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Toward a New Vision of Catholicity for the Chinese Catholic Church

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Toward a New Vision of Catholicity for the Chinese Catholic Church

By: Huili S. Stout, paper to be published by the journal *Ecclesiology*

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Problem

- * Vatican-China agreement;
- * Is Chinese church still Catholic?
- * What about Underground church?

Analyses

- What is the meaning of “communion?”
- * Juridical? As in in communion with Rome?
 - * Hierarchical? As in local church subject to the authority of universal church?
 - * Sociological? As in fraternal cooperation with civil authority and social entities?
 - * Something deeper?

Conclusion

- * Need ongoing conversation on meaning of catholicity in Chinese context.
- * Work toward communion and ecclesial vitality not just hierarchical conformity
- * Pay attention to practical effects of Vatican-China agreement
- * Trust in the Holy Spirit in deciding if underground members should join official community
- * Foster opportunities of boundary crossing and fruitful communion with all sectors of society

Approach

- * No ideological battle
- * Turn to resources of communion ecclesiology
- * Consider Dumitru Staniloae’s theology of “sobornicity”
- * Ask: what is the meaning of Catholic communion?

Proposal

- Correcting the above partial interpretations, the communion of *Sobornicity*:
- * is a Slavonic word for gathering
 - * is rooted in trinitarian life of God
 - * depends on the action of the Holy Spirit
 - * emphasizes love/charism over law/institution
 - * emphasizes everyday spiritual experience of the Body of Christ
 - * embraces society and all of creation
 - * regards creation as first and final sacrament of God
 - * believes in the natural priesthood of all peoples
 - * is open to the non-Christian world
 - * assumes attitude of missionary charity

References

Cardinal Zen; Cardinal Kung Foundation; Pope Francis; Benedict; JPII; Dumitru Staniloae; Radu Bordeinau

