



THE CARDINAL KUNG FOUNDATION



The Cardinal Kung Foundation

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Document of the Chinese Communist Party Details Steps To Eradicate Underground Catholic Church



Stamford, Connecticut, U.S.A. - The Cardinal Kung Foundation, based in Stamford, Connecticut, USA, releases today a copy of the Chinese Communist Party's document for Chongren Xian in the Fuzhou District of Jiangxi Province in China. This document details a procedure to eradicate the underground Catholic Church in China. Joseph Kung, President of the Foundation, said: "The document proves that the ongoing persecution of the Roman Catholic Church by the Chinese Government is not regional, or an isolated case of abuse of power by a certain government official. On the contrary, it is a carefully planned strategy by the central government to destroy the Roman Catholic Church commonly known as the underground church. Although this document specifically addresses a township in Jiangji province, it is based on a national document "The Procedures Legally to Implement the Eradication of Illegal Activities of the Underground Catholic Church". Its principle and result-oriented procedures are consistent with the intensified persecution of the Roman Catholic Church in the recent months as reported previously by this Foundation and others."

The document blames the increasing population of religious believers on "the intensified infiltration of overseas religious enemy and opposition forces, and due to the influence of the illegal activities of the underground religious force", accuses the religious believers having "used religion to commit criminal activities, seriously disturbing the social order and affecting political stability", and urges the township leadership to employ "resolute, decisive and organized measures.....to eradicate the illegal activities of the underground Catholic Church."

The objective of the implementation procedures for the said document clearly states , among other things, to "destroy the organization of the Catholic underground forces" and "destroy the Church's illegal assembly place". In order to accomplish this "glorified assignment", as the

Chinese Communist Party puts it, they organized six teams of "spiritual civilization propaganda force" and tailored a propaganda campaign to target different groups of underground Catholics. It proclaims ten slogans such as "Actively Expand the Special Struggle of Eradicating Illegal Religious Activities In Accordance With the Laws".

The procedure spells out a seven-point action plan for the implementation stage (November 25, 1996 - March 31, 1997) from laying a foundation by performing good public relations, registering and setting up a file for each religious believer of both local and transient Catholics, to forcing each underground Catholic to write a letter of apostasy, and to join the Communist government's "church" known as the Patriotic Association. It orders the leadership to define the "theology" acceptable to the authority. Teachers "performing illegal religious studies" will be dismissed and students are not allowed to carry any "religious goods". It also calls to "firmly eliminate large scale illegal assemble activities" on Christmas day in 1996 by blockading the exits of the villages in order to guarantee that no one leaves the village on Dec 25, 1996.

In its consolidation stage (April 1, 1997 - June 30, 1997), the plan calls for making the "struggle" of stopping the "illegal Catholic activities a long term political objective" to insure that "the illegal underground Catholic influence and the illegal assembliesare eradicated".

These are just few examples of recent persecution of the underground Catholic in China.

****In April and May last year, 5000 soldiers supported by armored cars and helicopters sealed off a tiny village called Dong Lu in Hebei where a national Marian shrine is located and to which almost 100,000 underground Catholics came in 1995. The soldiers destroyed that shrine. They confiscated the Statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary and arrested two bishops, many priests and lay persons. One of the bishops is Bishop Su Zhimin, the Bishop of Baoding. He has now disappeared.

****Bishop Thomas Zeng Jingmu, 75 years old and sick, was sentenced in March 1995 to three years in a labor camp because he celebrated a Mass for his faithful.

****Bishop Joannes Han Dingxiang was offered a bribe from a government official to join the Patriotic Association. He refused the offer. He is now in jail.

****Rev. Charles Guo was sentenced to 2 years in a labor camp because he offered a Mass, administered sacraments, taught catechism, supported the Roman Pontiff and refused to join the Patriotic Association.

****Eighty Catholics were arrested in Jiangxi on November 20 last year in the same township where the aforementioned document was issued.

China turned Communist in 1949. Almost immediately, the new Communist government started to apply pressure on the Roman Catholic Church. Eighteen months later, the communist government expelled the Papal Representative Archbishop Riberi and cut off diplomatic relationship with Vatican. By 1953, many Chinese priests and laypersons were thrown into prison, labor camp, or executed. Cardinal Ignatius Kung was arrested in 1955 and was sentenced to life imprisonment. Failing to stamp out the Catholic Church, the Chinese government created in 1957 its own church called the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association in order to replace the

Roman Catholic Church (underground Catholic Church). Its mission was to control the Church entirely by the government. It purports to be independent from the Vatican and does not recognize the administrative, judicial and legislative authority of the Pope. Instead of destroying the Roman Catholic Church, however, Roman Catholics in China increased from about 3 million in the early 1950's to more than 8 million now.

Joseph Kung remarked "The persecution of Roman Catholics is obviously not ancient history. The persecution continues and gets worse, at a time when China is giving much freedom to business, at a time when China is making significant economic progress, at a time when China is working hard to elevate its status to a major player in the international community. Certainly, the current policies of many governments in the West to separate human rights and trade sends a clear but wrong message to China that the West will tolerate human rights abuses for the sake of profit and trade. Inasmuch as religious freedom is the most basic form of human rights, the current administration of many western governments, including the United States, must bear great responsibility for this ongoing religious persecution in China."

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