

## **Church–State Relations in the Decolonisation Period: Hong Kong and Macau**

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### **Introduction**

On 1 July 1997, with the whole world watching through the mass media, and in the presence of 4000 international dignitaries, in a solemn ceremony presided over by Prince Charles of Great Britain and Jiang Zemin, the Chinese party general secretary, Hong Kong was returned to China. In December 1999, Macau, Hong Kong's next door neighbour 50 miles away across the Pearl River estuary, will be transferred from Portuguese administration to Chinese sovereignty in a similar way. Hong Kong has been under British rule for 150 years, and Macau under Portuguese rule since 1554. The process of decolonisation began with the signing of a Sino-British agreement (1984) and a Sino-Portuguese agreement (1987) which initiated the transitional period leading to the Chinese takeover. These transfers of highly developed capitalist systems to a communist system are unprecedented. The citizens of these colonies are 90 per cent Chinese, but naturally there is a spectrum of reactions among them about the restoration of Chinese sovereignty.

As far as Catholic Christians are concerned, a major issue is the conflict between the Chinese authorities and the Vatican. The source of the conflict is the administrative and teaching authority<sup>1</sup> of the Catholic Church located in the pope and the Vatican. This dispute has cast a shadow over the future religious rights and freedoms of Chinese Catholics in Hong Kong and Macau.

Hong Kong has a territory of 400 square miles with a population of 6.2 million, including 243,000 Catholics (approximately 4 per cent). The church today has 326 priests, 2 deacons, 73 male religious and 559 female religious to run 329 educational institutions at various levels, and 103 socio-medical institutes serving 1.4 million people.<sup>2</sup> Macau has a territory of 18.7 square miles and a population of 420,000 including some 23,000 Catholics (about 5 per cent). The Catholic diocese of Macau has 132 priests and male religious as well as more than 155 female religious to run 34 Catholic educational institutes, and over 30 socio-medical centres which serve 13,000 people, including 1000 inmates who need intensive care, accounting for 90 per cent of the residential services offered in Macau.<sup>3</sup>

Both churches have a very good record of cooperation with the colonial governments in providing educational, medical and social services to the local people. Both churches have established quite warm church–state relations in the colonial period, but whether this relationship can continue under the new government is questionable. It has not been easy for the local churches in Hong Kong and Macau to prepare them-

selves for the postcolonial period.

The situation becomes more complicated in view of the fact that these churches and other overseas Catholic Chinese churches were designated to be a 'bridge' over the gap between the church on the mainland and the church based in Rome. A triangular church–state relationship has thus developed involving China, the Vatican and Hong Kong/Macau.<sup>4</sup> This fact explains why Catholics in Hong Kong and Macau have found the process of decolonisation more complicated than have the other Christian denominations.

There has been systematic discussion of the political aspects of the transitional period for the two colonies.<sup>5</sup> Yet very few scholars in the English-speaking world have dealt with the question of church–state relations in either Hong Kong<sup>6</sup> or Macau.<sup>7</sup> This article aims to compare the response from these two local churches to socio-political changes during the transitional period, with the intention of identifying the problems which exist between church and government and which are considered likely to continue after the Chinese takeover.

Both churches have traditionally emphasised educational, medical and social services as their main priorities. The church of Hong Kong and the church of Macau have gone through different periods of socio-political change in their local societies, which have been colonies for different lengths of time, at their own speed and with their own model of development. In the 1950s and 1960s the Hong Kong church began to involve itself more in social services as means of evangelisation; then in the 1980s, when social services were gradually taken over by the government, the church turned towards a more prophetic role, becoming more involved in socio-political issues and assuming the role of the 'conscience' and 'hope' of society; it also began moving towards a more lay-oriented focus.

Since the 1960s the renewal programmes of the Second Vatican Council (1963–65) have been systematically launched in local churches throughout the world. In Macau, political upheaval caused by the left-wing December Riot in 1966 became a stumbling block for the renewal of the local church, diverting it from the post-Vatican Council path of development.<sup>8</sup> After this riot the Portuguese government allowed a rapid expansion in the influence and development of pro-Chinese institutions, which began to have a socio-political impact. Thus in the 1980s pro-Chinese organisations such as neighbourhood associations and trade unions, which had been gaining influence and ideological impact among their grassroots members for the previous two decades, began to play a role in moral education, an area which formerly belonged exclusively to the Catholic Church.<sup>9</sup> A similar riot in Hong Kong in 1967, by contrast, did not provide an environment for the growth of pro-Chinese elements in socio-political life. Rather it indicated the growth of a student movement, which was the cradle for political awareness and, for the first time in the history of Hong Kong, nationalist sentiment.<sup>10</sup> The British were able to retain political control of the territory, and to restore stability, subsequently allowing more vigorous socio-economic development. The local Catholic Church was able to make use of this opportunity to enhance its development in the 1970s and 1980s in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

### **Returning to the Motherland versus Religious Freedom**

In 1982, when Sino-British negotiations were in full swing, the people of Hong Kong were deeply worried about their political future, particularly as the negotiations remained for them nebulous and inarticulate. The main concern of the Hong Kong

Catholics, who knew full well the religious situation in China, was religious freedom.<sup>11</sup> Immediately after the Sino-British Declaration of 1984 the Catholic prelate, Bishop Wu (who was to become a cardinal in 1988), issued a *Statement on the Catholic Church and the Future of Hong Kong*.<sup>12</sup> He supported the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty and listed in detail various sorts of religious freedom prevailing in Hong Kong, expressing his hope that these freedoms would be recognised and respected in accordance with the Sino-British Agreement which promised that there would be no change in Hong Kong's economic and social systems for the next 50 years.<sup>13</sup> The 'freedoms' which Cardinal Wu mentioned included the freedom to adopt a religious belief, the freedom of the individual to worship in private and in public, the freedom to give and receive religious instruction, the freedom for religious communities to conduct religious activities, the freedom to appoint and train personnel, the freedom to construct religious buildings and the freedom to maintain links with foreign religious believers and institutions abroad.<sup>14</sup> Few of these freedoms prevail for Christians in China.

The restrictive religious policy in China is partly the result of the unresolved conflict of authority between Beijing and the Vatican. Chinese political ideology permits no claim by the pope to any authority, either moral or religious, over Chinese citizens. The basic Marxist–Leninist foundation for Chinese religious policy has been supplemented by the prevailing nationalism which tends to reject anything which is not of Chinese origin and a continuing xenophobia which is a reaction to the 'hundred years of humiliation' in the Late Qing dynasty.<sup>15</sup> Despite the fact that in recent decades China has emerged as a major power in the international arena these latter sentiments are still influential in Chinese international policy.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) religion was almost completely annihilated. The Catholic Church in China had neither sufficient time nor opportunity for revival before the start of the 'modernisation' era under Deng Hsiaoping in 1979. As soon as this period began the Chinese authorities made overtures to the Vatican as part of a new 'open doors' policy. Informal contacts were proposed with a view to Sino-Vatican dialogue, with the eventual aim of rapprochement. Before the dialogue between Chinese and Vatican officials could begin, however, the whole process experienced a setback in 1981, because of the controversial issue of the unilateral appointment by the Holy See of Deng Yiming as Archbishop of Guangzhou.<sup>16</sup> After this failure to build a channel for official contact, in 1982 Pope John Paul II changed his strategy and called upon overseas Chinese Catholics to build a bridge for reconciliation between the church in China and the Universal Church.<sup>17</sup>

This was the origin of the dual role of the churches in Hong Kong and Macau: both local church and international bridge. The triangular model of relations (China–the Vatican–Hong Kong/Macau) has generated a tremendous impetus in those churches towards formulating their own policies in the transitional period, and has provided the opportunity for the churches to revitalise their role as 'salt' and 'light'<sup>18</sup> in their respective situations.

### *Planning for Future Change: The Church in Hong Kong*

In 1989, after two years of study and consultation, the Bishop of Hong Kong issued a pastoral letter *Marching into the Bright Decade* which provided concrete guidelines for the implementation of Catholic policy in the transitional and postcolonial periods.<sup>19</sup> The letter recommended the establishing of Christian 'basic communities' as a means of strengthening personal faith, and with a view to ensuring that the Christian faith

would be preserved through the mutual support and assistance among Christians organised into small units. This is an approach to encourage the revival of Christian faith which has been practised with great success in South America. The Christian Basic Community movement is specially designed for a situation where church institutions can no longer exist and formal religious functions cannot be carried out. The letter encouraged Catholics to concern themselves with social issues in the context of Christian social teaching and also to promote Catholic values, witnessing to the justice and peace taught by Christ. The diocese subsequently recommended stressing this particular society-oriented approach in Catholic training.<sup>20</sup>

### *Training of Christian Leaders: Hong Kong*

The training of Christian leaders became the first priority on the agenda of the Hong Kong Catholic Church soon after the signing of the Sino-British agreement. The first step was the establishment of the Catholic Institute for Religion and Society (CIRS) in 1984; its aim is to train Christian leaders, through research and study programmes, to be active in the socio-political sphere, guided by the social teaching of the church. CIRS has been training leaders for the basic communities and has become the model as well as the centre for the supply of leaders of these communities in many of the parishes of the Hong Kong diocese. In order to protect this pioneer project the CIRS thought it appropriate to place itself outside the normal church system, so that it could acquire enough freedom for its own research and activities. Financially, it is directly supported by Cardinal Wu, and administratively monitored by a council composed of intellectual laypeople.

The CIRS concentrates on the implications of Catholic social teaching for everyday life, an understanding of which has been deficient not only among the laity but also among the clergy and religious. It cooperates with the local higher education institutions. It advocated direct elections to the Legislative Council in 1988, commented on the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region from the perspective of human rights, and engaged in empirical research on the 1991 Legislative Council election, the role of Catholic women in society, and problems of emigration for the church.<sup>21</sup> It has run many seminars and workshops to assist Christians to study social problems from the viewpoint of the church's social teaching. This kind of training cannot reach large numbers of people, but its quality has been widely appreciated. In the ten years since its inauguration CIRS has developed as a training centre for Catholic laypeople offering both breadth and depth in its vision of the Christian faith.<sup>22</sup>

Since the CIRS was set up various other Catholic associations have been following the same line, running courses on social problems and study groups focussing on socio-political issues. They have sent open letters to the government giving their views on a variety of controversial issues. These have included the 1988 direct elections, the Daya Bay nuclear plant, plans for protecting retired people, the problems of Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong, the importing of labour, and AIDS among school children.

Surveys on the 1991 and 1995 Legislative Council elections show that the Catholic turnout was very high, reflecting educational endeavours and specifically efforts by the church to encourage Catholics to vote.<sup>23</sup> Surveys show that the voting rate among Catholics was 86.6 per cent in 1991 and 81.5 per cent in 1995, while the general voting rate was 39.1 per cent and 35.8 per cent respectively.<sup>24</sup> The 1991 survey revealed that Catholic voters had a better understanding of the social teaching of the

church than did non-Catholic voters, although they generally stated that it was not the religious factor which prompted them to perform the duties of a citizen.<sup>25</sup> In a society in which the rule of law and freedom of religion are realities, Christian social teaching can thus become integrated with other positive civic values. Most of the Catholic respondents supported the direct election and the representative system which does not find favour with the Chinese government.<sup>26</sup> The survey confirmed the fact that religious belief can reinforce the choice of democratic government and direct election and produce citizens who take a responsible attitude to socio-political issues and the duties that go with citizenship.<sup>27</sup>

### *Planning for Future Change: The Church in Macau*

At the end of 1988, soon after the signing of the Sino-Portuguese agreement which confirmed the return of Macau to Chinese rule in 1999, the Catholic diocese of Macau held a major seminar to discuss its approach to socio-political changes. After four evenings of discussions by more than 200 participants the following recommendations were presented to the diocese for immediate implementation: (1) to strengthen the training of lay people in the areas of catechetics, theology, leadership and administration; (2) to upgrade the appropriate existing institutions in order to facilitate evangelisation – for example, Catholic educational institutions, social service institutions, mass media centres and parishes; (3) to give new immigrants, young people and working people top priority on the new agenda of pastoral care; (4) to employ modern technological know-how and mass media for evangelisation; (5) to strengthen the church's participation in social issues with the aim of establishing a society of justice, peace and charity; and finally (6) to promote the Christian Basic Community movement.<sup>28</sup>

In a seminar on 'The Hong Kong and Macau Catholic dioceses in political transition and the Asian church experience' in 1988 the Macau representative urged, in view of the political future, that the following recommendations be implemented: (1) to strengthen the link between the local church and the Universal Church, especially in the area of the renewal of the church proposed by the Second Vatican Council; (2) to speed up the pace of the localisation of the church, by encouraging the church and believers to participate actively in the development of the socio-political life of Macau; (3) to nourish the spirit of self-support within the church with a view to becoming independent of government financial assistance; (4) to take up a prophetic role through communication so that the church would become the hope of society after the Chinese takeover.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, the above recommendations did not receive much publicity, and no study groups were formed to discuss them; yet many are being implemented quietly and gradually.

### *Training of Christian Leaders: Macau*

In 1989 an association was formed by the four major Macau parishes to initiate the training of laypeople: before they could become active in the social sphere, thereby becoming the 'salt' and 'light' of society, they needed basic doctrinal training as a prerequisite. Historically the Macau church has developed with a clergy-centred orientation; the laity have not been trained to put the church's social teaching into active practice, either within or outside the church.<sup>30</sup>

Another important endeavour is a plan to reorganise the Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Young People. Set up in 1976 on the prophetic suggestion of a group of young

priests and nuns, the Centre was structured in response to social need and according to the social teaching of the church. It was a pioneer project and has remained the most active centre of its type in Macau. Its aim is to bring the church closer to society; it emphasises training young people to think on their own as an indispensable first step towards meaningful participation in social issues and the practice of civil responsibility. In the 1970s the Centre's publication *Huo liu (The Living Water)* discussed Macau's social problems. It was very successful, attracting many talented young people.

Many of the young people who were associated with the Centre after higher education have achieved prominent positions in Macau society. The current member of the Legislative Council Antonio Ng Kwok Cheong and other democrats received training at the Centre. Unfortunately, in 1987, with a change of priest-director, the orientation of the Centre also changed. It has been moving away from the task of training laypeople in social awareness and has been concentrating on providing recreational activities. *Huo liu*, which once played the role of 'the conscience of society' and 'the voice in the wilderness', ceased publication for a time. Over the last few years, many have come to the view that it was a mistake for the church to have changed the policy and direction of the Centre, especially in view of the indecisive orientation of the leadership of the Macau diocese in the social involvement of its pastoral work. A plan was formulated to reorganise the Centre with the hope of returning it to its prophetic orientation in the training of laypeople; this policy has been modified since the early 1990s as the transitional period has begun to throw up new challenges.

Many of the Catholic young people trained by the Centre took the initiative in 1992 to form an Association of Catholic Laity, with the dual purpose of increasing lay participation in church affairs and at the same time bringing the Christian faith and its values to the worlds in which they were closely involved through their own professions and work. A gathering on Good Friday 1993 under the title 'A reflection on the cross of modern man' was an example of the kind of activity the Association organises. This is a new type of society-oriented spiritual formation being offered for the first time in Macau, and can be taken as the sign of the beginning of the maturity of the church there. Spirituality is brought to bear on concrete situations in everyday life, and the implementation of gospel values in society is the eventual expectation.

### **The China Factor in Church–State Relations in Hong Kong and Macau**

Macau has developed smoother church–state relations with Beijing than has Hong Kong because in political issues Macau has been more docile than Hong Kong; it has not been 'too strong' or produced 'too many independent institutions' as Beijing considered to be the case in Hong Kong.<sup>31</sup> Compared with that of the church in Hong Kong the political participation of the church in Macau has been much smaller in scale and has had less influence.

Beijing has shown itself uneasy about the politicisation of Christianity in Hong Kong and insisted that the Hong Kong Basic Law provide that religion should be separated from politics. In Macau, by contrast, no leading figures in society who are pro-China have ever claimed that the political involvement of Macau Catholic leaders has been problematic. In 1988, when the Basic Law of Macau Committee began to recruit prominent local people to work on the drafting of the Basic Law for Macau Special Administrative Region 1999, Bishop Domingo Lam of Macau was invited to work with the Chinese officials. It seems, then, that the Beijing government has no negative feelings towards the Catholic Church in Macau, even

though since the 1960s the church's relationships with the pro-China elements in Macau have been characterised by tension as well as by cooperation.

The Catholic Church in Hong Kong had been so deeply involved in support of the pro-democracy movement in China in 1989 that an association called 'The Hong Kong Catholic Church in Support of the Pro-Democracy Movement in China' was created. Fr Louis Ha, a young progressive priest who had occupied several key positions in church institutions, was elected as a member of the Standing Committee of this organisation, which Beijing considered to be a subversive movement. In Macau, Caritas, the Catholic social service centre, gave shelter to the leader who took the people out onto the streets to support the pro-democracy movement in China; but the church in Macau, through its bishop, announced that it had no desire to be involved in local political activities. The bishop argued that the church should not offend the sensitivities of either the Chinese or the Portuguese by commenting on local political issues.<sup>32</sup>

The pastoral letter by the bishop of Hong Kong *Marching into the Bright Decade*, mentioned earlier, placed a considerable amount of weight on Christians' civic responsibility, integrating Christian social teaching with politics in order to reinforce positive political values such as peace, democracy and human dignity. The bishop of Macau has issued no detailed guidelines nor any open instructions on the preparation for decolonisation; the church in Macau has its own policy, implementing feasible suggestions in a low-key way while allowing peripheral Catholic leaders to work in the name of liberty and human dignity to integrate Catholic faith with social action.

The bishop of the Hong Kong Catholic Church enjoys a much higher position and greater prestige in the overall church hierarchy than does the bishop of Macau. The church in Hong Kong is a good deal bigger than the church in Macau, and its institutions render a greater amount of service to society. Yet in the process of the formulation of the Basic Law, the mini-constitution for the Special Administrative Region, neither Cardinal Wu nor any Catholic clergy or religious were invited to work on any of the important committees involved in this task, with its significant impact on the future of Hong Kong beyond 1997. By contrast, the Anglican bishop of Hong Kong, Bishop Peter Kwong, and the leader of Hong Kong Buddhist community were asked to join the Basic Laws Drafting Committee, and Bishop Kwong was also invited to sit on one of the committees of consultants which have close connections with Beijing's decision-makers on Hong Kong affairs. In April 1994, after much criticism both direct and indirect of Beijing's negative attitude towards the Hong Kong Catholics, Fr J. B. Tsang, the assistant director of Hong Kong Caritas, was appointed as consultant on Hong Kong affairs in accordance with the 'united front' policy.<sup>33</sup> The role of many of the third batch of 'consultants'<sup>34</sup> is viewed with suspicion by many Hong Kong citizens. Later a pro-China Chinese priest was prepared to stand for election to the National People's Congress, a move which appeared to herald a warmer relationship.<sup>35</sup> In Macau the Catholic bishop was invited to be one of the drafters of the Macau Basic Law, and a young and progressive priest to be a member of the Consultative Committee on the Drafting of the Basic Law. The difference in the treatment of Catholic leaders in Hong Kong and in Macau is probably a clear indication of the likely development of church-state relations in these two places in the postcolonial period.

In Hong Kong the involvement of the Catholic Church in social and political affairs has been gathering momentum in the transitional period (witness for example its support of the principle of direct election and its promotion of participation in the 1991 and 1995 elections).<sup>36</sup> In the quarrel between China and Great Britain over

Chris Patten's political reforms the Hong Kong Catholic Church gave the impression that it stood by the Catholic Patten.<sup>37</sup> The pro-British attitude of the Hong Kong Catholic Church is further reflected in its close connection with the Central Policy Unit, the 'think tank' of the Hong Kong Government. For the last four years there has always been an influential and well-informed Catholic priest filling the post of part-time researcher at the Unit.

The nearer Hong Kong approached the 1997 handover, the more docile and submissive Hong Kong citizens became in the face of Beijing's influence on Hong Kong's affairs. The motive was apparently to facilitate as smooth a relationship as possible with the incoming government. For the sake of maintaining social stability and economic prosperity after the handover, the Hong Kong business sector appeared conveniently to forget about concepts such as 'one country two systems' and 'Hong Kong is ruled by the people of Hong Kong'. By contrast, Catholics continued to be notably outspoken. The new editor of the Catholic weekly *Kung kao po*, the mouth-piece of the church in Hong Kong, adopted a more candid editorial policy in his critique of China's human rights and religious policy.<sup>38</sup>

The Macau church authorities, by contrast, have made public the fact that they have no intention of involving themselves in politics; and most priests and nuns of the diocese are apparently not interested in doing so either. In the 1992 elections one Catholic-backed candidate, Anthony Ng, won a seat. His is the only specifically Catholic voice in the Macau Legislative Council, whose members are overwhelmingly pro-China. China does not sense any political threat from the Catholic Church in Macau, and hence the Catholic bishop of Macau has much warmer relations with China than does the Cardinal in Hong Kong. It is to be expected that in the future Special Administrative Region (SAR) the local church in Macau will work more smoothly with the government than will the church of Hong Kong.

As far as the role of 'bridge church' is concerned, the Hong Kong and Macau churches have different orientations. The church of Hong Kong has the tendency to attempt to draw the church in China into the orbit of the Universal Church with its leadership in the Vatican. The bishop of Macau, on the other hand, emphasises nationalism, and suggests that the church in China should keep its special identity as a local church. He also rejects the idea that the growing churches in Asia and Africa should follow foreign models: they are at different stages of development and have different cultural heritages from those of the churches of Europe.<sup>39</sup> This orientation is naturally more acceptable to Beijing. The bishop of Macau, in the process of drafting the Basic Law of the Macau SAR, has had ample opportunities to work with Chinese officials, especially with those in the Macau branch of the Xinhua News Agency, and in the course of the exercise has doubtless gathered very valuable experience in dealing with the Chinese bureaucracy. His involvement has also afforded him the opportunity to formulate smooth church-state relations for the period after the preparation of the handover, in which working relationships will be built on mutual cooperation rather than confrontation.

## **Church-State Relations in Hong Kong and Macau in the Late Transitional and Handover Period**

### *Hong Kong*

In the late transitional period the governor, Chris Patten, suggested a constitutional reform by which all 60 seats in the Legislative Council would cease to be appointed



and become elective. The aim was to take precautionary measures in the face of the ill-defined 'autonomy' promised by the Basic Law by establishing the right of all citizens to select their own political representatives.<sup>40</sup> Beijing made it clear that it would not accept this reform, which enabled a fully elected Legislative Council to take office in 1995. It represented a twofold threat to Beijing: China would appear weak in conceding a measure of sovereignty which had been a British initiative to the people of Hong Kong; and if an anticommunist Hong Kong government were to be elected this might set a precedent, serving as an example to other Chinese provinces and threatening a chaotic end to communist party rule similar to that in the Soviet Union.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, Hong Kong Catholics continued to support the Democrats in elections, aiming to protect themselves through the pursuance of greater autonomy.<sup>42</sup> When the Democrats were excluded from the political establishment of the future government of the Hong Kong SAR, the Catholics were reminded more than once, by high officials in the United Front Department of the Chinese Communist Party, the Religious Affairs Bureau and the Hong Kong and Macau Office of the State Council, that after 1 July 1997 they should 'cooperate' with the government of the Hong Kong SAR. They were advised not to follow the footsteps of the Catholic Church in China in 1949 which took a 'crooked' road in its relationship with the government.<sup>43</sup>

Hong Kong Catholics have also been advised not to 'interfere' with the Catholic Church in mainland China after the transfer; so far, they have been maintaining contacts in their capacity of 'bridge'.<sup>44</sup> This will mean that financial and manpower aid hitherto going from or through Hong Kong for the revival of the Chinese Catholic Church will now have to find other routes. This prohibition is a reminder that the revival of religious activities in China coincides with a hardening ideological line in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), reinforced by the fact that the Chinese leadership regards Christianity as a means used by western powers to 'westernise' and 'divide' Chinese society.<sup>45</sup> This new policy is already having its effects. Quite a number of Catholic agents engaged in 'bridge' work are moving away from the colony.<sup>46</sup> Hong Kong Catholics are also showing a growing tendency to refrain from overt political involvement, as reflected in the slight drop in the Catholic voting rate from 86 per cent in 1991 to 83 per cent in 1995.<sup>47</sup> The transfer by the hierarchy of Fr Louis Ha, the politically active pro-democratic priest, from a public post to work with ancient documents in the diocesan archive has been seen as a deliberate move to distance the Hong Kong Catholic Church from politics, and as a signal that it will be more accommodating to the future government. In October 1996 the Vatican appointed two Chinese priests as bishop coadjutor (successor) and auxiliary bishop of Hong Kong to assist Cardinal Wu in administering the diocese. The two new bishops have spent long years working in China, but they lack pastoral experience. The appointment was made less than one year before the transfer, and can obviously be interpreted as a step to strengthen the leadership of the Hong Kong Catholic church with experienced China hands. These two bishops with China experience are expected to tackle the subtle and complex task of establishing church-state relations after the transfer.

A controversial 'Selection Committee' was set up during the transfer period, and one of its tasks was to elect members to the widely publicised 'Provisional Legislative Committee' of the Hong Kong SAR. Before nominating candidates to the Selection Committee, for the first time in the history of the Hong Kong church the hierarchy consulted all levels of the church, leaders and laypeople alike. The result of the consultation led most Catholic lay leaders to expect that the church would take up

a prophetic role and advocate justice and morality in politics. The hierarchy did not nominate a candidate to the Committee, leading laypeople to think that the church would dare to challenge the Committee's legitimacy.<sup>48</sup> However, the church leaders went on to adopt a compromise policy: the diocese would endorse Catholic candidates but those candidates would campaign as individuals. Eventually nine Catholics were nominated but only two were chosen. Four members were chosen from each of the Protestant and Buddhist lists. The relationship between the Hong Kong Catholic Church and China thus remains ambiguous.

Since the transfer took place, the Hong Kong Catholic Church has been trying to formulate a positive attitude and achieve a warmer relationship with Beijing. The Hong Kong diocese regards Catholic education as a top priority on its agenda. One in ten Hong Kong children go to Catholic educational institutions, and the Catholic authorities know that education is vulnerable in a socialist regime. A new set of policies on Catholic education has been formulated. These are: (1) to retain Catholic educational institutions in Hong Kong as long as possible, even if this eventually causes economic difficulty; (2) to retain the present curriculum in these institutions even if the medium of instruction changes from English to Chinese; and (3) to put more emphasis on Christian values in civic education. This policy is a compromise, formulated in the light of the fact that China has been criticising the unpatriotic nature of Hong Kong Catholic education.<sup>49</sup> However, the Catholic Church, alone among religious organisations, has not been invited to participate in the legal-political committees which are going to have a long-term influence on the future treatment of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong by the Beijing leadership. Unlike other Hong Kong Christian church leaders who have openly expressed their willingness to cooperate with the new government, Cardinal Wu and his two newly-ordained bishops have become reticent on controversial issues such as the 'provisional legislature'. The compromise over sending Catholic candidates to the Provisional Legislative Committee pleased neither the Catholic laity nor China. The Catholic hierarchy seems to be caught on the horns of a dilemma.

### *Macau*

In the late transitional period it seemed to be the policy of the Macau diocese quietly to continue its socio-political involvement but to try to avoid conflict with the authorities in the future Macau SAR. It is regrettable that laypeople are not leading this involvement. The Association of Catholic Laity of Macau has not been officially recognised as a diocesan organisation by the Macau Catholic hierarchy. Its socio-politically oriented biweekly magazine *Aumen guan cha bao* (*The Macau Examiner*) has had no financial support from the Macau diocese since it first appeared two years ago, but has relied on anonymous donors. The Macau Catholic Youth Centre, which was influential in the 1970s, has recently had a similar experience: after careful evaluation in the 1990s the diocese shelved plans for revitalising the Centre, mainly because of a perceived need on the part of the diocese to remain apolitical in the decolonisation process.

Even at this late stage of the decolonisation process, while beginning to experience the initial stages of integration of faith and society, the church in Macau still has a long way to go, especially given its present clergy-oriented approach. Laypeople are still at the stage of being trained, and a survey held in 1992 revealed that 75 per cent of churchgoers had not yet received adequate religious education, to include catechetical training and a theological course.<sup>50</sup> With the newly-established Association

of Catholic Laity of Macau still in its infancy, and no support from the hierarchy, social consciousness at the present stage of church development appears to be a faint 'voice in the wilderness'. Nevertheless, given the quality of its leadership and the educational background of its members, this Association could well be the embers under the ash.

## Conclusions

On the whole, the church in Macau has experienced slower development than the church in Hong Kong, yet its warmer relationship with China in the past years is a trump card which will give it a quicker start in the field of church–state cooperation after the completion of decolonisation. Because of their more clearly expressed ideological differences with China, the Catholics of Hong Kong will have to find channels to establish warmer relations as a means of lessening suspicion before the church can begin to serve the Hong Kong SAR community in the postcolonial period. The immediate problem facing the church in Hong Kong is thus discovering how to deal with the Hong Kong SAR government and how to establish better church–state relations with Beijing in order to continue the service in which it has engaged so well during the colonial period. Meanwhile the church in Macau under its present church leadership will have to undertake tremendous work to modernise itself by integrating religion with social conditions in Macau after 1999.

Under the gradually increasing political pressure from China both the Macau and Hong Kong churches are now trying to distance themselves from socio-political involvement and concentrate their activities within church circles, putting emphasis on traditional pastoral endeavours such as organising Bible study and prayer groups. These moves have been very much influenced by the recent tightening-up of religious policy in China, and China's own interpretation of Hong Kong's future in the context of 'one country two systems'. With the long-term aim of achieving warmer church–state relations, the churches are thus taking a first step towards showing their good will, in view of the fact that the Chinese leadership traditionally disapproves of socio-political involvement on the part of the churches.<sup>51</sup> One is led to wonder what the second step for the Hong Kong and Macau churches to take should be.

## Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> The authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church is referred to as the 'Magisterium'. Catholic social teachings have been appearing since the nineteenth century in papal encyclicals, pastoral guidance papers issued by bishops and conciliar documents.
- <sup>2</sup> 'Statistics of the diocese of Hong Kong as on August 31 1996', *Hong Kong Catholic Church Directory 1997* (Catholic Truth Society, Hong Kong), pp. 566–69.
- <sup>3</sup> These statistics on the diocese of Macau were given to the author in February 1996 by the Bishop's Office of Macau and Caritas de Macau.
- <sup>4</sup> For detailed discussion of the role of the 'bridge' church see Beatrice Leung, *Sino–Vatican Relations: Problems in Conflicting Authority (1976–1986)* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992), chapter 7.
- <sup>5</sup> For Hong Kong see: Ian Scott, 'Political transformation in Hong Kong: from colony to colony', in R. Y. W. Kwok and A. Y. So (eds), *The Hong Kong–Guangdong Link: Partnership in Flux* (Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 1995), pp. 193–94; Steve Tsang, *Re-alignment of Power: the Politics and Reform in Hong Kong*, a paper delivered at the international conference 'Hong Kong in Transition: Political Order, International

- Relations and Crisis Management' held at Lingnan College, Hong Kong, 18–19 September 1996; Sonny S. H. Lo, *Political Oppression, Co-optation and Democratization: the Case of Hong Kong*, a paper delivered at the same conference. For Macau see: Herbert Yee and Sonny S. H. Lo, 'Macau in transition: the politics of decolonization', *Asian Survey*, vol. 31, no. 10, October 1991, pp. 905–19; Lo Shiu Hing, *Political Development in Macau* (Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, 1995); Geoffrey Gunn, *Encountering Macau: a Portuguese City State on the Periphery of China 1557–1999* (Westview Press, Boulder, 1996); Richard Louis Edmonds, 'Macau and Greater China', *China Quarterly*, no. 136, December 1993, pp. 878–906; Jonathan Porter, 'The transformation of Macau', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 66, spring 1993, pp. 7–20. For a comparison of political developments in Hong Kong and Macau see: Lo Shiu Hing, 'Comparative political systems: the cases of Hong Kong and Macau', *Journal of Comparative Asia*, vol. 25, no. 25, 1995, pp. 254–71; Beatrice Leung, *A Comparison of the Implementation of the Sino–British Declaration 1984 and the Sino–Portuguese Declaration 1987* (unpublished manuscript).
- <sup>6</sup> For relations between the state and the Catholic Church in Hong Kong see: Beatrice Leung, 'The uneasy balance: Sino–Vatican and Hong Kong relations after 1997', in Beatrice Leung and Joseph Cheng (eds), *Changing International Relations and Crisis Management in Hong Kong after 1997* (Chinese University Press, Hong Kong); C. P. Chan and Beatrice Leung, 'The voting behaviour of Hong Kong Catholics', in C. H. Kuan (ed.), *The 1995 Legislative Council Election in Hong Kong* (HK Institute of Asia-Pacific Study Centre, Hong Kong).
  - <sup>7</sup> For the church and its impact in Macau see M. Teixeira, 'The church in Macau', in R. D. Crewer (ed.), *Macau: City of Commerce and Culture* (UEA Press, Hong Kong, 1987).
  - <sup>8</sup> The 1967 December Riot in Macau was a spillover from the Chinese Cultural Revolution. See *Guanyu fandui puguochenfu chuseng baolei tongzhi* (*On Opposing the Bloody Repressive Rule of the Portuguese Government*) (Macau Daily Press, Macau, 1967). For its repercussions on the church in Macau see note 9.
  - <sup>9</sup> Chen Enen, *Aumen shewei chaiotan* (*The First Attempt at a Study of Macau Society*) (Wensiwei, Hong Kong, 1992), pp. 15–16.
  - <sup>10</sup> Leung Kwan Kwok, 'Student politics in Hong Kong: democracy and transition', in D. McMillen *et al.* (eds), *One Culture, Many Systems* (Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, 1992), pp. 159–72.
  - <sup>11</sup> The official Chinese interpretation of religious freedom is recorded in *Document 19* (1982) issued by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. See D. MacInnis, *Religion in China Today* (Orbis, New York, 1989), pp. 1–26.
  - <sup>12</sup> Bishop John Wu, *Statement on the Catholic Church and the Future of Hong Kong*, press statement, 23 August 1984, released by Catholic Information Service, Hong Kong.
  - <sup>13</sup> *A Draft Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the PRC on the Future of Hong Kong*, 26 September 1984.
  - <sup>14</sup> Bishop Wu, *Statement ...*
  - <sup>15</sup> Leung, *Sino–Vatican Relations ...*, chapters 2 and 4.
  - <sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, chapter 7.
  - <sup>17</sup> Beatrice Leung, 'The triangle relation: Hong Kong, China and the Vatican', *Missiology: an International Review*, no. 2, April 1991.
  - <sup>18</sup> Matthew 5: 13–14.
  - <sup>19</sup> John Baptist Wu, *Marching into the Bright Decade: Pastoral Exhortation of Cardinal John Wu on the Pastoral Commitment of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong* (no date or place of publication).
  - <sup>20</sup> *ibid.*
  - <sup>21</sup> Beatrice Leung, 'The Catholic voter', in R. Kwok *et al.* (eds), *Votes Without Power* (Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 1992), pp. 151–84. The 1994 survey was conducted by the same author. In 1984 a survey was conducted to study the migration of Catholics and church personnel who had decided to leave Hong Kong out of fear of communist rule.

- <sup>22</sup> The author gained this impression when she participated in the annual general meeting of CIRS and read its annual report for 1993–94.
- <sup>23</sup> Leung, 'The Catholic voter'.
- <sup>24</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> Information from author's interview in February 1993 with Catholic lay leaders who participated in the 1988 seminar.
- <sup>29</sup> 'Macau and 1999', *Tripod*, no. 50, April 1989.
- <sup>30</sup> Beatrice Leung, 'The church–state relations', in H. Yu (ed.), *Aumen chaioyeu 1999 (Macau Moves Towards 1999)* (Wide Angle, Hong Kong, 1993).
- <sup>31</sup> See Michael Yahuda, 'Hong Kong's future: Sino–British negotiation, perceptions, organization and political culture', *International Affairs*, vol. 69, no. 2, 1993, pp. 2245–66; Leung, *A Comparison ...*
- <sup>32</sup> *Simin ribao* (a daily newspaper), Macau, 12 January 1992.
- <sup>33</sup> The Chinese Communist Party considers the tactic of the 'united front' to be one of the 'three magic weapons' used to seize power, the other two being 'armed struggle' and 'party construction'. The 'united front' tactic involves 'uniting with all forces that can be united with in order to fight a common struggle against the enemy and to win in the revolution and construction'. What this actually means in practice obviously depends on times and circumstances.
- <sup>34</sup> The second and third of the three batches of consultants appointed by Beijing were widely perceived as having been selected simply for the sake of uniting all forces with the Chinese Communist Party in its preparation for the reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese rule rather than for the purpose of engaging in genuine consultation.
- <sup>35</sup> *Kung kao po* (a Catholic weekly), Hong Kong, 16 November 1997.
- <sup>36</sup> Leung, 'The Catholic voter'.
- <sup>37</sup> *Kung kao po*, 5 March 1993.
- <sup>38</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> Information from author's interview on 21 December 1994 with Bishop Domingo Lam.
- <sup>40</sup> There are many works by scholars from Hong Kong and elsewhere which discuss Chris Patten's constitutional reforms. See: Tsang, *Re-alignment of Power ...*; Suzanne Pepper, 'Hong Kong in 1994: democracy, human rights and the post-colonial political order', *Asian Survey*, vol. 35, no. 1, January 1995; *id.*, 'Hong Kong in 1995: institution-building and citizenship between two sovereigns', *Asian Survey*, vol. 36, no. 1, January 1996, pp. 25–32.
- <sup>41</sup> Pepper, 'Hong Kong in 1994 ...'
- <sup>42</sup> On the Catholic choice of the Democrats in the 1991 and 1995 Legislative Council elections see: Leung, 'The Catholic voter'; Chan and Leung, 'The voting behaviour ...'
- <sup>43</sup> The first hint was given by Yeh Xiaowen, the head of the Chinese Religious Affairs Bureau, when he visited Hong Kong in June 1996: see *Sunday Examiner* (a Catholic weekly), Hong Kong, 5 July 1996. The author received the same message when she accompanied a group of Hong Kong religious women to Beijing on the invitation of the Catholic Church in China and visited various government departments dealing with religious affairs (28 December 1996–4 January 1997).
- <sup>44</sup> See previous footnote.
- <sup>45</sup> The hardening ideological line was revealed in an internally-circulated document in which Ye Xiaowen, the head of the Religious Affairs Bureau, expounded the Communist Party's view to trainees at the Party School: Ye Xiaowen, 'Dongqian woguo di zongjiao wenti' ('Contemporary religious issues in the Motherland') in *Zonggong zongyang dangxiao baocao xuen (Selected Reports of the Central Party School)*, vol. 101, note 5, 1996, pp. 9–23.
- <sup>46</sup> The Hong Kong-based Union of Catholic Asian News (UCAN), which used to issue a

great deal of news on the Catholic Church in China (both official and unofficial), and the Jesuit office dealing with church affairs have both moved to Taiwan; and a number of religious orders have also moved their China-related documentation away from Hong Kong.

<sup>47</sup> For voting figures among Catholics in the 1991 and 1995 Legislative Council elections see: Leung, 'The Catholic voter'; Chan and Leung, 'The voting behaviour ...'

<sup>48</sup> The author participated in the consultation meetings with Catholic laypeople held in May 1996, and has had in-depth discussions with priests and nuns on this subject.

<sup>49</sup> For the last few years Chinese officials have been openly expressing this view on Catholic education in Hong Kong. Employees of the Hong Kong and Macau offices of the State Council expressed the same view to the author when she visited them in December 1996.

<sup>50</sup> *Asia Focus*, 5 March 1993, which gives the results of a survey conducted by the Association of Macau Laypeople.

<sup>51</sup> The author has received this message on many occasions since 1979 when she has discussed church involvement in socio-political issues with Chinese officials.