but time is needed to gain control.

⁴⁰ The Chinese Communists in their early days allowed Dong Biwu, Song Qingling and others – all former Nationalists – to hold important roles in the government or the National People's Congress. Beginning from the middle fifties, however, the Central Government became an area where only one color reigned – the Red of Communism.

The Chinese Communist Party's Early Attitude to Religion

The CCP had never elaborated a coherent policy on religion. As early as 1926, in Mao Zedong's report on the peasant movement in Hunan, Mao had written: "It is the peasants who made the idols, and when the time comes they will cast the idols aside with their own hands; there is no need for anyone else to do it for them prematurely. The CCP's propaganda policy in such matter should be, " Draw the bow without shooting, just indicate the motions."⁴¹

In practice, the Communist policy towards Christianity varied from active suppression in the late 1920s and early 1930s to toleration in the period of the Second Front from 1937 to 1945. Moreover, it is doubtful if the vast majority of Communist cadres had any well thought-out policy concerning religion, beyond an instinctive dislike of "superstition" and foreign missionaries. It is not surprising, therefore, that the experience of Chinese Christians and missionaries during the process of Liberation varied from almost friendly toleration to ruthless persecutions. Compared to the Protestants, as a generalization, it is true that the Communist Party treated Protestants with more respect than Catholics and the main reason is that the Catholics had ties with Vatican and the status of the Catholic Church with rural society.⁴²

The "Three-Self" Movement

After the Communist took over China in 1949, the Chinese government's United Front⁴³ policy attacked the major contradictions existing with religious bodies. It also continued to work on the minor contradictions in order to consolidate its power. Therefore, in addition

⁴¹ Mao Zedong, "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan", *Selected Works*, Volume 1, (Foreign Language Press, Beijing 1965), 46.

⁴² See Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity* (London: Found Paperbacks, 1988), 206.

⁴³ The United Front in the People's Republic of China is a popular front led by the CCP. It is managed by the United Front Work Department (中共中央统战部) of the Central Committee and beside the Communist Party it consists of eight minor parties. The aim of the United Front's chief strategy was twofold in 1950: first, keep close contact with the masses and attack small groups. Secondly, to keep relations with minor enemies but attack big ones. To the CCC, the task of the United Front in applying its theory to the Church was to cause division among Church groups.

to suppressing activities undertaken by church leaders, the government set up new organizations for those who wished to cooperate with it. This policy enabled the government to gain total control over the Church. The instrument was the “Three-Self Movement.”

How did the “Three-Self Movement” happen in 1950? On 30 November 1950, a group of Catholics under the leadership of a Chinese priest, Wang Liangzuo, who was from the Guangyuan county of Sichuan province, was said to have issued its own manifesto calling for the severance of all church ties with the forces of imperialism and the establishment of a self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating church. The document essentially condemned the way in which the imperialists had used the church in the past as an instrument of colonial aggression and it called on Chinese Catholics to cut off connections with imperialism so as to build up the “Three autonomies.” Soon afterwards a similar manifesto was published in Nanchang, Wuhan, Chongqing and other provinces.⁴⁴

In 1951 the Chinese Catholic leaders requested a meeting with the Chinese Prime Minister Zhou En lai. This took place on January 17, 1951. Zhou is reported to have acknowledged that “the Vatican is the heart of Catholics,”⁴⁵ but to have insisted on the creation of a national Church. He distinguished between “ideological” matters and “practical” matters. He said: “The fact that religious circles have proposed the Three-Self Movement, so it must be promoted. The People’s Government adds its support and help. This is a movement in which patriotic religious people are taking part. We must break off all relations with those countries that are our enemies and we must clearly define who these enemies are.”⁴⁶

The reaction of the Catholic hierarchy came swiftly; in February 1951, the bishops published “The Church in China: Declaration of Principles.” The statement was drafted by five bishops and three priests, of whom respectively four and two were foreigners. It was an uncompromising document rejecting the allegation that the Church was allied with imperialism, and

⁴⁴ See Gu Yulu, *Zhong Guo Tian Zhu Jiao Shu Ping* (Shanghai Academy of Social Science Press, 2005), 159.

⁴⁵ Bush, op. cit., 107.

⁴⁶ See Gu Yulu, *The Chinese Catholic Church: Past and Present* (Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press 1989), 116.

arguing that self-government meant the establishment of a native hierarchy; self-support, the refusal of those subsidies with political implications; self-propagation, that the missionaries work in the interests of the local Church. As one Catholic writer has remarked: "The assertions of the document may be true according to Catholic theology *sub specie aeternitatis*. However, the principles seemed oblivious to the political, historical and social currents of the time. It offered no possibilities for dialogue or rapprochement."⁴⁷ The government, not surprisingly, rejected the document. *Guangming Ribao* (Chinese government official newspaper) commented: "As we all know, the Catholic Church has been established in China for more than three hundred years. During this time, the administrative and financial powers of the Church in China, together with all the policies having to do with the propagation of the faith, always had been held in the hands of foreign priests who never had the desire to help us establish our own Church."⁴⁸ On 31 March the Apostolic Nuncio Antonio Riberi wrote to all the bishops, attacking a Nanjing declaration in favor of the Three-Self Movement by the Vicar general of Nanjing, Li Weiguang. The government reaction came quickly. On 26 he was placed under house arrest. In September the Shanghai police arrested the Catholic Central Bureau's four departmental heads.⁴⁹

Actually the original purpose of Wang Liangzu in issuing the Guanyuan Manifesto was political rather than pastoral. His aim was independence from some oppressive foreign missionaries rather than from the Holy See. But the CCG took advantage of the Guanyuan manifesto and made it a device for separating the Chinese church from the Universal Church.

The Foreign Missionaries' Expulsion

Here this writer has to say that another big pain for the Catholic Church in China during that time was the expulsion of the foreign missionaries. During the Oppose America-Aid Korea Movement in 1951, the expulsion

⁴⁷ Hanson, Eric O., *Catholic Politics in China and Korea* (Orbis Books, New York 1980), 35.

⁴⁸ China Missionary Bulletin, Hong Kong, III (May 1951), 388.

⁴⁹ See Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity* (London: Found Paperbacks, 1988), 246.

of foreign missionaries, confiscation of their property, freezing of foreign assets were in part of the political measures carried out in retaliation against the freezing of Chinese assets in the United States that took place during the Korean War, a convenient time during heightened anti-foreign emotion. The CCP not only organized anti-American rallies and demonstrations in many cities but also froze foreign assets and expelled foreign Protestant and Catholic missionaries in China. Lu Dingyi, the Head of the Party's Propaganda Department, believed the anti-American Movement could kill two birds with one stone and urged religious cadres at all levels to use the opportunity, when foreign subsidies vanished and foreign missionaries were expelled, to swiftly weaken the functions of Catholic and Protestant churches in organization, finance, and personnel.⁵⁰ To the Catholic Church, the party ordered the expulsion of foreign missionaries, thus crippling the Catholic Church. Foreign missionaries-priests, brothers and nuns constituted more than half of the church personnel. Included in a report on the Catholic Church in China in 1948 were the following statistics: 5,533 priests (foreigners 2,572, Chinese 3,006); 1,103 brothers (foreigners 682; Chinese 421), and 6,781 nuns (foreigners 4,735; Chinese 2,046).⁵¹ The departure of foreign church personnel had obviously crippled the Chinese Church, especially when, at that time, most of the church funds came from abroad through these foreign missionaries.⁵²

During the period between 1949 and 1952, many foreign missionaries were accused of being spies and counter-revolutionaries. No matter what "evidence" the government authorities brought up against them, their fate was already sealed. They were first imprisoned and then expelled. In the summer of 1951 a fierce campaign was launched against the Catholic Church. Archbishop Antonio Riberi, the Holy See's Nuncio to China, was placed under house arrest and finally expelled from the country.

The relationship between the Vatican and China is very important for the development of the CCC. Sino-Vatican relationships were becoming worse during this period.

⁵⁰ Xiaofeng, "Zhonggong Zengyang Duidai Jiaohui he Zongjiao Tu" (How did the CCP treat the church and religious believers?)

⁵¹ See Jean-Paul Wiest, *Maryknoll in China: A History, 1918-1955* (New York: M.E. Sharp, 1988), 462.

⁵² See Beatrice K. F. Leung and William T. Liu, *The Chinese Catholic Church in Conflict: 1949-2001* (Universal Publishers, Boca Raton, Florida, 2004), 61.

In 1949 when the Nationalists moved to Taiwan, the greater part of the foreign diplomatic corps followed them. Archbishop Antonio Riberi, the Holy See's Nuncio to China, remained behind in Nanjing and encouraged other countries to keep their legations open. However this action did not win the favor of the Communists. On the contrary, the Communist government never considered Riberi as having diplomatic status. In their eyes he was the head of the foreign missionaries and a representative of the Western imperial powers. Then the government expelled him in 1951, but Church life did not immediately terminate. From 1949 to 1955, the Pope was able to appoint eighteen Chinese bishops to dioceses that were gradually being put on a firmer footing. Seminaries also continued to train many priests.⁵³

Before 1954, the government showed a milder attitude toward the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, in October of 1954, Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) encyclical *Ad Sinarum Gentes* (*To the People of China*) refueled the fires of persecution. In this encyclical, addressed to the bishops, priests, and laity of China, Pope Pius XII defended the missionaries' enterprise, distinctly rejected the independent church movement, and affirmed the necessity, on the basis of Christian charity, of allowing ties of mutual support in the Catholic Church throughout the world. This strong, public criticism of communism by the Pope deeply offended the Chinese Communists, who prepared to confront the Catholic Church even more boldly. In 1955, they arrested many bishops, priests and lay, but in 1956 the situation had subsided. By the beginning of 1957, most of the priests, bishops and lay were released.

A Period of Great Difficulties for the Church

After the release of the bishops, priests, and lay in 1957, the CCG wanted to control the CCC completely. In this case, in the middle of June 1957 the director of the Religious Bureau convened a meeting that brought 241 Catholics and a number of government officials. After a month of off-and-on discussions, the delegates established the National Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA), with Archbishop Pi Shoushi of the diocese of Shenyang, as its chairperson.⁵⁴ The government's intent was to stress

⁵³ See Lam, *The Catholic Church in Present-Day China*, 19.

⁵⁴ See Edmond Tang and Jean-Paul Wiest, Eds., *The Catholic Church in Modern China: Perspectives* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 13.

that Catholics themselves had founded the Association. The CCPA was a political organization of the Catholic masses; its role was to serve as a bridge between the Church and the state. Moreover, it was meant to replace the Church hierarchy.

The first session of the CCPA was designed to assert the right of the national church to conduct its own life, but despite a very critical attitude towards the Vatican, it sought to preserve the spiritual link with Rome. Archbishop Pi stated on August 2, 1957: "The Catholic Church of China shall keep strictly religious relations with the Vatican and submit to the Pope in regard to religious doctrines to be believed and ecclesiastical regulations to be practiced. However, the independence, honor and interests of our country must not be violated."⁵⁵

Actually the first session of the CCPA adopted a policy of "Separation of Church and State" stating their position on relation with the Holy See. Their resolution reads as follows:

The Catholic Church in China must implement a policy of autonomy and independence whereby Chinese Catholics, clergy and lay, take charge of their own affairs and no longer act contrary to the interests of their country. With our country's independence and dignity foremost in mind, we shall maintain purely religious relationships with the Vatican. We shall obey the Pope in matters pertaining solely to faith with the Vatican and resolutely sever all political and economic ties with the Vatican and resolutely appose its use of religious pretexts and other underhand activities to disrupt our just cause of opposing imperialism and promoting patriotism.⁵⁶

This statement of the Patriotic Association clearly reflects the desires of the majority of clergy and laity present at the meeting. They wished to maintain church unity and the hierarchical structure. They hoped that by yielding to government demands and by striking a balance between political demands and one's individual faith, they could preserve the church's unity and universality.

⁵⁵ Leon, *China Missionary Bulletin* M.E.P., Hong Kong, Nos., 114, 115, 118 July-November 1958.

⁵⁶ *Da Kung pao*, Daily Newspaper, (Hong Kong, August 4), 1957.

After the Patriotic Association's first session, the government put pressure to consecrate bishops without Vatican approval. The government demanded that bishops be chosen and appointed to fill the vacancies in those dioceses that did not have bishops.

From our presentation of this history, we see how the situation of the CCC was becoming unique and complex from 1949 to 1957. The CCC was facing a very serious challenge in order to survive. All catholic educational facilities had been either destroyed or confiscated by the government. All foreign missionaries were expelled. The Church was suffering terribly. Especially in September of 1955, so many bishops, priests, laypersons all over the country were imprisoned. In 1957, even though some bishops, priests and lay persons were released, the CCPA was established. From that time on, the relationship between the Vatican and China became worse than before. On December 16, 1957, the diocese of Chengdou in Sichuan Province chose Fr. Li Xiting to be the bishop. This set the precedent for choosing and consecrating bishops without prior approval of the Holy See. But this was not to be the end. After 1957 the CCC had to face another grim test when the question of the illicit consecration of bishops arose.

The Period of Conflict: 1958-1966

I have tried to present the difficulties and the problems the CCC faced. More still has to be said. After 1957, the situation of the Chinese Catholic Church became worse than previously seen. The conflict between the CCPA and the Vatican became inevitable in 1958 when the government insisted that bishops be chosen and appointed to fill the vacancies in many places. The CCG wanted to control the CCC and asked CCC to choose bishops without the Pope's approval. On the other hand, after foreign missionaries were expelled by the CCG, many dioceses had no bishops, so the CCC also needed more bishops to fill the vacancies in many dioceses.

The First Two Illicit Ordinations of Bishops

After the establishment of CCPA in 1957, the Shanghai Catholic newspaper, XinGe, in an editorial of 28 February 1958, sounded the public call for the local election of bishops: "The Vatican, in order to sabotage our Church in China, has struck at patriotic priests and it continues in its desire

to control the nominations of personnel. We can no longer have any illusion about the Vatican, and we ourselves must assure responsibility with regard to the problem of the bishops, we ourselves must elect and consecrate them.”⁵⁷ On March 18-19, 1958 during the first meeting of priests in Hubei province, the Franciscans Fr. Dong Guangqing and Fr. Yan Wenhua were chosen by their local communities to be bishops of Hankou and Wuchang dioceses respectively. A telegram was sent to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith announcing the elections, in the hopes of getting the Pope’s approval. The Congregation replied by telegram refusing to accept the results of the elections, and restating the position that only the Pope had the authority to select bishops and that no local election could replace his authority. The Hankou and Wuchang dioceses appealed for understanding, but to no avail. The reason for the local election of bishops put forth at the time was pragmatic. Since expelled bishops were not allowed to return to their sees, and since some Chinese bishops were in prison, new bishops had to be chosen from among the “Patriotic” priests to fill episcopal vacancies. In this case, the two Franciscans were consecrated by Bishop Li Daonan on April 13, 1958.

Within three months of the Wuhan consecrations, thirteen more consecrations took place, conducted by five bishops, including the Chairman of the CCPA, archbishop Pi Shushi. Altogether at least forty-two bishops were consecrated in this way from 1958 to 1962, after which, there were no further consecrations until the election of Fu Tieshan as bishop of Beijing in December 1979.⁵⁸

Actually the Roman stance is easy enough to understand. It is and was clear that the CCG was trying to exercise a large measure of control over the Church. Catholics had suffered imprisonment for resisting this control over the Church. Hence, Pius XII saw the independent selection of bishops by the Chinese as an attempt to put the Church under control of men who would simply carry out government policy. Another reason was that the Pope was prevented from communication with the church in China because the Chinese Government did not want the CCC to have any contact with the Vatican. He was unable to obtain sufficient information

⁵⁷ See Gu Yulu, *The Chinese Catholic Church: Past and Present* (Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press 1989), 137.

⁵⁸ See Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity*, 246.

about candidates for him to make proper episcopal appointment. Of course, also it is the practice all over the Christian world and history that the Pope is the one to elect bishops.

An Unexpected Result

Here one has to know that after these consecrations, the CCG, not unexpectedly, forbade church authorities to have further recourse to the Holy See. The CCC already became divided throughout the country. The government requested those who supported independent consecrations without the Pope's approval to declare openly that they had broken off all relations with the Holy See; those who refused to accept government demands were immediately imprisoned. Hebei, Sichuan, Shangdong and Hunan all in turn held episcopal consecrations. Up to that time, the CCC could maintain "pure religious ties" with the Holy See, but after these consecrations took place all relations were cut off. Changsha, diocese in Hunan, can serve as an example of what happened. The New Hunan News on December 16, 1958, commenting on the episcopal consecration that took place in that city, said that: "Priests and lay persons from Changsha, Chengde, Hengyang, Lixian and Yueyang dioceses in Hunan have at last broken the yoke which the Vatican had imposed on them these past few centuries. They have consecrated for themselves and on their own authority bishops who are truly representative of their wishes. These bishops are Xiong Delian, Yang Gaojian, Guo Zeqian, Le Zhenlin, and Li Shuren. During the ceremonies these newly consecrated bishops took a public oath proclaiming that they would run their dioceses well and refuse to accept all counter revolutionary "encyclicals" emanating from the Vatican as well as resolutely oppose all its control."⁵⁹ All these illicit consecrations of bishops without papal approval now brought relations between the CCC and the Holy See to a very grave situation.

Suffering through the Changing Situation

Here one would like to specially state that the CCC suffered during the changing situation. At first, one has to mention that in 1958, John XXIII (1958-1963) became Pope, and His Holiness changed the Church policy by

⁵⁹ The *New Hunan News*, November 4, 1958, (Chinese).

opening doors for dialogue with communist countries. He made a statement concerning the Church in China expressing his fears that events were leading to schism. However, on January 26, 1962, he promised that he would not use the term schism again when describing the church situation in China. In 1959, a group of China experts held a meeting in Hong Kong. Cardinal Agagianian, the head of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, was present. At the meeting, two conclusions were reached: (1) the consecrations taking place in China were illicit but valid; (2) the Chinese Church was not a schismatic Church.”⁶⁰ Actually for the faithful and most Chinese clerics, they were always faithful to God and the Holy Father.

After 1958, the Chinese Church was forced by the CCG to break all relations with the Holy See. When this happened, no seminary had reopened. Many churches were left without pastors because many bishops and priests who had refused to cooperate with the government were either imprisoned or sent to labor camps. By 1965, many imprisoned bishops and priests had already died. There were also bishops who died of old age while under house arrest. The situation of the bishops and church leaders who joined the Patriotic Association was deplorable. The first of the illicitly consecrated bishops to suffer persecution was Bishop Dong Wenlong of the diocese of Jinan in Shandong province. In 1963, Bishop Dong quarreled with the government over religious matters. The government then classified him as a rightist and kept him under house arrest in the cathedral at Hongjialou, Jinan City.

From 1958 to 1965 the CCC was becoming weaker. After 1965, a special political storm brought a period of darkness to all including the Chinese Catholic Church which suffered immensely during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. When the Cultural Revolution began in 1966 the entire Church was destroyed.⁶¹ The Church in China was reduced to silence. FABC documents referred to the Church as the “Church of Silence.”⁶²

The Period of Darkness: 1966 to 1977

From 1966 to 1977, there took place a very unfortunate period of “darkness for all Chinese people, especially for intellectuals, various

⁶⁰ Ibid., 40.

⁶¹ Ibid., 43.

⁶² See FAPA1(1974), 18.

religions, and also for some government officials. For the Chinese Catholic Church, it was a really hard time. Many churches were destroyed; the clergy and Catholics were subjected to great suffering because of the Cultural Revolution.

The Chinese Cultural Revolution(1966-1976)

Let us recall what the Cultural Revolution in China was all about. The Chinese Cultural Revolution was a struggle for power within the Communist Party of China that manifested itself in a wide-scale filtering into a social, political, and economic chaos, which grew to include large sections of Chinese society, and eventually brought the entire country to the brink of civil war. It was launched by the Communist Party of China's Chairman Mao Zedong on May 16, 1966, officially as a campaign to rid China of its "liberal bourgeoisie" elements and to continue the revolutionary class struggle. It is widely recognized, however, as a method to regain control of the party after the disastrous Great Leap that led to a significant loss of Mao's power to rivals Li Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, and would eventually manifest into waves of power struggles between rival factions both nationally and locally. Although Mao himself officially declared the Cultural Revolution to have ended in 1969, the term is widely used today to include the period between 1969 and the arrest of the Gang of Four in 1976.⁶³

During the mad tide of the Cultural Revolution, all religious personnel were forbidden to engage in religious activities and many were subjected to abuse and ill-treatment. Such abuse was conducted on an arbitrary basis. It was much worse in some places than others. Priests, pastors, and Buddhist monks found themselves sharing in physical labor with intellectuals, democrats, and disgraced Communist officials, including the former cadres of the Religious Affairs Bureau. This collective suffering was to influence the future attitudes of many even in more tranquil times. There is no doubt about the suffering experienced by Christians during these long years.⁶⁴

The years 1966 to 1976 was also a period of darkness and bitter persecution for the CCC. While the destructive storm of the Cultural Revolution raged across the country, all religions as institutions disappeared

⁶³ See Wikipedia, "Cultural Revolution." Retrieved on June 29, 2007 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Cultural_Revolution

⁶⁴ See Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity*, 292.

in China. All churches, official or unofficial, approved or not approved, went underground in order to survive. The Religious Affair Bureau and the CCPA both ceased to function. During this period of great violence, many bishops, priests and seminarians were sent to labor camps. Groups of Red Guards⁶⁵ marched into churches to tear down crosses and to break windows. Sometimes they forced old priests to kneel on the broken glass. Many priests, bishops and their families were harshly treated. Churches were closed or locked, or were converted to assembly halls for the Red Guards. Through beatings and torture, many Christians were forced to give up their faith.⁶⁶ Many priests, bishops, religious sisters, seminarians and some lay people suffered for many years. To give an example: Msgr. Anthony Li Duan (李笃安), one of the most prominent figures of the CCC, who had served as the Archbishop of Xi'an since 1987 and who was known for his loyalty to the Holy See, was detained on several occasions for long periods of time: 1954-1957, 1958-1960, and especially the last time during the Chinese Cultural Revolution from the beginning of 1966 until 1979. He was released only on December 26, 1979. All together he had been detained for 19 years.⁶⁷

We can see that during this period, suicide was not an uncommon thing. Bishop Guo Zeqian of Hangyang Diocese in Hunan, unable to bear the humiliations inflicted on him by the Cultural Revolution, committed suicide.⁶⁸ Bishop Zong Huaimao of Yantai Diocese in Shangdong, who had been on very good terms with the government, ended his life in Beijing by taking his life. Some bishops and priests married religious sisters; they registered their marriages according to government regulations. Some did this to show their obedience to the government, while others wanted to give, at least in name, a means of support to those women who had no means of survival. Their marriages were in name only. But this is not to deny that some of them really wanted to get married. It is undeniable that some illicitly consecrated bishops who had joined the Patriotic Association, acting on their moral standards, secretly married even before the Cultural

⁶⁵ In the people's Republic of China, the Red Guards (红卫兵) were a mass movement of civilians, mostly students and other young people, who were mobilized by Mao Zedong during the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976.

⁶⁶ See Edmond Tang and Jean-Paul Wiest, Eds., *The Catholic Church in Modern China: Perspectives*, 16.

⁶⁷ See AsiaNews. it: "Profile of Bishop Li Duan." Retrieved on September 8, 2005 from http://www.columban.com/profile_bishop_li_duan.html

⁶⁸ As reported by a leader of the Hangzhou Patriotic Association in 1992.

Revolution started. But this situation was not common.⁶⁹ We can see that all of these things were really sad things for the CCC during this period of darkness and suffering.

An Imprisonment Becomes A Protection

The title seems to be strange, but it is meaningful. Let me give the background on this subject. Most of the clergy in the CCC were terribly suffering during those years. But we could see that the Holy Spirit was working in China because the unforeseen situation which happened for those church leaders who did not compromise with the government in the fifties, had its positive side. Being imprisoned, they were able to avoid experiencing the cruel excesses of the Cultural Revolution. The prisons became a haven during this very trying times. This does not mean that in these prisons and labor camps, there was none of the usual suffering and pain, of certain forms of discipline which were imposed on prisoners who fortunately, did not have to endure the Red Guard's cruelty or put up with public struggle sessions. It is always painful to hear of church leaders and laypersons being imprisoned and sent to labor camps, but the Holy Spirit had inscrutable plans. With the end of the Cultural Revolution, many church leaders who languished in prison were destined to bring new life to the Church.⁷⁰

The year of 1976 was a momentous year for the Chinese People. On January 8 of 1976, the Prime Minister of China, Zhou Enlai died. On April 15, China's Qingming Festival, a traditional day of mourning, people had to gather on late March in Tiananmen Square to mourn the death of Zhou Enlai. The authority at that time denounced this as a counter revolutionary activity. Although not unexpected, his death created a crisis in the affairs of the government. Zhou had held the post of Premier since the founding of the PRC, and his death immediately precipitated a struggle as to who would succeed him. The Vice-Premier was Deng Xiaoping who had been taking over more and more of the administration of government during Zhou's illness, but Hua Guofeng was named acting premier. On April 6, Deng was dismissed from all his posts. Hua's appointment as premier was made permanent, and in addition he was named Mao's heir. On September 9 Mao

⁶⁹ See Lam, *The Catholic Church in Present-Day China*, 48.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 50.

Zedong died. Hua Guofeng became the Party's Chairman. Actually before Mao died, Hua had been widely considered to be lacking in political skill and as posing no threat at all to the Gang of Four⁷¹ in the power succession. But under the influence of prominent generals like Ye Jianying, and partly under influence of Deng Xiaoping, and with the support of the Army, Hua ordered the arrest of the Gang of Four following Mao's death. By October 10, the 8431 Special Regiment had all members of the Gang of Four arrested.⁷² Hu Guofeng became the head of State.

The political changes necessarily influenced the situation of the Church. In 1978 Deng Xiaoping returned to power and Hu Yaobang, who had been involved with the communist Youth League, also reappeared. Many leaders who had been falsely accused and condemned unjustly during the Cultural Revolution were reinstated including many church leaders. In May of 1978 before holding the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Beijing, the head of the CCPA, bishop Pi Shushi and bishop Zhang Jiashu of Shanghai diocese, were appointed as delegates to this congress. These appointments showed in some way the importance paid to religious leaders. The Chinese Church was entering a new period of history.⁷³

The Chinese Catholic Representative Meeting

In 1980, an important meeting (Chinese Catholic representatives' meeting) took place in the Chinese Catholic Church. The meeting was very

⁷¹ The Gang of Four (四人帮) was the name given to a leftist political faction composed of four Chinese Communist party officials. They came to prominence during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-76) and were subsequently charged with a series of treasonous crimes. The members consists of Jiang Qing, Mao's last wife and the leading figure of the group, and her close associates Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyan and Wang Hongwen. The Gang of Four effectively controlled the power organs of the Communist Party of China through the latter stages of the Cultural Revolution, although it remains unclear which major decisions were made through Mao Zedong and carried out by the Gang, and which were the result of the Gang of Four's own planning. The Gang of Four, together with disgraced Communist general Lin Biao, were labeled the two major "counter-revolutionary forces" of the Cultural Revolution and officially blamed for the worst excesses of the societal chaos that ensued during the ten years of turmoil. Their downfall on October 6, 1976, a mere month after Mao's death, brought about major celebrations on the streets of Beijing and marked the end of a turbulent political era in China.

⁷² See Wikipedia, "Cultural Revolution." Retrieved on June 29, 2007 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Cultural_Revolution

⁷³ See Lam, *The Catholic Church in Present-Day China*, 52.

crucial to the future development of the CCC. Actually, the revival of the Church since the beginning of the 1980s after the Economic Reform can be attributed to the Party's recognition of the principle of "religious freedom" on the one hand, and the awareness of the need to put religion under the control of the Party on the other.⁷⁴ In this case, the reorganization of CCPA was formally ratified at the Third National congress, which was held from May 22 to 30 1980. Bishop Zong Huide was elected as the new president. Then a most significant moment in the history of the Catholic Church in post-1949 China took place. A Catholic Representatives Assembly was held from 31 May to 2 June. This established two new organizations, the Chinese Catholic Church Administrative Committee (CCAC. 中国天主教教务委员会) and the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference (CCBC. 中国天主教主教团). There were said to be thirty-three members of the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference. The task of the Bishops' Conference was the supervision of doctrinal matters, but it also had as secondary aim, the expansion of friendly contacts with foreign Catholics. Bishop Zhang Jiashu of Shanghai was head of the CCBC and Director of the Administrative Committee.⁷⁵ The assembly also passed the resolution concerning the preparations to establish the National Catholic Academy of Philosophy and Theology.⁷⁶

But these meetings seemed to reaffirm the hard line mentality against Rome, although there is reason to think that some delegates argued strongly for unity with the Holy See. If so, the expression of their opinion in such a forum may have contributed to the restoration of a degree of trust, at least in some circles and in some places. The restoration of Bishop Deng Yiming of Guangzhou must be seen as part of this process, for he did not join the CCPA on this occasion.

Here one has to say that even though division took place and many conflicts happened in the CCC after 1980, the CCC had been still developing and growing. In 1986, 2000 churches had reopened throughout the country. In 1992, this number had increased to 4,000.⁷⁷ The number of Catholics was also increasing.

⁷⁴ See Beatrice K. F. Leung and Willam T. Liu, *The Chinese Catholic Church in Conflict: 1949-2001* (Universal Publishers, Boca Raton, Florida, 2004), 135.

⁷⁵ See Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity* (London: Found Paperbacks, 1988), 347-348.

⁷⁶ *Catholic Church in China*, op. cit. 52.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, no.18, Mar 30, 1987, 8. and no.42, Nov 13, 1992, 12.

The Archbishop Deng Yiming Incident

Here, we should know an important event which happened in the diocese of Guangzhou. This is the incident of Archbishop Deng Yiming. This incident made the Sino-Vatican relationship to turn worse. In 1950, Deng Yinming was appointed administrator of the Guangzhou archdiocese. He served in this capacity until his arrest and imprisonment in 1958. After 22 years of imprisonment, he was released in June 1980 but when he was released, the government announced that he no longer had responsibility for the diocese of Guangzhou. On October 1980, some priests, sisters, and lay of the diocese were called to the cathedral to elect a new bishop for the diocese; Deng was elected as the bishop of Guangzhou. The CCPA decided that Bishop Deng Yiming could resume his duties as Bishop of Guangzhou.⁷⁸

Not so long after the bishop's election, in November of 1980, Bishop Deng Yiming got permission from the CCG to go to Hong Kong for a medical treatment because of his intestinal cancer. In April of 1981, after his convalescence, Bishop Deng Yiming was allowed to travel to Rome, where he had a private audience with Pope John Paul II. A few days later, he made a courtesy visit to the Chinese embassy, and though the ambassador was absent, Bishop Deng Yiming was reported to have been received courteously. Many overseas China watchers thought this signaled a change for better relations between China and the Vatican. A pro-China newspaper described Bishop Deng Yiming's visit to the Chinese embassy in Rome in this way: "It signifies that for the first time in thirty years a representative of the Beijing government formally received a high-ranking Roman Catholic clergyman."⁷⁹ On June 6, 1981, Bishop Deng Yiming was named Archbishop of Guangzhou by the Vatican. This was major news. In China, bishop Deng Yiming was a government-recognized bishop; in Rome, he was appointed as archbishop. On June 22, at a press conference called after he returned to Hong Kong, Bishop Deng Yiming issued the following statement:

The Catholic Church throughout the world has no political motive. It encourages citizens of each country to love their

⁷⁸ See Deng Yiming *How Inscrutable His ways*.

⁷⁹ *Wen Wei Po*, Hong Kong, May26, 1981.

church and their country, and promote the virtues of their native culture. Therefore, to give greater honor and encouragement to the citizens of our country and to all our catholic brothers and sisters in the church there, the Pope has announced the appointment of your humble servant as archbishop of Guangzhou. With the hope that this appointment would help promote relations between the Vatican and our motherland, I accept this responsibility, vowing to carry it out to the best of my ability. Now I hope that after I have completely recovered from my illness, I can return to Guangzhou and work in unity and cooperation with my fellow countrymen to make a contribution to the building up of the motherland and the development of the Church.⁸⁰

However, the CCG did not recognize Deng Yiming as archbishop, and the CCPA launched a tide of verbal criticism against Bishop Deng Yiming and against papal interference in the affairs of the Chinese Church. Due to this event, Archbishop Deng Yiming could not return to Guangzhou diocese. Then the CCPA of Guangzhou chose Bishop Ye Yinyun of the Huiyang Diocese to take charge of Guangzhou diocese.

Here one must note one thing. During the “Archbishop Deng Yiming’s incident” many bishops and priests who belonged to the CCPA were forced to sign a statement criticizing the Pope to show that they agreed with the Association’s statement.⁸¹ In 1982, when the Holy Father sent a letter to all bishops of the world appealing for prayers for the Church in China, the CCPA criticized this as interference in China’s internal affairs.

We must realize that the Open Church’s attitude toward papal primacy had gradually improved after 1989. In 1989 the Bishops’ Conference formally acknowledged the Pope as the spiritual leader of the CCC. After 1989, most congregations had also restored the prayer for the Pope during Mass.⁸² Today all bishops, lay, and priests in OC pray for the Pope during Mass. As this writer can remember when he was a high school student, he

⁸⁰ *Kung Kao Po*, June 26, 1981.

⁸¹ See *Catholic Church in China*, no.3, Oct 30, 1981 and no. 4, Mar 30, 1982.

⁸² In the latter half of the nineteen fifties, the Prayer for the Pope was removed from two prayer books: A Collection of Important Prayers and Daily Prayers, published by the OC. But in 1982, the Prayer for the Pope that had been removed from the book of Collection of Important Prayers was reintroduced.

saw the Pope's pictures in the homes of many families⁸³ and those people are from the OC. It is a fact that in the hearts of the Chinese laity, bishops, and priests, the primacy of the pope is always acknowledged.

Formation of Seminarians

During the restoration of the Open Church after 1980, seminaries were also a part of the process of restoration as the number of seminarians was increasing rapidly after 1980. Now we are entering into another very important stage of the development of the CCC after 1980, which was the formation of seminarians. Preparation for priesthood has always been important in the Catholic Church. In 1957, more than three thousand foreign missionary priests departed from China, and a good portion of the 2,676 Chinese priests were incarcerated.⁸⁴ By the time of Deng Xiaoping's reform, only a few aged Catholic priests who had survived political storms had returned to their home dioceses. In the 1980s, the number of aged Catholic clergy was reduced to merely 1,000 with an average age of 70 years old and older.⁸⁵ In 1982, the State Council issued Document No.60 (82), which approved the application of the Religious Affairs Bureau for building religious education institutes.⁸⁶ Then one national seminary and 10 regional and provincial seminaries were opened with government funding. But the problem for those seminaries was that most of them did not have enough textbooks and professors. For example, as this writer recalls, that before 1999, most professors were old priests and some young priests, who were either poorly trained, or had no training at all, especially with regards teaching. So they did not know how to teach their students. Then, some visiting professors who came from Hong Kong, Taiwan and other places began teaching in the seminaries. Although they were very good professors, the government only permitted them to stay in China for a short time, so

⁸³ Last March, 2008, the researcher went back to China for one month. He also saw the Pope's pictures on the Catholic calendar. Some years ago when the researcher was a parish priest, even during that time, many churches and catholic families had photos of the Pope. People are praying for pope everyday.

⁸⁴ See Beatrice K. F. Leung and Willam T. Liu, *The Chinese Catholic Church in Conflict: 1949-2001*, 161.

⁸⁵ John Tong, "Seminar Formation in China Today and Prospects for the Future."

⁸⁶ See Beatrice K. F. Leung and Willam T. Liu, *The Chinese Catholic Church in Conflict: 1949-2001*, 162.

they had to finish one course in one or two months. After 2000, the situation became better because some Chinese young priests had already finished their further studies abroad, and came back to teach in the seminary. According to a report in December of 2007, there were about more than 16 seminaries, one national seminary, eleven regional seminaries, and five provincial seminaries in China, (including the UC seminaries).⁸⁷

After 1980, in spite of the divisions that took place in the CCC, the Catholic Church in China had been growing very fast. Below is the December 2007 statistical chart showing an overview of the Catholic Church in China.⁸⁸

Number of Catholics: 1) Official number: 5,300,000
 2) Estimated number: about 12 million
 Number of churches and chapels: More than 6,000
 Church's dioceses or ecclesiastical territories: 1) Traditional number: 138
 2) Official number(following the rearrangement of boundaries: 97
 Number of bishops(both official and unofficial): 1) Official bishops: 63
 2) Unofficial bishops: 41
 Number of priests: 1) Official priests: 1,800 2) Unofficial priests: 1,200
 Number of sisters: about 5,000
 Number of major seminaries: about 30 (National: 1 Regional: 11
 Provincial: 5 And the rest diocesan, both official and unofficial).
 Number of Sister's Novitiates: about 60
 Sisters in formation: 1) In the Open Church: 800
 2) In the Underground Church: 800
 Printing presses: 1 (Shanghai)
 Publication Houses: 3 (Beijing, Shanghai, Shijiazhuang)
 Social Service center: 5 (Beijing, Tianjin, Shenyang, Shanghai, Xi'an)
 Laity training centers: 2 (Beijing, Shenyang)
 Church-operated "orphanages": 20+ Clinics: 200
 Religious Congregations: 70

From the data shown above, we can see that although the division appeared, the Church was still growing. From 1978 till today, the Chinese

⁸⁷ Ticozzi Sergio, "Estimated Statistics for China's Catholic Church (December 2007)," In *Tripod* 147 (2007), 46.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Catholic Church has been struggling for religious freedom. We trust that the Holy Spirit continues to lead the OC and the UC.

The Emergence of the Underground Church

This issue is particularly painful for the Chinese Catholic Church. In order to understand the real situation of the CCC, we must know what the so-called Underground Church.

When speaking of the Underground Church, it is perhaps useful to distinguish between two moments of its history. In the 1950s, some Catholics were following the obedience of the Holy See. They refused to join or recognize the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA). They refused to go to the open churches or to accept the sacraments administered by priests and bishops who had joined the association. These Catholics, therefore, practiced their faith privately in homes and were served by itinerant priests. Although hostile to the open churches, their attitude was very defensive in character. After 1978, the Chinese society experienced a major change. Religious policy was being relaxed. Many priests, bishops and lay people imprisoned in the fifties were gradually released. Some of them were still unwilling to join any Catholic organization registered with the government. They refused to live at a church with other priests who had cooperated with the government, or who had publicly denied the primacy of the Pope. They carried out their religious activities in private, and gradually, they attracted a great number of Catholics to join them.

It is undeniable that the present UC took shape in late 1979 when the Holy See gave a series of exemptions to underground pastors so that religious life could be practiced without following the canonical laws of church. As was mentioned in previous pages, in 1981 when Bishop Deng Yiming was appointed Archbishop of Guangzhou, the OC launched a severe criticism against the Pope. This matter also increased the discontent among many of the clergy who had not yet entered the OC. Especially in 1978 after the Reform, as a result of extreme shortage of priests under which the Chinese church had functioned, the Vatican permitted underground bishops to consecrate Catholic young men as priests under three conditions: celibacy, spirituality, and willingness to serve God. Three years later, in a written document, the Holy Father permitted underground bishops to

consecrate new bishops if presiding bishops themselves had become bishops during the Papacy of Pius XII (1939-1958) or before the 1919 Communist Revolution.⁸⁹

With encouragement from Rome, there had been reports of increased numbers of underground faithful since the beginning of the 1980s, along with an increase in underground seminaries. And the granting of extra-canonical permissions by the Holy See, this event too, was seen by some as a green light to build an opposition church. From 1981 until the end of the millennium, about one hundred bishops were added to the rolls of native bishops.⁹⁰ It seems that the ordinations of priests and bishops were already far beyond the original pastoral intentions of the Holy See's permissions.

Bishop Fan Xueyan and the Underground Church

If anyone wants to know more in detail about the UC in China, then he or she must know the most important underground bishop, Fan Xueyan. In China, the person considered most closely associated with the UC is Bishop Fan Xueyan. Before 1978, Bishop Fan, like many other loyal bishops and even a few bishops who were later identified as bishops of the patriotic church, was twice incarcerated particularly during the Cultural Revolution. He was released from prison in 1979. In 1981, he came to an unprecedented decision: to secretly ordain three priests as bishops. He believed the Pope would understand the situation of the CCC. In 1981, he ordained Jia Zhiguo to be the bishop of Zhengding diocese, Zhou Shangchuan as the bishop of Yixian diocese, and Wang Milu as the bishop of Tianshui diocese in Gansu province. Subsequently when the news of these ordinations reached the Holy See, according to an article by Shi Fanjun, entitled "A Solemn Remembrance of Archbishop Fan Xueyan," in the *Christian Life Weekly* of Taipei January 16, 1994, the Holy Father himself agreed with Bishop Fan's decision.⁹¹

⁸⁹ See Beatrice K. F. Leung and Willam T. Liu, *The Chinese Catholic Church in Conflict: 1949-2001*. 142.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ The reply that Our Holy Father the Pope in his farsightedness sent to Bishop Fan is this: *Dear brother Peter Joseph, your action was in complete control accord with my will. I grant you the Holy See's benediction and special faculties that enable you to decide the proper course of action in all matters after which you can inform me.* See *The Catholic Weekly*, Jan. 16, 1994.

Having obtained acknowledgement and support from the Holy Father, Bishop Fan and his three newly ordained bishops (Bishop Wang Milu, Bishop Jia Zhiguo and Bishop Zhou Shangchuan) continued to ordain other bishops and priests without the required seminary training. Thus the Underground Church was growing very fast. The declaration of Bishop Maji of the diocese of Pingliang merits special attention. In August 1988 he noted the growth of the Underground movement in his province: "The rent in the Catholic Church is particularly apparent in Gansu province, where it is now widespread and growing ever worse. Here the vitality of the Underground Church is revealed in broad daylight, inspiring an attitude of trust and support in the faithful. The self-styled 'three Catholic organs' (CCPA, CCBC and CCAC) see their authority dwindle by the day. Isolated, paralyzed, and deprived of any influence, these organizations are only very reluctantly tolerated."⁹²

In September of 1988 a document entitled *The Thirteen Points*, attributed to Bishop Fan Xueyan, circulated in Hebei province and beyond.⁹³ The substance of its message was that the Catholic faithful commit a grave sin if they attend mass in patriotic churches. Laden with the authority of a universally respected confessor of the faith, this document had a devastating effect. The churches became empty. Shepherds of good will, unjustly labeled "patriotic," saw their flocks scatter. Patriotic directors and party officials were exasperated by this act of sabotage of their religious freedom policy.⁹⁴ The Underground Church (UC) emerged as a strong force and was able to contend with the Open Church (OC). The opposing positions of the UC and OC were clearly drawn.

The Underground Bishops' Conference

We have seen the birth of the so-called OC and UC. Now another important thing happened in 1989. Before 1989, the OC and the UC were working independently of each other. In 1989, the UC felt the need to set up its own organization. One reason for doing this was to counterbalance

⁹² See Edmond Tang and Jean-Paul Wiest, Eds., *The Catholic Church in Modern China: Perspectives* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 58.

⁹³ Ibid., 142-145.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 59.

the Bishops' Conference of the Open Church. They hoped in this way to unite the entire Underground Church enabling all bishops and priests to speak with one voice in expressing their opinions to the outside world. With this in mind, they called the first meeting of the Underground Bishops' Conference.⁹⁵

The meeting of some fifty bishops, clergy, and fellow religious faithful was reported to have taken place on November 21, 1989 at the church of Zhang Er Ce village (张二册村) of the diocese of San Yuan, GaoLing County, in Shaanxi Province.⁹⁶ At the meeting, a declaration was made that this was the first meeting of Chinese bishops on the Mainland China since the 1924 Shanghai conference. After 1924, the Catholic Church on Mainland China had not had a unified leadership and official communication among its members because, between 1924 and 1949, there were only a few indigenous bishops. The statement obviously disregarded the officially sanctioned and organized Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference as a legitimate body.⁹⁷ The main agenda was to discuss major issues of Catholic missionary work in China. At the same time the meeting decided to establish a Bishops' Conference to be called The Chinese Bishops' Conference on Mainland China to distinguish it from the officially recognized Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference established in 1981. The meeting elected three key figures of the underground church to the leadership even though, for one reason or another, none had attended the meeting. One was bishop Fan Xueyan of Baoding (保定教区范学淹主教). He was elected President, although he was in prison and no one could contact him. Bishop Deng Yiming of Guangzhou (广州邓以明主教)⁹⁸ and Bishop Gong Pinmei of Shanghai (上海龚品梅主教) was elected as honorary Vice President. Bishop Liu Guan Dong of Yixian Diocese (易县刘冠东主教) became Chairman of the Standing Committee. Bishop Liu Shuhe (刘树和主教) was named as its Secretary General. Shortly after the meeting ended,

⁹⁵ See Lam, *The Catholic Church in Present-Day China*, 165.

⁹⁶ As reported by Tian Ya Press, Hong Kong, December 21, 1989.

⁹⁷ See Beatrice K. F. Leung and Willam T. Liu, *The Chinese Catholic Church in Conflict: 1949-2001*, 145.

⁹⁸ Bishop Deng told Tian Ya Press in Hong Kong on March 5th 1990 that he was never informed of being elected Honorary Vice President. See also Hong Kong *Suisheng* No.31. July 1990.

the government arrested all those who attended the meeting and even some members of the clergy who had nothing to do with the Conference.⁹⁹

The Underground Bishops' Conference had perhaps fully expected recognition from the Vatican for their courageous actions. However records showed the Vatican was not happy about the event. The Holy See issued no comment, either recognizing or disavowing the Bishops' Conference. A report available in a Hong Kong religious publication stated the following: "Rome, however, seemingly based on its customary prudence and on the principle of toleration towards the Chinese Communists and the Patriotic Association was not happy to see the progress of this affair because Rome recently drafted some new directives, hoping that the Chinese Church might gradually become united."¹⁰⁰

Actually, the establishment of the Underground Bishops' Conference was not good for the CCC. At first, it was not good for the unity of the CCC. After the Underground bishops' meeting in 1989, the CCC was more divided. Also, it made it very hard for the Holy See to deal with the CCC. The Holy See's only hope was to improve the unity of the CCC, not dividing it. In this case, the Holy See could not blame the UC because they had been suffering for many years, and the Holy See also had to think about the attitude of the CCG. Because the CCG thought this action to build the Underground Bishops' Conference was against the government, so the CCG arrested many underground clerics after that special meeting. In this

⁹⁹ Confidential materials reported by the Maryknoll House in New York U.S.A. Those arrested were bishop Liu Guandong of Yixian Diocese, bishop Li Side of Tianjin Diocese, Vicar General Su Zhemin and bishop Yu Chengti of Hanzhong Diocese; bishop Lu Zhensheng of Tianshui Diocese; bishop Yan Libo of Lanzhou Diocese; bishop Hou Guoyang of Chongqing Diocese, bishop Guo Wenzhi of Harbin, bishop Zhang Liren of Hohot, Father Zhang Gangyi of Ankong Diocese, Father Yu Chengxin of Hanzhong Diocese; Father Wei Jingwen of Yixian Diocese, Father Wang Ruowang of Tianshu Diocese, Deacon Wang Tongsha of Baoding Diocese, bishop Li Zhenrong of Xianxian Diocese, and Father Wang Ruohan of Tianshui Diocese. The last two have been missing at that time. Also arrested Father Zhang Wancheng, Father Zhang Ximan, and Seminarian Zhang Suilu all three were from Tianshui Diocese; and Deacon Wang Tianzhang of Lanzhou Diocese. A Catholic layman, Li Fengfu who accompanied Bishop Li Side of Tianjin to the conference, was declared missing. (Source: New York Maryknoll Congregation, confidential information faxed on June 4, 1990 to UCA News in Hong Kong). See Beatrice K. F. Leung and Willam T. Liu, *The Chinese Catholic Church in Conflict: 1949-2001*. 306.

¹⁰⁰ See Beatrice K. F. Leung and Willam T. Liu, *The Chinese Catholic Church in Conflict: 1949-2001*. 147.

case, if the Holy See recognized the Underground Bishops' Conference, it would harm the OC because the OC already had established a CCBC in China. On the other hand, the CCG would be not happy either. So we are here confronted with a serious problem facing even the universal Church and the Vatican in very concrete terms.

Open Confrontation and the Start of the Division

As was mentioned previously, the inner division of the Catholic Church in China started in 1957 after the creation of CCPA. The CCPA guided by the principles of the Three Self-movement (三自运动), was officially established. The CCPA has done great harm to the Chinese Catholic Church because it internally split the one Catholic Church in China. The split became an open division in 1958 when the CCPA started to consecrate its own bishops without Roman approval. On the other hand, some lay people in CCPA got very high positions from which they controlled the Church. Another event worthwhile noting is that Pope Pius XII refused to approve the first two Chinese Bishops' request and threatened them with excommunication. Then the Chinese Communist Government started to consecrate more bishops.¹⁰¹

All these have caused deep divisions in the CCC between those who chose to collaborate with the CCPA and those who refused to collaborate with the CCPA because they did not want to put into question their unity with the Holy See and the universal Church. Subsequently, Sino-Vatican relations were completely cut off. After the Chinese Cultural Revolution, in 1978, many members of the clergy were released from prison, due to the new political changes in the nation. In the 1980s the division between the two groups was already inescapably an open confrontation. We can see that today's division persists as a result of these conflicts.

Moreover, in May of 1980, the CCG organized the CCC to establish the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference (CCBC) and the Chinese Catholic Administrative Commission (CCAC). The two new organizations clearly relieved the CCPA from directly interfering in religious related affairs within the Church. The change crystallized the delineation of major

¹⁰¹ Wurth 1985, 48-61.

function of CCPA as the “intermediate association” between an officially recognized Catholic Church. Some faithful and married clerics were placed at the top of the leadership of the two new organizations, and all these made many Catholics very disappointed. The problem got worse when in 1981, Bishop Fan Xueyan consecrated three bishops without any consultation with or prior approval of the Pope as well as of the CCG. Thereafter bishop Fan Xueyan and his three newly ordained bishops-Bishop Jia Zhiguo of Zhengding, Bishop Zhou Shanfu of Yixian and Bishop Wang Milu of Tianshui then ordained many bishops and priests without the required seminary training. The big division between the OC and the UC was sealed.

The Open Church’s Attitude to the Division

Before 1986, the CCG and CCPA never mentioned anything about the division with the CCC, even though they knew that the underground groups were growing and becoming very strong. They did not want to mention about this kind of division because the division was shameful for the CCC. The magazine of the Open Church- Catholic Church in China, was founded in 1980. It reported nothing about the division between the UC and the OC in nearly seven years. All important authors of this magazine such as bishop Zong Huide(宗怀德), Chairman of CCPA, and bishop Tu Shihua(涂世华), the former vice-chairman and some other bishops and priests, wrote many articles about the CCC. Most of the time they only talk about the homilies, successes of the independent and autonomous Church, inculturation, the Church history in electing bishops, breaking away from the Vatican’s control and supporting the policies of the CCG. But they never used or even mentioned the term “division”.¹⁰²

Then in 1986, Bishop Jin Luxian of the diocese of Shanghai indirectly referred to the existence of the division within the CCC. In 1987, Bishop Zong Huaide in his “Work Report of the Fourth Conference of the CCPA,” in mentioning the division, indirectly agreed that there was division among Chinese Catholics. In the early 1980s, the leaders of CCPA and CCG officially denied the existence of the Underground Church in China. They often denied that division existed within the Chinese Catholic Church.

¹⁰² See *Catholic Church in China* 1980-1987.

In 1996, Bishop Zong Huaide even denied that there were underground bishops under detention in Mainland China.¹⁰³

From the discussion above, we can see that the reaction of the CCG and some members of the Open Church clearly shows that the division, in their eyes, is a shameful matter. To admit the existing division within the CCC means that some people inside the Church do not recognize the CCPA. They do not cooperate with and disagree with the CCPA and CCG. On the contrary, some of them strongly oppose it. In this case, for CCG and the members of CCPA, especially to those who prefer to talk about successes of the independent church, the division is not a matter to be happy about, but rather a humiliation. That is also why they do not want to talk about the division. It is understandable that they tried to understate, avoid, and even deny the division as existing within the Chinese Catholic Church.

After 1990, the existence of the division was acknowledged in the CCC. The dispute had come out into open. Early in 1990, the division was mentioned publicly by Tang Boduo in the Catholic Church in China.¹⁰⁴ In his view, there should not be a distinction between UC and OC. Then in the second issue of Catholic Church in China 1990, an essay criticizing the “13 Points”¹⁰⁵ appeared. The author’s analysis and attitude toward the UC was very defensive and hostile. In 1990, on the occasion of the anniversary of the founding of the CCPA in the city of Shanghai, Bishop Jin Luxian acknowledged the division within the CCC and asked people to fill their hearts with love and not hate. In 1996, the vice-chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association Liu Bainian in Hong Kong admitted openly that there was division in CCC.¹⁰⁶ He did not deny the division among the Church in China, but he stressed that the members of underground church were few, not so many. We can see that division was a shameful fact for the CCG and the CCPA.

¹⁰³ See *South China Morning Post*, 4 March 1996, 11.

¹⁰⁴ See *Catholic Church in China* 1990, 15.

¹⁰⁵ The 13 points refer to bishop Fan Xueyan over-all criticism of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. Many bishops, priests and lay people who belong to the underground group took it as a norm for action. After reading these instructions, many Catholics who had been taking part in the open church services no longer wished to receive the sacraments from the clergy of the Open Church.

¹⁰⁶ See *Catholic Church in China* 1996. 6.

Cause of the Division

It is clear that the division was a shameful event for the Church. Facing and reflecting the division within the CCC, Archbishop Li Duan¹⁰⁷ of the diocese of Xi'an thought that division was caused by some members of the CCPA as well as some government officials. He said "In the past, there have been people who have done things that are against the love for the Church and harmful to the Church. There are patriotic association people in some localities who have acted improperly. In addition, some local cadres had not acted wisely with the resultant loss of acceptance by the masses of the people. This has also shaped opposition and tension."¹⁰⁸ In 1988, Bishop Ma Ji of the diocese of Pingliang in Gansu Province published his article "My Statement" and pointed out that the division within the Catholic Church in Gansu province was becoming very serious and well-known. He noted that this was the fault of three organizations (CCBC, CCAC and CCPA) and some members of certain groups.

People have different opinions about the division within the CCC. Many people think that the division is a very bad thing for the Church in China. This is true because the division is really harmful to the Catholic Church in China. Some Chinese priests and faithful think that the division between the OC and the UC is a challenge to the CCPA and the CCG. They feel that the rift could spur the OC to reflect and to improve or correct its stand on independence, such that it shows to go too far from the universal Church. On the other hand they also think that the division could push the

¹⁰⁷ Bishop Li Duan of the diocese of Xi'an was one of the most prominent figures of the Chinese Catholic Church. He had served as the Archbishop of Xi'an from 1987 to 2006 and was known for his loyalty to the Holy See. He was the bishop of the OC. Bishop Li Duan and his remarkable contributions to the Church in China were honored in an article by the official Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, On June 1, 2006 the day he was buried. "He was steadfast on the principles of the Catholic faith and did his utmost to dialogue with everyone, always looking for points of agreement and spaces useful for pronouncing the Gospel. He was firm on the principles, serene and meek in giving the reasons for his faith, and always respectful to others." He was one of the four bishops from the PRC invited in October, 2005 by Pope Benedict XVI to the Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist. He was esteemed and loved by his priests, feared by the authorities, appreciated in China and abroad. Even though he was a bishop in OC, but he was loved both by the "official" and "underground" Catholics as well as by Protestant brothers and sisters. He stands out as one of the brightest figures of the Chinese episcopate. See UCAN 06/06, Asia News 06/06.

¹⁰⁸ See Shijiang Zhang, "Toward a Wider Reconciliation: A Cultural-Theological Reflection on the Division within the Church in China." 31.

CCG to improve ways of implementing religious policy. Furthermore, they could get support from more people. In this sense, the division within the CCC does have its positive aspects. A Chinese priest said that maybe the division between the OC and the UC is “the special will of God for the Chinese Catholic Church in this special time.” Both the Open Church and the Underground Church can improve and compete in parallel ways with each other.¹⁰⁹

In 1988, Bishop Jin Luxian of the diocese of Shanghai, at a meeting of the local CCPA in Shanghai, pointed out that the strong forces of the Underground Church were moving from north to south, including the diocese of Shanghai. He had looked upon them as a threat to the OC and asked people to deal with them prudently.¹¹⁰ During that time, his attitude showed the very clear hostility between the UC and OC. But later on he changed his attitude with regards the division. He looks upon division not only as a threat but also as a challenge. In 1990 he talked again publicly about division with regret. He rationally responded to the “13 Points” and appealed for unity with love rather than hate. He said “When someone attacks us, whatever form that may take, we should forgive that person because he or she is our brother or sister, we should strive to fill our hearts with love and not hate.” He asked people to forgive and help those who attack them personally and to improve the CCPA’s functions.¹¹¹ In 1994 Bishop Jin Luxian again described the Chinese Catholic Church as “a small boat on the boundless ocean.” But unfortunately “within the boat, brothers are quarreling, with some even fighting murderously with one another.” He continued saying that others in nearby boats, after observing this, also began to quarrel among themselves. He proposed the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the Vatican as a key to solving the internal conflict in the Chinese Catholic Church. He also pointed out in 1995 in Scotland that both the UC and OC were making efforts at evangelization but with different foci. Both were loyal to the Holy See. There were some problems in the structure and organization of the OC, but steps were being taken to solve or correct them. Bishop Jin also indirectly admitted the challenge faced by the Underground Church. He noted that the UC had

¹⁰⁹ *Yueshing* 1994, 4.

¹¹⁰ *Tian ZhuJiao Hui Xun* Shanghai, 1988.

¹¹¹ See Edmond Tang and Jean-Paul Wiest, Eds., *The Catholic Church in Modern China: Perspectives*. 113.

difficulty training seminarians and sisters because of very limited resources. He warned that this could be hidden trouble for the Church or a peril in its future. For Bishop Jin Luxian, division results in missed opportunities for evangelization. Secret evangelizing gives rise to confusion and causes untold damage to the CCC.

The Government's Reaction

The government's reaction to the division within CCC is varied. There are some areas where, if an underground Catholic Church is established, the local officials immediately destroy the building and disband the community. In other areas, however, there are prominent underground churches that are simply ignored by officials and are allowed to exist as a parish without interference.

To all religions in China, CCG issued some special documents on religious policies, such as No. 19 (1982),¹¹² No. 3 (1989), No.6 (1991) and No.426 (2004). Of all these documents, document No. 3 entitled "Strengthening Catholic Church Work in the New Situation" was formulated specially for the Underground Church.

It states that the CCG looks upon the UC as a political force opposed to the government, an element of discord in the country, and whose actions are a consequence of the support of the Vatican. The CCG's negative view of the UC is reflected in the following quote: "In recent years, on the one hand it has slandered and attacked our country's Catholic patriotic clergy, and on the other hand, it has made use of the universal nature of the Catholic Church and the religious belief of the Catholics and clergy regarding the pope to continually send people to China, or it has used other concealed means, to secretly appoint bishops to split the Chinese Catholic Church. This is a factor which seriously affects the security of society."¹¹³

¹¹² *Document No. 19* promulgated in 1982, was the first definitive statement on religious and religious policy after churches were allowed to reopen. While there has always been some forms of control of religious organization, *Document No. 19* was a positive development. (See Lam, *The Catholic Church in Present-Day China*, 199.) For example, before 1982, time for worship in churches was greatly limited; worship was not allowed at home and children could not be baptized before 18 years age. With Document 19, there can be unlimited worship time in churches and at home, and children can now be baptized as early as parents decide.

¹¹³ See the appendix in Tong 1989.

Document No. 3 shows that underlying the division between the OC and UC is a power struggle between the Vatican and the Chinese Communist Government. On the one hand the government realizes that it is a matter of faith that most Catholics believe in the Pope as their spiritual leader and authority. On the other hand the Chinese government officials think that “the underground forces are made up of bishops secretly appointed by the Vatican as well as of priests ordained by these bishops and leaders manipulated by them. This clearly illustrates that division is one expression of power conflict between the Vatican and the Chinese government. For the Chinese government the way to handle the problem of the underground forces is simply to deal with the Vatican’s interference.”¹¹⁴ For CCG, this is a political struggle.

Several years ago, the CCG promulgated the *Regulations on Religious Affairs*,¹¹⁵ signed in 2004. It had a profound impact on the life of religious societies; they recognized some religious bodies as non-governmental organizations. Many observers in the Church say that we need to pay the closest attention to the impact of the new *Regulations on Religious Affairs* regarding religious freedom.¹¹⁶ Without doubt, in these Regulations, some articles appear more open and are more favorable to religious believers, but still there are quite a few articles which could restrict the growth of religion.¹¹⁷ The *Regulations on Religious Affairs* contain some special points aimed at the Catholic Church. For example, Article 4 stresses that “each religion must adhere to the principle of the independent governance of their religion.”¹¹⁸ It says that the supervision, of which Article 5 in the *Regulations on Religious Affairs* speaks, tends gradually to control the religion’s activity. For example, Article 5 says, “The government’s religious affairs departments, at the county level and above, and in accordance with the law, are responsible for the administrative supervision of religious affairs, which touch upon the national interest and the public welfare of society. Other departments

¹¹⁴ See Lam, *The Catholic Church in Present-Day China*, 287-297.

¹¹⁵ Premier Wen Jiabao signed these “*Regulations on Religious Affairs*,” listed as decree No. 426, on November 30, 2004, thus making them official. The regulations took effect on March 1, 2005, and replaced the “*Regulation on the Management of Venues for Religious Activities*,” signed by then Premier Li Peng on January 31, 1994.

¹¹⁶ Anthony Lam, “A Commentary on the Regulations on Religious Affairs.” In *Tripod* 25, no.136 (Spring 2005), 2.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ “*Regulations on Religious Affairs*.” In *Tripod* 25, no. 36 (Spring 2005), 199.

of the people's government at the country level or above are responsible, in accordance with the law, for the work of administrative supervision for concerned matters that fall within the scope of their duties."¹¹⁹ Although the new policy and the CCG has introduced some changes and recognized the religious bodies as non-governmental organizations, it still subjects them to a high degree of political supervision. Thus, it is obvious that the CCG's view of religion is very limited. The Underground Church is still an illegal group for the CCG.

Division in the Eyes of the Underground Church

The Underground Church insists that the division actually is the result of loyalty to faith in a time of persecution. Compared to the Open Church, the Underground Church never denies that a division exists. They refuse to cooperate with the CCPA because they think that the CCPA is a tool of the CCG. Furthermore, before 2000¹²⁰ bishops and priests in UC did not allow the faithful to accept any sacrament from the OC. They also told people not to enter open churches. Even though the situation is improving in some areas of China today, this is still a problem for the CCC. They often say that the Chinese Catholic Church is still undergoing a time of persecution. For example, in the "13 Points", the most important figure of the underground Church, Bishop Fan Xueyan of the diocese of Baoding, emphasized that China is going through an era of persecution. In this case, they claim the right to use the privileges given by the Holy See to consecrate many bishops and priests without approval of the Vatican.

According to an underground bishop in his "My Vision of the Patriotic Association,"¹²¹ there is a strong hostility between the UC and the OC. He accused the CCPA of seeking the government's help to arrest underground

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Because Pope John Paul II urged the CCC to reconcile between the two groups, after 2000, the relations between the UC and the OC have experienced some improvement.

¹²¹ This essay was published in English in *Zhonglian* 17 (July 1989): 16-24, and is reprinted with permission of China Catholic Communication in Singapore.

clergy and treat them as enemies.¹²² He then pointed out twenty-two reasons why the Underground Church cannot unite with the CCPA and the OC. He criticized some members of the CCPA for the denial of the primacy of the Pope. Meanwhile, his point of contention also included the fact that some married clergy had been working at the top of the CCBC and CCPA in the early 1980s. In his view, loyalty to the Pope and faith were basic reasons for their separation from the CCPA and refusal to cooperate with the Open Church.

Bishop Fan Xueyan, in his “13 Points”, said “the so called self-governing Church naturally is no longer a Catholic Church” because it governs itself separately and disobeys the pope. Lin Ruiqi, an executive editor of the Chinese edition of *Tripod* in Hong Kong, pointed out that the “13 Points” are identical with the UC’s standard which generally is quite “conservative”.¹²³ To further his point, Lin Ruiqi said that Bishop Fan adheres to the same principle that came out in a document by the Underground Chinese Catholic Bishops’ Conference on Mainland China¹²⁴ in the late 1990s. In a pastoral letter to the Chinese clergy and faithful in 1994, the Chinese Bishops’ Conference on Mainland China declared that the CCC is divided. It also said that one part of the church was recognized

¹²² Actually these things were only happening in very few places of China. The situation in most area of China is not like that. As the researcher knows that at least in Shaanxi Province, before although, many priests and bishops in UC did not co-celebrate mass together with the clergy in OC, but no bishop or priest sought the government help to arrest people of the UC. On the contrary, Archbishop Li Duan of the dioceses of Xi’an often helped the UC and improved reconciliation and unity between the two groups. Many people from the UC also love him very much, That’s why many underground lay people and priests attended his funeral after his death in 2006. Now at least in Shaanxi province, the UC and the OC already united, for example, in Hanzhong Diocese Bishop Yu Runshen of the OC and Bishop Yu Chengti of the UC already are united already. For example, many Chinese priests from the UC and the OC are studying in the Philippines, but we co-celebrate mass together.

¹²³ Lin 1995, 206-207.

¹²⁴ The Chinese Bishops’ Conference on Mainland China was established by the bishops of UC at Zhang Erce village, Gaoling county, Shaanxi Province in 1989. Before 1989, underground bishops and priests in China were working independently of each other. In November of 1989 they felt a need to set up their own organization. One reason for doing this was to counterbalance the Bishops Conference of the OC.

by the CCG as the “Open Church” and denounced the official CCBC as a new sect which must be rejected by the universal church.

Authority of the “Chinese Catholic Bishops’ Conference” comes from the “National Congress of Catholic Representatives.” Because of its formation, its constitution, its autonomy from the pope. Its accountability to the National Congress of Catholic Representatives, rather than to the sovereign Pontiff, we, the Bishops, as member of the Universal Catholic Church, do solemnly declare that the “Chinese Catholic Bishops’ Conference” and those churches which are led by the CCBC have become a new church, not the same as the Orthodox church, nor the same as a Protestant church.... Those Christian faithful who have failed to declare their separation from the CCBC are no longer members of the Catholic Church. No member of clergy of the Universal Church is permitted to be in sacramental communion with them.¹²⁵

In this pastoral letter, the Underground Church makes a very strong judgment on the Open Church. The attitude of Bishop Fan Xueyan’s “13 Point” and this pastoral letter toward the OC are the same. But some priests and bishops in the UC also do not agree with the above view because they think it would lead to great pastoral difficulties, and moreover it is not good for the church. These priests and bishops think there is no need to hide today. We can not say that all lay people and clergy in OC are not faithful. In some areas, priests and bishops in UC have a very good relationship. Some bishops of the UC such as in Shaanxi, Fujian and Hebei provinces have the open dialogue and negotiate with the CCG and the OC.¹²⁶ In some areas, the Open Church and the Underground Church live together in peaceful coexistence. In some places, when bishops and priests of the Open Church know there are underground Catholics nearby, they try to have fewer activities in those areas. In Shaanxi province, Bishop Li Jingfeng¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Anon. 1995, 53-59.

¹²⁶ Shijiang Zhang, “*Toward a Wider Reconciliation: A Cultural-Theological Reflection on the Division within the Church in China.*” 35.

¹²⁷ He was one of the four bishops from the PRC invited in October, 2005 by Pope Benedict XVI to the Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist.

of the diocese of Fengxiang even though he is underground bishop, he is also recognized by the CCG.

Division in the Eyes of Overseas Churches and Scholars

We have seen the opinion and attitude to the division within the CCC, but what is the thinking and attitude to this division in the Chinese Catholic Church (CCC)? Do they really understand the division between the OC and the UC? In the 1980s most of the foreign Catholics and many Chinese priests, bishops, and lay people in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao thought the division in the CCC was the outcome of the Underground Church's loyalty to the Pope and to their faith. But to some certain scholars, the reason is found elsewhere. Because the UC attacked the OC strongly, division took place. They think that the emergence of the UC is a result of a Roman "green light" to CCC. Edmond Tang in his *"The Church into the 1990s"* states "It is undeniable that the present underground church took shape in late 1979 when the Vatican gave a series of exemptions to underground pastors so that religious life could be practiced without following the canonical laws of the church.... the Vatican also granted permission to ordain priests without the required seminary training. Permission was also given to aging bishops to nominate and ordain their successors, and this power even extended to the selection of bishops for neighboring dioceses with vacant bishoprics. This extra-canonical permission was seen by some as a green light to build an opposition church."¹²⁸

Actually the original purpose in giving the exemptions was to fill pastoral needs and not to encourage separation or division. The scholar John Tang¹²⁹ points out, these underground ordinations were done without mandate from Rome. Another scholar Angelo Lazzarotto argues that "It may not be historically correct to trace its birth back to the special exemptions granted by the Holy See to the CCC in 1978. Because at that time, no one could begin to imagine the changes in Chinese politics or even think of an

¹²⁸ See Edmond Tang and Jean-Paul Wiest, Eds., *The Catholic Church in Modern China: Perspectives*. 28-41

¹²⁹ Most Rev John Tang now is the Auxiliary Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, Rector of Holy Spirit Seminary, and Director of the Holy Spirit Study Centre. and Editor-in-Chief of *Tripod*.

‘opposition church’.” He also agrees with John Tang that the division in the Chinese Catholic Church can not be reduced simply to a dispute over loyalty to the Holy See.¹³⁰ He thinks that there must be sociological factors common to the dissenting groups. It seems the OC and the UC as well as other elements like CCG must also be held responsible for division within the CCC.

In the early 1980s, most overseas Catholic communities thought the UC was suffering because of its loyalty to the Pope and the faith, so they especially supported and sympathized with the UC, and considered it to be the hope for the future of the Chinese Church. This is quite comprehensible because the UC was treated by the CCG as an illegal body. Furthermore its faithfulness to the Pope aroused strong sentiments. But after some years of contact with the Chinese Catholic Church they changed their opinion and attitude. They found that the Open Church has not been that bad and the Underground Church has not been as perfect as the overseas churches had thought. Before 1990, many priests, bishops and lay people from overseas were not willing to approach the OC. Furthermore, many of them criticized the OC, but after 1990, it became an honor to go to China helping the OC. Many priests from Hong Kong, Germany, the United States, Italy, and Taiwan flocked to China to teach short courses to seminarians both at those government-supported official Catholic seminaries and at the Underground Church seminaries. Cardinal Zen of the Diocese of Hong Kong always spent several months annually teaching in China for ten years. At any rate, in the 1990s, one common view was that division was a negative factor for the Church. Thus the CCC needs reconciliation.¹³¹ Most members of the universal church hope that both sides will become reconciled. If they support one side, they do not wish to harm the feelings of the other.

Vatican's Response

We have seen different views of several groups regarding the division of the CCC. But what is the view of the Vatican? Since the division took

¹³⁰ See Edmond Tang and Jean-Paul Wiest, Eds., *The Catholic Church in Modern China: Perspectives*.38.

¹³¹ *Bridge Church* 1992, art. 11-13.

place between the OC and the UC in 1980s, the Vatican has remained silent in public. However since 1979, Pope John Paul II had spoken to China on many different occasions. In Pope John Paul II's three speeches directed to the Catholic Church in China before 1991 (Manila in February 1981, Seoul in October 1989, and to the bishops of Taiwan in Rome in December 1990), he did not make any distinction between members of the Patriotic Association and the Underground Church. On the contrary he addressed the Catholic Church in China as a whole. He emphasized the unity between the universal church and the Chinese Catholic Church and the importance of communion with the Pope, the successor of Saint Peter. When he met bishops from Taiwan in 1990, he mentioned the division among Chinese Catholics indirectly, when he said "Yes, Brothers, the unity of the Church, including that of the Catholic community on the mainland, is the fruit of the Lord's infinite mercy.... Let our prayer to the Father be ever more fervent, that the Divine Child's gift to the Church on the Mainland may be the gift of unity."¹³² Actually in the heart of Pope John Paul II, there is only one Catholic Church on Mainland China.

One must admit that actually the Holy See knows the division between the OC and the UC very well. Because the Vatican and China have no diplomatic relationship, under this special situation, the Pope can not function pastorally. The Vatican has been keeping silent in public from mentioning division between the UC and the OC. That is because the Vatican does not want its intentions to be misunderstood by the Chinese Communist Government. But many of the bishops from both the UC and those of the OC, who have asked for admission, have been secretly accepted or acknowledged as legal by the Vatican. We can see that during these years, the situation of the CCC already was changing. Some new bishops in OC are not only appointed by the Vatican and but also recognized by the CCG. Bishop Gan Junqiu of the diocese of Guangzhou was consecrated on December 4, 2007. Bishop Lijing of the diocese of Yinchuan was consecrated on December 22, 2007. Bishop Lishan of the diocese of Beijing was consecrated on September 21, 2007. It is very interesting that the CCG should acknowledge these bishops' legal identity from the Vatican. The

¹³² John Paul II 1991, 3-5.

CCG is very concerned over the attitudes of these bishops towards the government. The Chinese government accuses the Vatican for interfering in China's domestic matters, by approving and appointing bishops.

Because the situation of the CCC is very special now, it is better that the bishops should be appointed by the Holy See, and at the same time, he should be recognized by the CCC. In this case, it will be easy for the bishops to perform their pastoral work in the country. □