

Pope hopeful of expanded freedoms

Charity work, education named as key areas in need of growth

HAVANA (AP) — Pope John Paul II gave Cuba's church an ambitious mission: to expand its role in Cuban society through Catholic education, greater access to mass media, more priests and more charity work. Churchmen said Monday they were optimistic they can fulfill at least some of those goals.

The pope flew out of Cuba on Sunday with strong calls for "greater liberty and pluralism" on the communist island, but his five-day visit also seemed to establish an unprecedented level of cooperation with Fidel Castro's government.

"I believe the balance was very positive and hope that the word of the pope will help a peaceful transformation of current structures toward forms of

greater liberty, greater participation," Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican secretary of state, told Vatican Radio on return to Italy.

It was not clear if the pontiff won specific commitments from Cuba; indeed, those were not the main point of his pastoral visit to a country that abandoned official atheism only in 1992.

"The visit was never conditioned" on solving specific church complaints, Cuban church spokesperson Orlando Marquez said.

Yet the pontiff laid out a broad series of goals during his visit.

Some seem unlikely: Cuban officials say they want to keep public education a state monopoly and will probably not honor the papal request to reopen Catholic schools. But they indicated they might even favor expanded church efforts at catechism and moral education.

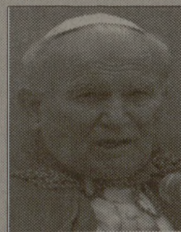
Other goals could see partial success. The pope urged Castro to release political prisoners. The

government made no comment, but has often released some prisoners following visits by other prominent visitors.

Yet other requests will be subject to negotiations — and occasional conflicts — with a government that seems to have opened a more receptive ear to churches. "These things can be discussed," Culture Minister Abel Prieto, a member of the Communist Party's elite Political Bureau, said during the trip.

The pope urged his bishops to "expand that dialogue," but insisted that in demanding greater liberty the church "is not asking for a gift" that depends on "the will of the authorities," because religious freedom is "an inalienable human right."

In meetings Sunday, the pope told Catholic clergy and laypeople what the church should do with that freedom in order to "occupy her rightful place in the midst of the people" — not merely preach behind closed doors.



John Paul II

Main pro-British paramilitary group withdraws from peace negotiations

LONDON (AP) — Choosing to jump before being pushed, Northern Ireland's major pro-British paramilitary group withdrew from peace talks today because its outlawed wing admitted to killing three Catholics.

The Ulster Democratic Party, the lawful representatives of the outlawed Ulster Defense Association, did not wait for a verdict from the British and Irish governments on formal complaints other parties filed earlier today.

Their departure from the talks, which began in June 1996 and were supposed to conclude by May, will likely raise widespread fears of even more attacks against the north's Roman Catholic minority.

Ulster Democrats leader Gary McMichael said he had little choice but to withdraw after the UDA's admission last week it was responsible for at least three of the eight Catholics slain in Northern Ireland since Christmas.

That admission directly violated a cardinal requirement for participants in the talks — that they "ac-

tively oppose" and "renounce" the use of violence.

"What we are dealing with is a fait accompli," McMichael said. "It is clear that the other parties have a firm view ... that we should be excluded from this process."

McMichael said he would not

tations, which have moved on for three days.

Mo Mowlam, the British minister for Northern Ireland, had said that she hoped the Ulster Democrats would weaken their moderating stance over the UDA's rank-and-file militant members.

The British and Irish governments, which have co-sponsored the peace negotiations since 1996, had wanted to conduct the most contentious process to create a new joint lawmaking body from Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

Protestant militants in the Catholic — and the UDA — expected acknowledgment that it was responsible for three deaths — under those hopes.

The UDA claimed it assassinated the IRA splinter the Irish National Liberation Army after the IRA splinter assassinated the commander of the Protestant gang, the Loyalist Volunteer Force, on Dec. 27, and Belfast UDA activist on Jan. 15.

"It is clear that the other parties have a firm view ... that we should be excluded from this process."

Gary McMichael
Ulster Democrats leader

break his ties to the UDA.

"We are not going to sit in the plenary this afternoon to have ourselves humiliated in such a fashion," he said, referring to the nego-

Brotherhood of Christian Aggies

BCA

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Date	Event	Time
Jan. 29	Informational Meeting @ MSC 226	9-10 p.m.
Jan. 31	Recreational Day Olsen Grove Pavillion	1-4 p.m.
Feb. 1	Recreational Day Gibbons Creek Reservoir	1:30-5 p.m.
Feb. 3	Shirt and Tie Mtg. C.S. Conference Center (Invitation Only)	7:30-10:30 p.m.

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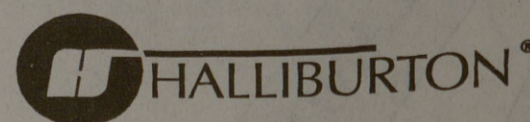
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