

**THE GROWING CHURCH: AMID VARIOUS RELIGIOUS
AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS
AND CONTEMPORARY IDEOLOGIES**

THE ECUMENICAL TASK IN ASIA

by

Robert H. Hardawiryana, S.J.

INTRODUCTION

1. What has Asia to contribute to the whole Church, particularly to our common efforts in ecumenism? Although hopefully these questions will be properly attended to in the course of this essay, it seems only suitable, by way of introduction, to highlight in anticipation some of its most important motifs.

a) In the early days of the ecumenical movement — as L. Vischer rightly remarks — the Church's center of gravity was still in the "Old World." Although missionary efforts of recent centuries broadened her horizons, the supremacy of the old, established Churches remained. But meanwhile the Church's outlook has changed. There is a growing awareness in the younger Churches that they must find a new way of expressing the universality of Christian faith. There must be an unqualified respect for their individuality.¹ In Asia the Churches are searching for new paths, in a context, indeed, quite different from that of the North Atlantic regions: a great diversity of cultures and historical experiences, a heterogeneity of religious traditions, a socio-economic situation marked by massive poverty, underdevelopment, political instability, the encounter with Asian forms of Marxism and atheism. At the Fifth International Congress of Jesuit Ecumenists held in Beirut, Lebanon, July 1975, it was strongly felt that the approach to ecumenism in the context of Asian religions, as well as in the arduous conditions of developing countries,

The Rev. Robert H. Hardawiryana, S.J., is a member of the staff of the Pusat Kateketik, and Professor of Theology at the Institute of Philosophy and Theology, both in Jogjakarta, Indonesia. His paper was presented to the Seventh International Congress of Jesuit Ecumenists, held at Frankfurt, August 24-30, 1977. The general theme of the Congress was Basic Christian Communities.

could provide new avenues of thought and action. While accepting the contribution of "Western" ecumenism to the cause of unity in Asia, it would prove useful also to reflect on what the Asian Churches could offer.

b) In Asia, more specifically, we meet with a particular type of dialogue, with strong religious beliefs and living faiths other than ours, and which in turn constitute an essential element of the Church's mission in the contemporary world, where the Spirit is guiding all men towards union in Christ.²

c) Ecumenism among our Asian Churches has the particular relevance of reinforcing the mission common to all Churches in countries most of which are developing; removing as far as possible the scandal of division; and thereby, of enhancing the credibility of evangelization and of our testimony that "salvation" is a reality not merely in some world beyond this world but also comprising now all of mankind, each man and the whole man. Ecumenism is seen to be not merely an inter-ecclesiastical affair to be settled among the Churches but is for the sake of evangelization. It is realized in efforts towards a common response to the needs of the time.

2. To reflect on the role of the developing Churches and particularly on an ecumenism in the Asian context, first of all we have to visualize what contemporary Asia actually is. Is there, apart from the geomorphological base, a unit which can be called "Asia" or "Asian"? Are there such things as "Asian" culture, "Asian" history, "Asian" economy? Can we pick out any one common factor in appearance, dress, language, habits and ways of thinking typically "Asian," as distinct from African, European or American? Is not today's Asia Malaysia and Singapore, Japan and Korea, India and Pakistan, the Philippines and Indonesia? A collection of sovereign states each jealously guarding its own identity? Asia in itself has no peculiar characteristics of its own, being Chinese in China, Vietnamese in Vietnam, Ceylonese in Sri Lanka. Hence, our "view from Asia" on the growing Church may not in any way overlook particularities of the individual Asian nations.

If, however, we may speak of "Asian realities," here are some dominant features of the Asian scene:

a) Asia is a continent of misery and distress, striking inequalities, oppression and injustice, rampant corruption and the stranglehold of a global colonialism inhibiting the efforts towards self-reliance and self-sustaining growth.³

b) Asia has countries, like Japan, in which the rising tide of technology, despite its great benefits, threatens to absorb the quality of human life. There are others, particularly but not only, in the "socialist orbit," where human rights and fundamental freedoms are scarcely appreciated.

c) Asia is the cradle of two of the world's major civilisations, older by far than those of Greece and Rome. Its age-old cultures and its traditional religiosity give rise to attitudes and behavior patterns that may obstruct development, even while its people's continual preoccupation with the divine and quest for religious experience may have much to contribute to the crisis-ridden concepts of liberation and quality of human life.

d) Asia is the home of great living religions, some of which are ethnic, i.e., tied to peoples, cultures and states, shaping the consciousness, the values and ultimate goals of the peoples and cultures that adhere to them, and thereby shaping the human voice that answers God's call to salvation.

e) Notwithstanding the sense of helplessness, frustration, not to say hopelessness, in the face of so many enormous problems on all fronts, Asia is emerging from dependence on colonial powers and is in fact becoming an important and perhaps vital element in the world power pattern. The future of Asia will in large measure affect the destiny of men everywhere.

f) Asia is a reality of people — half the human race — now more conscious than ever of their plight, and determined, especially the sixty percent who are its youth (i.e., one third of humanity), to struggle for a more just, more human and more humane world. They are people who need work desperately to make the grade for themselves and for their fellow Asians.

g) There is also the very small Christian minority, both in number and resources. What material, technological and human resources are necessary and available to the Church in order to reach the masses, to determine their readiness for receiving the Gospel, and to preserve close contact with them, not merely through the mass media and audio-visual aids, but even "physically"?

It is within the context of this post-colonial era and from this perspective of a dynamic Asia grappling with its problems and mustering its forces, material and spiritual, for a new future, that we must situate our developing Christian communities, their mission and their ecumenical efforts.

3. In chapter I we will try to take a closer look at the life-situations in Asia, although our description of its socio-economical, culture and religious conditions and of its search for liberation and development will remain rather sketchy and inadequate.

Chapter II is to describe the Church in Asia, problems of growing Christian communities in the context of Asia's religious and cultural traditions, and of the common aspirations of Asian peoples for greater welfare and human fulfilment.

Finally chapter III will add a few remarks about the main features,

specifically, of ecumenism in Asia.

CHAPTER ONE: THE LIFE-SITUATIONS OF ASIA

4. In order to "contextualize" our reflection on the Churches in Asia, their mission of evangelization, and their ecumenical endeavours, let us start by considering some aspects of the socio-economic situation of most Asian countries.

In the last thirty years, and especially in the last decade, changes have taken place so rapidly and radically that they can only be called revolutionary, be they demographic,⁴ political,⁵ or, our particular concern here, social and economic. It is, for example, usual to say that 20% or 30% of mankind living in the developed countries dispose of some 80% or more of the world's resources imported from underdeveloped countries, where now two thirds, and soon a much greater portion, of all people struggle for survival. The small minority in developed regions appropriate for their own production and consumption an entirely disproportionate and steadily increasing part of all available means.

Actually "the decade of development" has proved rather to be a decade of failure. "Development" is either non-existent or paradoxically counter-productive: perpetuating and propagating poverty rather than relieving it. The reason is that Asia is not simply poor, but rather is deprived of the means to improve its quality of life. Due to the present economic systems the disparities between the rich and the poor may even widen. "We have come to realize the enormous social sin reflected through this injustice, oppression and poverty."⁶ Within ten years' time, 90% of the earth's wealth will be concentrated in the hands of 10% of the world population.

For centuries our countries have been isolated from one another by rival colonial powers. Their economies are not complementary but competitive, geared to the export of the same agricultural raw materials. They are still in process of discovering that they need one another more than they need their former masters of the developed West.

In addition to these grave problems in most countries, some countries of North Asia — China, North Korea, Tibet, Vietnam and Outer Mongolia — now have Marxist-based socialist regimes with centrally-organized, state-controlled economies. While in many regions injustice, often built into economic, social and political structures, dominates the whole of the peoples' lives, in North Asia economic justice seems to be almost within their grasp. This makes Marxism the more attractive, despite the fact that the people in these countries have yet to acquire their full political rights.

A deeper reflection on the Asian quest for liberation and development seems to indicate a complex process comprising at least four different movements, of which two are "religious" and the other two "secular".⁷

a) The "religious" are: 1) the gnostic soteriologies found in the higher forms of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, etc.; and 2) the biblical theism of Islam and Christianity.

b) The "secular" forces are: 1) Western technocracy based on the capitalist model of development; and 2) socialism, particularly Marxist-based.

The gnostic zone, dominant in the Buddhist, Hindu and Taoist cultures, preserves beneath their animistic and/or Confucianist⁸ encrustment its mystical bent, kept alive in many monasteries. Hinduism permeates India and flows as an underground current into Indonesia and into Buddhist Burma, Thailand and Cambodia,⁹ as well as into Sri Lanka. Buddhism, the most tenacious of these gnostic trends, is numerically very powerful¹⁰ and has spread extensively to many countries."¹¹ Even the Marxists are beginning to acknowledge that a deep understanding of the Asian masses requires a thorough insight into Buddhism,¹² while the Buddhists, aware of this, have started to assert themselves as an Asian force by forming world organizations.¹³

Although by situating Islam under the category of biblical theism we place it at the same level with Christianity, Islam in Asia has sociologically a far more decisive role than does Christianity. Unlike Taoism, Hinduism or Buddhism, which have their center of gravity in the Asian continent itself, Islam seems to gravitate towards Africa and Asia's Western margin, thus placing the Muslims of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia and the southern Philippines on the borders of the Islamic world. Presumably, the Middle East and Africa will determine to some considerable extent trends in the Asian Muslim countries. In a radio interview broadcast carried by Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, April 6, 1975, it was declared that it is the Muslim who now guards Asia's gates against capitalism. How far the Asian Muslim countries will be affected by these socialist tendencies is no difficult question to answer. An attenuated form of socialism has already infiltrated Bangladesh. On the other hand, the Muslim states of Asia have to take into account Hindu, Buddhist and Taoist minorities as well. This makes the Muslim situation in Asia unique.¹⁴

Animistic trends, as found in many regions, mostly wither away when exposed to technocracy and Marxism, and are easily domesticated by the world religions. Conversion from animism to any of the biblical and gnostic religions is more frequent than from one religion to another. Moreover, when religion collides with Marxism or technocracy, it is always the animistic

substructures in which it has been implanted that erode first. It seems unlikely that as these religions sink their cultural roots in Asia, they can do so without absorbing the popular religiosity and the cultic practices of each region and in turn becoming submerged within very different and new soteriologies. Hence, in the Asian quest for development animism, as it now exists, seems not to be per se a decisive or continuing instrument.

6. The socialist zone, no less extensive than the gnostic area, is mostly under Marxist rule. Two-thirds of Russia is Asian, and of the rest of Asia Maoist China constitutes the major portion. Indochina has also won its prolonged struggle to establish Marxist rule. Other countries like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh recently have carried out a series of reforms confirming their option for socialism. Though this socialism is still a far cry from genuine Marxism, it is clear where the road is leading.

Marxism, although the only "religion" born in the West, is more Asianized than Christianity, which is Western by adoption, though Asian in origin. For decades the Marxist message has been thought out, discussed, written about, and even developed in several vernacular dialects of Asia.

There is no denying the attractiveness of Mao Tse Tung's China. Acutely aware of the need for rapid and radical changes, young people especially are turning to this country. Before 1949 China was not unlike many Asian countries today: poor, weak and disorganized. Today it is a power to be respected, rapidly developing technologically and economically, culturally and communally. Although the Chinese people do not enjoy full political liberty — their political leaders are not elected — a totalitarian regime has enabled them to overthrow a corrupt centuries-old system. Mao's call to rise up and march forwards finds a ready response from the young, who will not be satisfied with a revolution contained by national frontiers but will work for a world revolution as the only way of ensuring a fair distribution of the world's resources.

7. In Russia and China Buddhism and Marxism have collided, but the more sober Vietnamese experience seems to indicate that their mistakes may not be repeated elsewhere.

The Marxist attitude towards religion in general, however, has not changed greatly since 1917 and 1949. The establishment of a socialist Vietnam under the direction of a Marxist government, for example, has created for Vietnamese Christians a problem whether or not they can, without after-thought, join their efforts in collaboration. It is not apparent to them that such collaboration is reconcilable with what they consider to be for the good of the nation and, above all, with their understanding of the Christian faith. On the other side, the new communist government could hold

suspect the loyalty of people who were the most adamant adversaries of the North.¹⁵

The well-planned and graduated course of action adopted by the Mongolian Republic's Revolutionary Party to break down the feudalistic hold of the Buddhist lameries¹⁶ has indirectly shown that a gnostic soteriology, in the process of institutionalizing a mystical ideal which considers worldly happiness illusory, tends to delude itself by embracing a worldly structure which in turn endorses Marx's opposing doctrine that "the abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness."¹⁷

The Buddhists, mindful of this, in some cases have started to anticipate such Marxist criticism by pressuring Buddhist monasticism from within to renew itself along socialist lines. It is equally significant that, since the fifties, South East Asia has produced about three different brands of "Buddhist Socialism."¹⁸

By joining serenity of mind with the socialist ideal of community authors of Buddhist socialism have expounded the theory that Buddhism and socialism are both indigenous to Asia and that Buddhist socialism, the common area of their encounter, must also be equally and authentically Asian. Since Buddhist socialism has emerged in the context of a struggle against neo-colonialism and capitalist technocracy, and of a struggle for the workers, the peasants and the "proletariat," the gnostic and the socialist streams — we are asked to assume — have found a true point of confluence in the Asian peasantry, which really embodies the spirit of Asia. When left to establish themselves comfortably, though, both socialism and gnosticism are as malign to the peasantry as any other petrified institution.

For example, Mahatma Gandhi and Chairman Mao spoke from two different viewpoints, the Hindu and the Marxist respectively. Yet, in a truly Asian way they pleaded in favor of a symbiosis of "spiritualism" and "activism." Each in his own manner blended the structural transformation of society with the individual's own interior renewal. Both spelled out liberation in sociological and psychological terms. Gandhi made Hinduism socially meaningful, while Mao made Marxism spiritually challenging.¹⁹

Even more relevant is the common discernment where Mao's Marxism and Gandhi's Hinduism seem to meet — that the "Asian mystique" resides in the hearts of the peasants. Asia's hope is the rural population. The spiritual and social self-determination of the peasants and workers is itself Asia's own liberation. Hence, Gandhi, as well as Mao, feared a "capitalist technocracy" which would procreate monstrous cities to the detriment of villages, drain the rural economy and destroy the spiritual values embedded in the peasant

culture.

The Sarvodaya movement which embodies the Gandhian spirit and aims at rural development on an interreligious basis, as well as the Maoist doctrine crystallized in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution,²⁰ illustrate not only the divergence between the gnostic and socialist accents of their respective philosophies, but also their convergence in locating Asia's future in the hands and hearts of rural masses.²¹

8. In the presence of the often disheartening social and economic facts, we encounter as well the deeper religious aspirations of Asian man, the birth of a new civilization, a man striving for mastery of his own destiny, and for freedom from all forms of oppression and social order. Asia wants to be free:

from the structures which imprison and warp both those who oppress and those who are oppressed; from the idolatry of ideological and social systems; from the phenomenon of faceless men and women who manipulate societies without having to be accountable; from the loss of purpose in work, leisure or social relations; from the violation of human rights in all our countries; from the paralysis of recurrent world monetary crises and uncontrollable inflation; from the resulting apathy, cynicism, alienation, despair and senseless violence.²²

Our Asian life-situations, which are then a mixture of hope and anxiety, require collective solutions. The answers, however, will come not from technology but from the meaning men give to their lives.²³

Two of the main causes of changes in Asian society which are rather recent, namely, secularization and industrialization, may of course mean better social welfare, indeed mostly for a rather very small group (for the masses prosperity still remains a far-fetched dream!), but may also lead towards alienation from God, and to greater injustice and poverty, which are all mutually connected.

For this reason many episcopal conferences have stressed the necessity of evangelizing the whole man. Otherwise the result will be a dualism — if not a separation — between doctrine and life, between “the Gospel” and its daily implementation. In addition, this dichotomy will be an obstacle not only to evangelization but, speaking more generally, to the very credibility of the Church.²⁴

The contemporary history of Asian countries must henceforth be built up through their own decisions and choices and through the quality of society Asians themselves create. We become more human or less human according to the quality of life and the direction of history and society we ourselves construct.²⁵

Furthermore, the more our Churches are conscious of themselves as part of human society, the more they will feel the responsibility to testify to the Gospel amid the masses.

Let us realize also that what appear to be such great obstacles or difficulties to the Church in implementing her mission of evangelization are, in fact, so many challenges, chances and opportunities to involve herself and to penetrate the life-situations of Asia.

CHAPTER TWO: THE CHURCH IN ASIA

9. We shall start with a quick glance at the actual position of the Church, at least in its most important aspects. This overall view from the outset raises questions as to how we have carried out our mission in Asia.

There is no denying the real sacrifices the Church has made down the centuries, or the great work she has accomplished. Yet we are challenged, for instance, to ask ourselves whether our preaching of the Word has in fact had anything to do with the exploitation of the people by the local elite and foreign powers. How vigorously did we fight against immorality, even though in theory we were opposed to it? What kind of education did our "elitist" schools give, keeping in mind the conditions of injustice and inequality in our countries? How did the numerous — and indispensable — works of Christian charity help to bring about a social situation opposed to the forces of liberation?²⁶

To what extent is the Church today still out of touch with the changes of recent years? Has she not sided at times with the status quo, providing a bastion for an uncritical anti-communism, unable still to see both the positive and the negative aspects of Asian communism, and seemingly ignorant of the need for a calm analysis of the social and economic situation? Have not Christian communities failed to appreciate the ambivalent character of their silence, which has sometimes made them accomplices in the worst injustices?

Have not our institutions and services often projected images of wealth, and even of alienation from the poor? With the help of our resource personnel, many of our Church institutions which are designed to help the poor not only failed to do so but may in fact have produced unintended effects against their interests. They have been caught, as it were, in the unjust systems and structures of our age.²⁷

Feeling the waves of modernization sweeping over most Asian countries and particularly converging around the ever more industrialized areas, is not the Church living in fear of losing her identity, and therefore tempted to consolidate herself into a power structure, if she follows the easy way opened

up by an "capitalist technocracy," which is antagonistic to the gnostico-socialist trends in Asia? Are not some of the Church-run educational, agricultural and technological institutions turning the Church into a Western "city on the mountain," incapable of putting the masses in touch with the Source of Liberation? Does not the Church owe a debt of gratitude to the trans-ecclesial ecumenical groups,²⁸ especially those "spiritualists" and "activists" who have opted to be co-pilgrims with other Asian seekers?²⁹ Can the Church, if she chooses to ignore the contribution to be made by these groups, ever hope to reformulate for Asians the long-forgotten Gospel of Liberation? Is not the spiritual journey of the Christian suspect from Asia's viewpoint if its climax is not an encounter with God in Christ Who is a worker son of a peasant woman?

Theologically speaking, the Church should be the concrete realization of the harmony towards which discord is striving. But is it in fact that realization? Our young activists tend to say that in Asia the Church, as a "total institutional system," is not a "sacrament" of that desired accord but rather (perhaps they exaggerate!) its countersign. And this verdict is given not primarily because of her internal divisions and the plurality of Christian denominations, but because, if considered historically in its structure and means of support, at least in her past and present, she is viewed as an instrument of rupture within the Asian communities, and as a continuing agent of the neo-colonialism and imperialism of the West. And these things our Asian peoples find totally intolerable.

To make our remarks still more down-to-earth, we can cite the Baguio City seminar on "Religion and Development" (1975), which identified some common obstacles encountered by those working for the accomplishment of the Church's role in development. People who opt to help fight for the rights of the oppressed often do not receive support from the institutional Church. As a result of the Church's institutionalization and segregation from the greater part of the people, many bishops and priests still do not recognize the need to make the people themselves the embodiment of Christ's Church on earth. The institutional Church as such should not be isolated in her mission of working for the people. Her existence must be utilized and her orientation redirected, so that eventually she will be an instrument in the promotion of a genuinely human development.³⁰

10. Since Vatican II, the building up of the local Church has been very much emphasized. The relationships between the Church and cultural traditions, between the Church and social-economic life in Asia, between the Church and other living faiths, and the areas of interreligious dialogue for social welfare, of dialogue with Marxism in Asia, and particularly the importance of a dialogue of life, all of these are so many aspects of one and

the same issue, namely, if we are permitted to use terminologies which are not quite satisfactory, the issue of "inculturation" (in our opinion a better term than "indigenization"), or the "incarnation of faith" in the local life-situations.

In the report on Asia presented to the Synod of 1974 by Cardinal Joseph Cordeiro of Karachi, the "de-westernization" of the Church and the "incarnation" of Christian faith in Asia's cultural traditions, in dialogue with other living faiths and religious beliefs, was mentioned as one of the main problems common to all the Asian Churches.³¹ Several episcopal conferences declared that certain remnants of the colonial period are still obstacles to the service of faith, to the degree that they obstruct the particular Churches in finding their own way and to the extent that they have imprinted upon Church life a foreign external appearance.³² Therefore, in evangelization the building up of the particular Churches merits priority.³³

At the Pan-Asian Colloquium on new ministries in the Church, Hong Kong February 27 – March 5, 1977, sponsored by the Office of Mission of FABC, it became clear that the need for forming basic Christian communities is becoming more strongly felt in Asia today. Our faithful are expressing their need for some kind of basic social grouping in which their members can express real interpersonal relationships and feel a sense of communal belonging. Many different forms of these are evolving, leading to a fuller participation in Christian living. Such groups are not the only way of participating in the life of the Church. Still the Spirit seems to be moving the Church strongly in this direction.

These basic Christian communities have arisen as a response to various needs and situations:

- a) existing parish structures are sometimes not conducive to an intensive Christian life. They become inadequate to minister to the growing needs of people;
- b) the faithful are too many and too spread out for the number of priests available to minister to them;
- c) the people need a sense of belonging and support, particularly in an environment of other faiths and religious beliefs;
- d) people are taking more and more responsibility for their Church and are responding through new ministries serving their small Christian communities;
- e) there is the growing urgency for genuine Christian witness in community in the presence of the ideological struggles in Asia.

These basic Christian communities have been developing in the rural

areas, among the villages and out-stations. There are neighbourhood or block groups in the towns and cities. There are also interest groups, groups of the same profession or the same age, coming together to deepen their faith commitment in their larger community.

Thus, this question of "particular Churches" (not only in the sense of dioceses but, following the trend of development since Vatican II, in the sense of parishes and other types of smaller congregations) is particularly relevant for areas like Asia, where the Church encounters an immense variety of cultures, and senses more deeply how many elements and structures of Church life are in fact alien to Asian peoples.

11. It was stressed by some of our Asian bishops during the Roman Synod of 1974 that inculturation would by no means imply a weakening of our universal communion of faith. And indeed inculturation, based upon the plurality of life-situations and the diversity of daily experiences, within so many and different religious and cultural traditions, essential as it is, should never lead towards isolation.

When the mystery of Christ discloses its unfathomable depths through a manifold expression in local religious and cultural traditions, and by redeeming the values within these traditions, this only enriches the faith of the Church, in so far as it is being fostered within the communion among the Churches; or, to say it another way, through an ever ongoing communication in faith between the Churches. The greater the plurality of situations and experiences, the more indispensable and intensive must be the mutual exchange or sharing between the local congregations.

Local communities must be "catholic." It is basic that their life be drawn from the whole and oriented towards the whole. Every community must live its faith in an "ecumenical" manner. Moreover, as a community the local Church cannot attempt to tackle those problems which can only be solved by the universal Church as a whole.³⁴ Although the particular Churches, and the experiences that can only be gathered within them, are called upon to play their part, we can only do the meaningful and the right thing if we are moved by a constitutional and innermost oneness with the universal Church.³⁵⁻

If this effort for the universal dimension is neglected, we may indeed end up with national, regional, racial and cultural schisms. In a Church organized solely on a national basis, nationalistic attitudes — and how strong they can be in countries of the developing world! — may pervert, or even silence, the prophetic voice of the Church.³⁶

All this means that, while granting great value to the particular Churches and acknowledging the importance of seeking their views about the problems they have to face, we must realize that a Church can never undertake any

important initiative without also taking into account what the other local Churches will think about the matter.

Therefore, while admitting the existence of variety in these Churches and appreciating the fact that we all are only just beginning to be aware of these legitimate diversities in the different situations that present themselves, we must insist at the same time that there is a fundamental unity of human language and human intelligibility. At all cost we should avoid the dissolution, atomization or "monadization" of the different types of culture with which we are to cope, particularly in the Asian context. True unity is there at the heart of diversity and true diversity is defensible only within a unity that is shared in some certain sense by all men.³⁷

12. The FABC "Statement and Recommendations" of Taipei, 1974, stressed the necessity of making "the message and life of Christ truly incarnate in the minds and lives of our peoples." Hence, the primary focus of evangelization in Asia at this moment in our history is the building up of truly particular Churches which are realizations and enfleshments in Asian countries of the Body of Christ, Christian faith "incarnate" in Asian society; and this means concretely:

a Church in continuous, humble and loving dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, the religions — in brief, with all the life-realities of the people in whose midst it has sunk its root deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own. It seeks to share in whatever truly belongs to that people: its meanings and its values, its aspirations, its thoughts and its language, its songs and its artistry. Even its frailties and failings it assumes, so they too may be healed.³⁸

Similarly the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (WCME) of the World Council of Churches at the Bangkok Conference, December 1972, deplored that Western missionaries have not always had regard for the cultural values of the people they evangelized.³⁹ For many Christians in Asia and Africa conversion to Christianity cut them off from their culture, a process that some have described as "missionary alienation." Now many Christians are deeply convinced that recognition of each culture is an essential condition for evangelization.⁴⁰

Nowadays, when such a great deal is being said about cultural revolution, counter-culture, etc., the question is raised whether in our life-situation the Christian community can be called a "counter-community." The group which prepared the report at the Bangkok Conference of Section I on "Culture and Identity" felt that the concept "counter-community" would imply that the Christians are cut off too definitively from their world. They preferred to speak of the need of a dialectical relationship between the Christian

community and the prevailing local culture, still “identifying ourselves, while keeping our critical distance,” in order to be fully engaged with others in the search for justice and freedom.⁴¹

Therefore, while it is true that our faith in Christ is one, its expressions nevertheless cannot but be plural. This plurality need not be legitimized. It is a reality — as we have seen — that flows by necessity from the very incarnation of the Christian faith in the different cultures.⁴²

Cultural pluralism in Asia makes the fact of cultural relativism unavoidable. The confrontation of cultural relativism and evangelization is described by Donald McGavran in this way:

Cultural relativism stoutly maintains that there are many ways to God, many good cultures, and many standards of right and wrong. Any attempt to persuade men of other cultures to your way of thinking is cultural imperialism. To cultural relativism, Christian missions are impertinent invasions of ethnic units whose members are happy and satisfied in their own customs and beliefs. These they have practiced from of old. Men have grown up in these cultures and feel at home in them. Missionaries should not trouble them.⁴³

On the other hand, an over-accentuation of an “incarnational” theology at the expense of the “theology of the Cross” impoverishes the understanding of the Church’s mission. The principle of inculturation is sometimes not free of this one-sidedness.

As a matter of fact, the mystery of the Incarnation implies the mystery of the Cross, which leads to resurrection in new life. This relationship applies as well to the Church in fulfilling her mission amid human society. In other words, the Church should be a “counter-structure” in society, i.e., a structure existing within the cultural reality of our peoples and yet in opposition to this reality by taking a critical attitude towards this society.⁴⁴

13. If the Churches are to dialogue with the Asian peoples, they will have to dialogue with the poor themselves, with those generally subjected to social, economic and political structures which have injustice inbuilt into them.

There were numerous interventions made during the 1974 Synod on the secular aspect of the mission of the Church, by bishops of the “West” (who often used the term *promotio humana*), of Asia and Africa (development), and of Latin America (liberation). We quote a few thoughts of Cardinal Stephen Sou Hwan Kim of Seoul:

... what can and should be done in Asia today, is gradually to impregnate all spheres of life in society — cultural, socio-economic, political, and the

rest — with true Christian values through a personal and deeply committed witness of truth, justice and love. Such a commitment is an imperative of the hour, and is by no means peripheral or ancillary to what is called 'direct evangelization.' It is not only a 'constitutive' dimension (Synod of Bishops 1971) of evangelization, but should be seen as the concrete realization of the Church's sacramentality⁴⁵

Quite in accordance with the "Statement" of the Asian bishops:

Engaged in tasks for justice in accordance with the spirit and the demands of the Gospel, we will realize that the search for holiness and the search for justice, evangelization and the promotion of true human development and liberation, are not only not opposed, but make up today the integral preaching of the Gospel, especially in Asia.⁴⁶

To be truly the *signum magnum credibilitatis*, the Church must become, and also:

be convincingly seen and felt by the poor and the young in Asia, as a Church whose life is given in selfless dedication, even at grave risk to itself, to the great needs of mankind today If all this is true, how then are we to understand the attitude of the Church, in all too many instances, that cries foul when its position, institutions, vested interests are touched by outside forces, while remaining silent and inactive in the face of others' being oppressed?⁴⁷

The "Statement" of FABC also says:

This dialogue leads to genuine commitment and effort to bring about social justice in our societies. In turn this will include an operative and organized 'action and reflection in faith' (sometimes called 'conscientization')⁴⁸

An encounter between the Church and the poor which will "demand working, not *for* them merely" (in a paternalistic sense), "but *with* them (for we have much to learn from them!)."⁴⁹

14. It has become ever more evident that Christianity cannot go it alone. We in Asia are living as a minority amongst an overwhelming majority of peoples adhering to living faiths and traditional religious beliefs. Often it is difficult enough for them to understand Christianity and its mission, and more so really to admit it into their midst. On the other hand, a mere switch in the understanding of Christian teaching so that their own religious traditions are now understood by them to be the "ordinary" means of salvation for million and millions of their own brothers and sisters does not actually solve the problem for our faithful in Asia.

Rather, we must take seriously those traditions and beliefs, expressions

of their vivid experience of the living God (although sometimes under the somewhat less personal name of the "Divine"). It is of paramount importance that we Christians live in community with our brothers and sisters of other living faiths and beliefs, closely knit together in a continuous dialogue of life. Certainly, an important aspect of our Christian testimony of life is that we try to be good neighbours to them.

Moreover, a meeting of Christianity and the world religions must happen on theological grounds, both trying to discover God's purpose and design, which prevails in the midst and in spite of the plurality of religions.⁵⁰

Referring to the glorious picture of the heavenly Jerusalem given in the Apocalypse (21:23ff), J. Neuner sees in this vision of a universal human history, though presented only in its barest outlines, the ultimate meaning of interpersonal and interreligious relations.

The attitude towards other people and other communities here inculcated is not a matter of merely pragmatic considerations but is man's contribution to the divine plan. The attitude and the actions of the Church and of all Christians towards others must be based on the fact that by origin and destiny all men are one family and that to us is given the task of realizing ever more fully the oneness of our race.⁵¹

God makes men seek Him from within the human condition. He allows man to deploy all his human resources and to fall into every kind of sin. But eventually, throughout all these experiences of human life on earth, God invites man to open up himself to something other than himself. He is encouraged to do so by the dissatisfactions experienced in this economy, this earthly scheme of things, and by the symbolism available to him in the very same economy.⁵²

15. A Catholic view emerged very clearly during Vatican II that God's grace solicits, enlightens and supernaturally raises everyone who comes into this world, and offers him salvation in Christ for his acceptance.⁵³

This universality implies a history of salvation and, even if non-reflective and not yet historically objectified, a history of revelation coexisting with the history, individual and collective, of mankind. In this framework it is easier to conclude further that, because there is a universal history of revelation and salvation, there is also an official, reflective and explicit history of revelation bound by time and space, reaching its climax in Jesus Christ.⁵⁴

For if there is a universal history of salvation coexisting with the history of humanity, then there must be, first of all, a history of faith. Faith is, in the last analysis, inconceivable apart from a history of revelation, since faith can only be response to a genuine revelation by God.⁵⁵

The crux of the whole complex problem seems to be whether the religious significance of religions and religious beliefs stems from their being the visible and social expression only of the religious instinct present in each of us, or from the fact that they too possess a certain revelation in the proper sense of the term, which they have the privilege to express and to promote, though of a totally different construction from that of the Judeo-Christian religion.

Opting for the latter position, G. Thils, for one, affirms the reality of a revelation in creation, envisaged as the "manifestation of God."⁵⁶ While distinct from the knowledge of God coming through the natural powers of man, the knowledge of God through nature belongs to the genuine realm of revelation, because it involves the whole person of the knower and elicits a religious response on his part. Referring to this knowledge of God through nature which affects the whole person, some authors nowadays speak of a "theopathy" or an "experience of the divine."⁵⁷

It signifies a grasping in one basic act of understanding of the created world in its importance to the human person as a whole, and the evoking of a religious response, i.e., an acceptance of God as the answer to the problems of the human person, produced by the human condition.

Creation, being the gift of God, is already the bearer of the divine mystery itself, to which man responds continuously. In this exchange of action and reaction, invitation and response, discovery and commitment, one can recognize, this opinion maintains, a process of a true and salvific revelation taking place, though it still needs a further kind of revelation in which God not only acts but also speaks and enters into a true dialogue with man. This opinion only advocates that God must somehow show Himself to man if He really wishes man to seek Him. If one holds that creation and salvation are "in continuity," as integral aspects of an indivisible whole, i.e., of salvation history, one can hardly refuse to see creation as a form of revelation, a revelation which is demanded indeed if salvation is to be made possible even for those not evangelized.

In short: man lives in a situation open to salvation. His act of faith is the response to God's invitation extended to him in this situation. It is the response of his whole person to the totality of reality grasped in his objective intuition and embraced as the supreme good in his implicit value-judgment. God Himself is present to this personal and fundamental commitment of man made in and through his concrete circumstances of life.

This hypothesis about salvation makes it not only easier to understand the possibility of salvation of the non-evangelized and of the contemporary non-Christian, but also provides ample room for viewing the great world

religions and religious beliefs as the necessary medium for the conferral of grace on so many millions in Asia, and for their response to the saving God.⁵⁸

16. Hence, we cannot blame the “failure” of Christian missions in Asia simply on their association with colonial armies and exploitative regimes, nor on the many and persistent mistakes of missionaries and Church leadership in conveying the message in a psychological, religious and cultural language alien to Asia’s peoples, nor on the crusades, the inquisition and other sins of the Church. Such explanations imply a value judgment about the religions and religious beliefs of Asia, tacitly assuming that these religions have no greater significance than to be destroyed, removed and replaced by Christianity. What we need is a Christian witness which knows how to locate itself within a salvation history which is co-terminous with all human history, and sees the religions of the masses as God’s provision for their wholeness.

Emerging and developing in God’s shielding providence, these religions apparently are not destined to be set aside or absorbed by Christianity. Their vocation is to be our partners in dialogue, our co-prophets and co-servants, by reason of the mission they have from God. They are God’s gifts to His Church, just as the Church is His gift to them. The many religious experiences and traditions are there in order to give themselves to one another. Only thus can each come to its own fullness.⁵⁹

Also, it is important to stress the historical character of Christian faith. For many religions show a tendency to move away from life and its harsh realities into realms of ritual worship and abstract spiritualities. Without in any way denying the primary importance of the eschatological meaning of salvation, its anthropological, socio-cultural and historic values must be attended to as well.

Mindful of the “spiritualistic” tendency of many religions and beliefs, we must therefore pay due attention to the renewal of catechetics, in order to overcome the dichotomy between faith and life and the danger of offering a presentation of faith often too “conceptual.” In renewing our liturgy — a significant aspect of religion in Asia — we are to keep in mind that the purpose of liturgy is not to escape from life’s hardships, or to withdraw into a private religious sphere, but to worship the Father as a community of faith in Christ who has become a sharer precisely of our lives. When in the risen Lord we worship the Father, our hope for mankind and a more humanized future becomes part of our lives, and this hope will have to express itself in action. Thus the renewal of our preaching and our worship aim at confronting faith with actual life-situations, and at making us ever more aware of the richness of salvation for the living out of our very lives on earth.⁶⁰

Despite modernity, in many regions we still find an urge towards prayer.

We have to take to heart what the Indian bishops emphasized so much during the last Synod. If the Church wishes to be a sign of salvation, prayer, and especially contemplation, must be an essential aspect of her life, to be promoted for every Christian.⁶¹ Every Christian is called upon to experience the inhabitation of the Spirit in moments of silence and interiority, and above all to share his experience of Christ with others.⁶²

17. Along the same lines the FABC Statement declared that the great religious traditions of Asia are to be accepted as "significant and positive elements in the economy of God's design of salvation." In them are to be recognized and respected "profound spiritual and ethical meanings and values," "the treasury of the religious experience of our ancestors, from which our contemporaries do not cease to draw light and strength." "They have been (and continue to be) the authentic expression of the noblest longings of their hearts, and the home of their contemplation and prayer. They have helped to give shape to the histories and cultures of our nations."⁶³ By dialogue we will be able to touch "the expression and the reality of our peoples' deepest selves,"⁶⁴ and to find "authentic ways of living and expressing our own Christian faith" (this is the essential aspect of "inculturation" in evangelization).⁶⁵

Compare the declaration of the Synodal Fathers in 1974:

Confident in the Holy Spirit's action which overflows the bounds of the Christian community, we wish to further dialogue with other religions which are not Christian, thus to achieve a deeper understanding of the Gospel's newness and of the fullness of Revelation, and to be able to show them thereby the salvific truth of God's love which fulfills itself in Christ.⁶⁶

Some of the reflections presented during the Synod of 1974 were similar. Those who preach the Gospel have to become ever more acquainted with other living faiths and their development. Dialogue is not merely a way of approaching them; it is necessary condition for the service of faith. It means fidelity to the Spirit at work in other religious traditions. Dialogue must eventually lead people of other faiths towards Christ; it is not sufficient merely to make Muslims better Muslims. Dialogue has to go together with an entire way of life which gives testimony to the Gospel.

And in order to stress the equality of partners — perhaps to counter-balance attitudes still too Church-centered on our part — the FABC Statement concludes:

... this dialogue will teach us what our faith in Christ leads us to receive from these religious traditions, and what must be purified in them, healed and made whole, in the light of God's Word.⁶⁷

Let us not, however, overlook the fact that at times the service of faith in Asia by dialogue with other religions is a difficult way of life, not only because the overwhelming percentage of its population adheres to other faiths and traditional beliefs, but also because in many countries these religions have a very privileged position, supported as they are by their governments, and sometimes being even "state religions."

18. A few remarks should be added regarding dialogue with the Great Religions in particular.

a) In dialogue with the mystical and prophetic religions⁶⁸ the covenantal character and reality of Christianity should be kept in mind if we are to do justice to our own religion, since the entirety of Christian revelation knows two stages: the Old Covenant, which then reaches its climax in the New Covenant, the person of Christ. The concept and reality of Covenant prevent the Christian mystical experience from degenerating into some kind of identity by way of an absorption with the "Divine." Moreover, Covenant performs the function of describing the prophet's role or confining it to recalling to the people's conscience the pact of the Covenant which their God made with them in the past, to preaching this Covenant as still valuable in the present, and to announcing a new Covenant for the future.⁶⁹

b) If we look at Christianity against a background of Chinese culture, one cannot avoid giving the impression that Christianity is intolerant. The religious tolerance of the "Middle Kingdom" (China) is probably due to its cultural and religious traditions: Confucianism upholds harmony as its ideal; Buddhism champions the cause of mercy; and Taoism exalts transcendence over human conflicts. The average Chinese takes and receives something from each of these three "religions," and has somehow integrated them into his life. With the coming of Christianity this harmonious integration has been disrupted. There are more than sixty Christian denominations in China, and a number of these do not live in a peaceful relationship with each other. This Christian intolerance may have its origins, and some kind of justification, in an understanding of the absoluteness of Christian faith and the uniqueness of the true God. At the same time, they are not mindful enough of the truth that this very same God is the Lord of the whole of mankind.⁷⁰

c) The climate of dialogue between Christians and Muslims seems to be improving in Southeast Asia and India. In this subcontinent the joint efforts of the Henry Martyn Institute and the Secretariate on Dialogue of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India have a growing impact, and the Hong Kong Consultation can be considered a hopeful sign of progress. The number of priests and religious from these countries specializing in Islamic Studies is also increasing.⁷¹

Yet we should not be presently too enthusiastic! As a matter of fact, what the participants apparently experienced at the Seminar on Islamic-Christian Dialogue held in Tripoli, February 1-5, 1976, seems to be true for Islamic countries in general. Dialogue is mostly still in its initial stage of listening, of accepting, and of eliminating hostilities and prejudices. It is still difficult on account of differences of history, culture, social evolution and religious mentality. Besides, the dialogical state of mind has still to be born in them, while on the Christian side a vocabulary of dialogue and the suitable theological categories have still to be developed in order to be able "to think Islam."⁷² The most valid methodology for dialogue seems at this moment to be to feel and call each other brothers in the name of the same God, and to offer to our Muslim brothers an example of humility, disinterestedness and brotherhood, in an interpersonal relationship of friendship in which the only thing sought after is the good of the other.⁷³

Not seldom, the notion of dialogue in open discussions is regarded with suspicion. At times, it is positively rejected as a modern subterfuge for missionary infiltration. Sometimes, it meets with a certain verbal sympathy, but rarely is it welcomed as a genuinely new start towards better relationships. Generally, the Pakistani Muslim wonders what hidden motives prompt the Church to adopt such a posture.⁷⁴

Hence, it is not without some reservations that we relate two ways of initiating a fruitful approach to Islam, which are sometimes proposed by Christians. One way is to assume that the Qur'an, if rightfully interpreted, would uphold Christian teaching, and that Muslims have not rightly grasped the real meaning of the Qur'an. As Christians we would have the right and even the duty to rectify traditional Islamic misunderstandings.⁷⁵ Another way would be to encourage Muslims to apply historical standards to the study of the Qur'an. Some Muslim scholars have already recognized the necessity of such a study and have taken steps to implement it. A rethinking of Islam in fact by a searching criticism of its sources, especially those of the Qur'an, seems to be the direction Islam will take in the future. Such criticism will also pave the way for a real distinction between the temporal and the spiritual domains, between state and religious institutions, and to a reform of religious instruction.⁷⁶ It is not easy, however, to conceive Muslims as accepting the guidance of non-Muslims to a correct understanding of their Qur'an.⁷⁷ We wonder whether such a rather doctrinal approach (if it is really understood as an approach and not rather a mistaken polemical stance, which in many Asian regions seems to be more likely!) would help us very much. We submit that in many instances a dialogue of life, by living daily in community with Muslims, may be a shorter and smoother way towards an ever growing mutual understanding, e.g., in the situations of daily rural life.⁷⁸

19. Some facts of interreligious dialogue, particularly in the areas of social welfare, may also be mentioned, in order to enrich the picture of Asia's religious situation.

While visiting Jakarta, Indonesia, on December 3, 1970, Pope Paul VI expressed his desire that we Christians join with the various non-Christian religions in promoting and defending common ideals in the spheres of religious liberty, human brotherhood, teaching and education, social welfare and civic order.

In Thailand, dialogue is now being carried out by means of cooperation in social action. It is also an ecumenical cooperation. Religious leaders (both Christian and Buddhist) are launching action programs for more human conditions. In the report he gave to the Meeting on Dialogue with Hinayana Buddhism, held in Bangkok on May 17-19, 1974, Fr. John Ulliana, a Salesian missionary in Thailand, said that social welfare is a common field where we can all cooperate for the benefit of the people, by giving both material and spiritual assistance.⁷⁹

In Japan, interreligious dialogue is taking place through a collaboration for the good of society, for example, for the promotion of human rights, world peace, the building of a better world, etc.⁸⁰

In Taiwan and Hong Kong, dialogue at the social welfare level is chiefly carried out by the ecclesiastical leadership and takes place within excellent cooperation with the Protestant Churches.⁸¹

We have to try to build on the positive results achieved at the Colombo Conference, which was jointly planned by a group comprising persons drawn from five faiths: Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews and Muslims. For the first time in a meeting organized by the World Council of Churches, Christians risked being a minority (although still by far the largest single group). Some of the results were a "provisional," but perhaps a more realistic approach, to the theme of "world community." Attention was drawn to "the emergence of new models of society and their impact upon the fate and the role of religion." The "feeling" was particularly expressed that it might be "the special task of religious groups to stress the importance of the model of concrete local community not only as the first reality of world community but also as the reality which mediates world community."⁸² There resulted a better appreciation of "the influence of religions and ideological resources upon socio-economic conditions and upon the quality of life in a given nation or community of nations."⁸³

20. Can we speak of a common search for community when we look at totalitarian ideologies? Is dialogue with Marxism feasible, as long as the doctrinal articulation of such an ideology, with its aim of dominating the

whole, prevents any real community with outsiders?

As a matter of fact, totalitarian ideologies rarely exist as fully realizing their programme. Their adherents retain individually the ability to act in freedom. Dialogue and cooperation with them are neither impossible nor necessarily sterile. They may indeed contribute to the common quest for community, but this in spite of their ideology, and not, as with the religions, because of the very dynamism of what they hold and are.

The deepest reason for the impossibility of community with these ideologies is — at least speaking theoretically — that they are closed to transcendence. To the degree that there is an openness towards transcendence, ideologies have similarities with the religions.⁸⁴

Many Christians of East Asia have experienced personally or through their friends and relatives both the attractive elements of Communism (these deriving from its Judaic-Christian prophetic inspiration), and its negative elements: the use of any means to obtain its ends, a disregard for truth and promises, the reliance on violence and hatred, the whittling away of the relation binding each individual man in his conscience with the personal Absolute.

Christians should be clearminded in their dealings with Communism. While stimulated to a greater fervour in the service of our Lord by the example of the dedication of many Communists to their cause, they must not close their eyes to objective truth and objective facts, and must keep in mind the violation of basic human rights — mainly, the right of free exercise of religion — inflicted on so many of their brothers living under Communist rule.⁸⁵

It is to be regretted also that the Churches' dialogue with monastic religions and Marxist movements of Asia has polarized the spiritualists and activists into a tension similar to that existing between monks and Marxists in certain countries.⁸⁶

The Church will have to meet the people where they are, and to encounter those ideologies where their adherents strive for the people's social and economic welfare. Again it may be the best way, wherever it is possible, to live in community, especially with the masses, in rural as well as in urban and industrialized areas affected by those ideologies, and to engage in a dialogue of life with them.

CHAPTER THREE: ECUMENISM IN ASIA

21. Vatican II's decree on the Church's Missionary Activity stresses the relevance of unity for the credibility of our Christian message:

the division among Christians damages the most holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature and blocks the way to the faith for many (*Ad Gentes* 6).

Then this article continues:

by the same mandate which makes missions necessary (*ex necessitate missionis*) all the baptized are called to be gathered into one flock, and thus to be able to bear unanimous witness before the nations to Christ their Lord.

The one mission, therefore, should be the reason for promoting (and eventually achieving) unity among Christians, in order to bear "full witness to the same faith."⁸⁷

The document for the reorganization of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (called the "Propagation of the Faith") states that one of the objectives of this organization is to search out, in coordination with the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, ways and means for:

bringing about and directing fraternal cooperation as well as harmonious living with the missionary undertakings of other Christian communities, in order to remove as far as possible the scandal of division.⁸⁸

Ad Gentes, n. 36, says that the living testimony of a profoundly Christian life, which is our first and most important obligation towards evangelization, will more easily achieve its effect if it is given in unison with other Christian communities, according to the norms of the Decree on Ecumenism, 12.⁸⁹

What, then, has the Asian experience to contribute in general to world ecumenism? In Asia, ecumenism has to be undertaken with the goal of a common witness and dialogue with the millions of adherents of other religious faiths and traditions and of the Marxist ideologies, and with an emphasis — as we will see — on a dialogue of life,⁹⁰ and on a prayer and religious experience shared with believers in God in other faiths⁹¹ These emphases are to be preferred to doctrinal and theological discussions, to research into the reasons for the divisions of Christendom, and, generally speaking, to discussions about a common pastoral orientation of our missionary activities.

22. Inter-ecclesial unity is not the only important ecumenical concern. No less relevant to the Asian situation, where we meet with the great living faiths and a popular quest for liberation and development, is what has been called "trans-ecclesial ecumenism." We are including under this term four different emphases of Christ's redemptive role, which cut across or extend to

all the Churches now involved in classical ecumenism (hence the term trans-ecclesial). Therein, we also find their ambivalence: while they gather Christians together, irrespective of Church lines, these four trends scatter the Christians of each Church to the four opposite directions. Yet in three of these Christian concerns we find a potential for a renewed Christianity which is capable of answering the needs of contemporary Asia. They point out where our missionary energy should be spent in most Asian countries.

a) In quite a number of Churches we find an evangelism which stems from the 16th century. The Reformation and Counter-reformation turned out to be a rigid conversion movement inspired by the belief that the rural masses of Europe, still steeped in ignorance and superstition, needed to be "Christianized."⁹² Whereas the Protestant forms of evangelism gave an exaggerated importance to the Bible, the Catholic forms emphasized too strongly the role of the Church. The former were based on bibliolatry ("no revelation outside the Bible"); the latter on ecclesiolatry ("no salvation outside the Church").⁹³ Thus, both biblical fundamentalism and ecclesiastical triumphalism converged into one evangelical strand.

b) More and more, dialogue is finding its way into the Churches in their approach to other faiths. Christ, as He is disclosed by Sacred Scripture, is a salvific stage of an Event still awaiting to be revealed beyond the Bible. The Lord of the Church is an intensive moment of a Presence still to be acknowledged beyond the Church. The Bible and the Church are not the terminating points of the journey to Christ, but rather a divine environment where the Christian sharpens his innate inclination to search for the Saviour, not alone but with all men of good will.

c) In the spiritualist trend, Christ is encountered as a personal, spiritual Liberator, implementing His salvific role primarily in the interior world of the individual man. Liberation in Christ is given a strong psychological bias. The charismatic ramification of this trend retains the pneumatological flavor of the early Christian community, while the "mystic" tends to adopt the "gnostic" thrust of Asian religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Charismatics may find evangelism appealing; "mystics" normally follow a dialogical path in meeting people of other beliefs. The charismatic renewal is of Western origin, though spreading fast in Asia; the "ashram" movement, and its several equivalents, now in vogue in vogue in the West, has its home in Asia. The charismatic movement tends to be intramural and modelled upon classical ecumenism; the "ashram" trend always provides a context for a trans-ecclesial ecumenism.

d) The most courageous example of trans-ecclesial ecumenism, namely, the activist, focuses upon social liberation, in marked opposition to the

spiritualist's psychological approach. Drawn by the social ethics of the Gospel, its adherents unanimously denounce organized injustice within and without the Church. Recognizing sin in its structural dimension, they proclaim Christ, Who condemns oppression by being Himself its victim here and now. On account of their philo-Marxist tendencies they are often labeled "left-wing" Christians.⁹⁴

23. Mission groups from the Northern Atlantic regions unknowingly have distorted the picture of Catholicism and the Christian missionary enterprise by making them merely a prolongation or extension in Asia of the Western Church. We now recognize as mythical the opinion that the Latin Rite — if it still exists — would be indispensable for maintaining communion with Rome, or that the "self-government of particular Churches," declared inviolable by Vatican II,⁹⁵ is an obstruction to attaining the ultimate goals set by ecumenism.

Classical ecumenism, a Church-to-Church encounter, with the connected obligations of discussing doctrinal diversities and of codifying inter-church discipline, seems to be a charism specific to the particular Churches of the West. We must profit by their efforts rather than duplicate them, and adopt their conclusions judiciously rather than spend our resources on such ecumenical theologizing. We can allow those experiences of classical ecumenism freely to inspire our minds, so that it gradually becomes the mood rather than the aim, a "life-style" rather than the goal of concerted ecumenical action. The Churches in Asia, however, have no time to face one another in this classical pattern. They should rather face the world together. Such a new inter-ecclesial ecumenism could very well be the spontaneous outcome of our common effort to encounter Christ ever more closely, a by-product of a trans-ecclesial, Christ-centered and world-oriented ecumenism.

The discussion between evangelism, aiming by every means to "Christianize Asia," and dialogue, preferring to "Asianize Christianity," cannot conclude with any real results unless we practise the methodology imposed by a trans-ecclesial ecumenism. The dialogical approach automatically will be given preference as the tension between spiritualism and activism is eased,⁹⁶ since both these are dialogical movements.

The "mystico-monastic" trend represents the Church's desire to enrich herself in general through the Hindu-Buddhist gnostic spirituality of many Asian peoples searching for higher values. It is through the political commitment of her so-called "leftists" that the Church is shocked into a healthy questioning of her attitudes towards Asia's irrevocable option for socialism. So the opposition now appears to be between the political "spirituality" of the activists and the apolitical "activities" of the spiritualists. Thus, our apostolic

energy seems dissipated in two antagonistic directions, each neutralizing the other.

Providentially, these dissonant voices can be harmonized, since they all take off from the same note, Jesus Christ, or more accurately, the search for Christ. It must be possible to reconcile Christians within the same common Christward thrust they all display. Lest, however, we get lost amid purely theological speculations, let us focus our attention on the concrete situation in Asia, and its spiritual pilgrimage to Christ, and join our brethren in their quest for liberation and development.⁹⁷

24. The First Asian Congress of Jesuit Ecumenists, held in Manila, June 18-23, 1975, discovered a striking convergence of its major concerns with those of the First Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, held in Taipei, 1974. The bishops, addressing themselves to particular tasks demanded by the proclamation of the Gospel in contemporary Asia, called attention to three major solicitudes in evangelization, viz., incarnation of Gospel and Christian life in the particular Church, dialogue with the living religious traditions of Asia, and service to its peoples, particularly the poor, by promoting justice. The Congress arrived at a consensus that these were the very major concerns of Asian ecumenism today.⁹⁸

Ecumenical concern in our Asian life-situations, they agreed, must give primacy to a dialogue of life.

The document, *Justice in the World*, of the Bishops' Synod of 1971 considers action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world as "a constitutive dimension" of evangelization, i.e., "of the mission of the Church for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation." Similarly, the FABC "Statement" of 1974 is convinced that Christ is calling the Asian Churches from the material deprivation of the poor, to the realization of their tremendous human potential, and to the fulfillment of their aspirations for a more fully human and brotherly world.⁹⁹

What do we mean by a "dialogue of life"? A dialogue of life implies the following aspects:

a) Efforts and theological reflection on behalf of unity must spring from and be directed to concrete and genuine Asian situations, our needs, problems and possibilities, at local grass-roots levels. Dialogue must take root in each place and group and particular culture. This calls for a fuller knowledge and deeper understanding of the human reality in local circumstances, and a true grasp of the view of man and of community found there. It is only in this way that Asian Christianity can find its own identity and its

own style of Christian living.¹⁰⁰

b) We must stress orthopraxis, i.e., the practice of unity, love and justice, convinced that the truth, entwined in the theological diversities, will best be served by our growth in charity. We transcend purely conceptual distinctions and doctrinal controversies, and seek to share our experiences of God, of life, of prayer, in mutual openness. This sharing can open up for us opportunities for a discriminating collaboration across denominational and ideological boundaries in the promotion of the human. And this cooperation can lead to the discovery of God's Spirit, active on behalf of man in places and movements in which our Christian tradition has not trained us to expect Him.¹⁰¹

c) An ecumenism understood in the usual Western sense, as directed to Christian denominations and faith-and-order concerns, is — as it has already been stipulated — only functional to a dialogue of life, to a dialogue with men of various religious traditions, and particularly to the common struggle for a just and authentically free and human social order. Even the dialogue with religions is only functional to the construction of the truly human community, in and through which the Kingdom of God becomes present in our midst.¹⁰²

25. According to the Decree on Ecumenism, cooperation among all Christians should be ever increasingly developed, particularly in regions where a social and technical evolution is going on.

It should contribute to a just appreciation of the dignity of the human person, the promotion of the blessings of peace, the application of Gospel principles to social life, and the advancement of the arts and sciences in a Christian spirit. Christians should also work together in the use of every possible means to relieve the afflictions of our times, such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, lack of housing and the unequal distribution of wealth.¹⁰³

This statement expresses the same viewpoint found in *Gaudium et Spes*. Though earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ's Kingdom, nevertheless, to the extent that the former can contribute to the better ordering of human society, it is of vital concern to the Kingdom of God (art. 39). In the light of Christ we too are called to illuminate the mystery of man and to cooperate in finding the solution to the outstanding problems of our time (art. 10). While helping the world and receiving many benefits from it, our intention should be that God's Kingdom may come, and that the salvation of mankind may come to pass (art. 45). Hence the Catholic Church gladly holds in high esteem the things which other Christian Churches or ecclesial communities have done or are doing cooperatively in order to make the family of man and its history more human (art. 40).¹⁰⁴

Along similar lines, the 1968 Uppsala Ecumenical Assembly emphasized the obligation laid upon the Church to identify herself with the world and participate in its struggles for human rights, social justice and world community. At the Colombo meeting, in the context of interreligious dialogue, it was agreed there is a primary responsibility towards the task of living together as a world community to "seek for all a higher and more just quality of life and a new sense of community."¹⁰⁵ It is imperative for us now to face up to the reality, indeed the hard facts, of community life in our Asian countries.

At the Bangkok Conference on "Salvation Today," Philip A. Potter described the context of mission in terms of the paradoxes of a world unified in new ways, yet profoundly divided; a technologically developed world which yet fails to cope with problems of human life; a world where counter-cultures parallel cultural revolutions. The need of salvation today is to be understood in these terms. Nowadays, a concern for justice and the welfare of people accompanies the proclamation of the Gospel and is part of it.¹⁰⁶

26. While reflecting upon the situation in our Asian countries, we are aware that the ecumenical movement is perhaps still regarded by many as an inter-ecclesial affair which is to be settled among the Churches. Should not this attitude be gradually revised, so that we may come to realize how much the ecumenical movement is related to the world, not because it is fashionable or convenient, but because it is at its very foundation? Precisely because it is to the world that the Church is "Sacrament of Salvation"?

Ecumenism is not simply an internal Church issue, by which preference is given to the problems of Christians rather than those of peace, justice, liberty and human rights. Especially in Asia, where by far we are no more than a very small minority of the population, ecumenism for the sake of evangelization must bring us right to the heart of the problems of humanity.

While ecumenism as merely an inter-church concern ought to develop into ecumenism as service to human society, it is also conversely true that from doing things together we move on to witnessing together. Ecumenism is not simply the sum total of all the things we do together, but rather a way of being and living in service to human society.¹⁰⁷ This service commits Christians and Church to a process of renewal, involving a change of heart, and is a summons to continual reformation and, at the same time, to an ever greater fruitfulness.

Christians must strive to live in the world, bearing a common witness rooted in Christ and essentially directed towards conversion. And if our activity hides the fact that this change of heart has not taken place or is

constantly to be postponed till some time later, such an ecumenical movement is bound to fail.¹⁰⁸

At the Bangkok Conference the discussions and the interventions from the floor emphasized unequivocally the socio-temporal dimensions of salvation. Of course, there was also the very clear concern of arriving at a full and balanced notion of salvation. Yet a number of the participants, including the Catholic observers, felt that the relationship between the temporal and eternal aspects of salvation had not been worked out adequately. There was not enough stress on its eschatological dimensions, nor — so it would seem — enough concern for the personal elements in salvation. At times, it appeared as if there was a greater preoccupation with the “consequences” of the Gospel than with “the Gospel itself.” To this extent, some felt there was not enough room given to reflection on the bases for mission, although veterans of these international meetings expressed the opinion that these had been adequately treated on earlier occasions.¹⁰⁹

27. We regard ecumenism to be not merely an inter-ecclesial affair among the Churches but our common service to the developing Asian countries. At the same time we keep in mind that this service should be the concerted endeavour of all our peoples, most of whom are adherents of other living faiths and religious beliefs.

In addition to many general inter-religious meetings, large and small, local, national and international,¹¹⁰ the World Council of Churches itself has organized a number of dialogues with people of other religions.

In 1970 a multilateral meeting was held at Ajaltoun, Lebanon, in which people of four different religious traditions took part.¹¹¹ Bilateral conversations between Christians and Jews have been going on at the ecumenical level for some years. The theme of a 1972 meeting was: “The quest for world community: Christian and Jewish perspectives.” With our Muslim friends, too, dialogues have been taking place for some time. At Broumana, Lebanon, Christians and Muslims met in 1972 to consider the theme: “In search of understanding and cooperation: Christian and Muslim contributions”.¹¹² Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians have been in living dialogue for many years in Asian countries. More recently, carefully organized meetings have been held in several countries on specific themes. Many of the participants of the Colombo Meeting, Sri Lanka, April 17-26, 1974, had an earlier experience of such gatherings. Moreover, the planning sessions, in preparation for the Broumana and the Colombo Conferences, which included people of other faiths, may also be themselves regarded as intensive dialogues, where the details of the future meetings were discussed in an atmosphere of warm cordiality, sensitive understanding and critical reflection.¹¹³

28. In line with one aspect of the developing thought of post-Vatican II ecclesiology, that of shifting the gravity of concern from the diocese towards the local congregation, and within the perspective of building up the particular Churches in Asia, which we discussed above, we must form with other Churches a fellowship in Christ at the local level.

Among many Churches, especially in the Third World, the conviction has matured that the spiritual unity of Christians must be explicitly visible where they gather, that God calls His people into a visibly single worshipping community.¹¹⁴

There is only one call, one summons, one Church of God which is universal, and the particular Church represents that universal community as it is in one place.¹¹⁵ There is here no question of depreciating the real existence of the universal Church. However, the local Church is the most important place for ecumenism. Local ecumenism is not simply a matter of applying at the local level universal concepts worked out in advance elsewhere; it is "an independent aspect of the ecumenical problem an original form of ecumenism and a starting point independent of theological discoveries."¹¹⁶

The need to bear common witness, now deeply felt by the Churches, urges them to explore ways of really working together in local situations, whenever possible, both in the field of pastoral work and in other spheres of activity. In the relations between the Catholic Church and the member Churches of the World Council of Churches, this awareness of the need of a common witness is a relatively recent element. Particularly in non-Christian milieus — actually coterminous with the Asia which is undergoing socio-economic and cultural development — the best sign we can give is that of our joint efforts which at once seek to build a community of believers in Almighty God, and to promote a more just society, which activity, we have seen, is considered a constitutive element of evangelization. But it must not be open to question that we are working together only because of our common belief in the Gospel, and not as a political manoeuvre.¹¹⁷

E. Lange, therefore, holds that undoubtedly one of the crucial factors for the ecumenical movement is that our efforts be directed in a particular way towards making the motivations for ecumenism relevant to Christianity at its base, the local Christian communities, "without which the boldest ecumenical avant-garde would remain an entirely unauthorized elite."¹¹⁸

Thus, the issues of unity of the Church and of her common witness find their primary significance at the level of the congregation and the parish. It is there that the tests of reconciliation, new life in Christ, and involvement in mission are passed or failed. If the presence of Christ, breaking down all social,

economic and racial barriers, cannot be detected in the local gathering, any more universal forms of fellowship are seriously called into question.

29. What are the ecclesiological implications of such "localized unity"? They can be drawn out in many directions, but two are primary:

a) First at all, ecumenical efforts and the worshipping community.¹¹⁹ Dr. G.F. Moede, member of the Secretariat of the WCC Commission on Faith and Order says that, although cooperation at all levels among Churches is a very positive development, yet in so far as it leaves untouched the basic realities by which the Church lives its life, it can neither solve the basic problems existing between the Churches, nor fulfill their potential.¹²⁰ Common worship at the local level is central to the whole enterprise of union, for it incorporates the dimension of the reconciliation of persons (and not only of institutions) with one another. Union at the local level has the further benefit of making possible the reconciliation of human diversity and social pluralism in face-to-face encounter, undoubtedly one of the effects of genuine worship. Union recognizes the validity of the fact that there are theological and social questions which are decisively shaped by and can only be settled in the context in which Churches live and encounter one another locally.¹²¹

b) Secondly, our endeavours in promoting Christian Unity even at the local level and our mission in the world, in other words, evangelization.¹²² Communion in worship and the implementation of mission, *koinonia* and *diakonia*, are indivisibly connected. They are in themselves the *martyria*, and enhance the credibility of the Churches as the sign of salvation to our peoples. Moreover, both of these aspects of the living testimony of our faith at local congregational level are of great relevance in the encounter with various religious traditions, within the context of an ever developing Asia, if we keep in mind:

1) that religiosity and a high esteem for prayer and meditation, the lifting up of hearts and minds to the Almighty (to "the Divine"), are two of the main features of life in most Asian societies. Many (if not most) of the religious trends, though, show some tendency to move away from the realities of life, while, at the same time, our countries are struggling for their liberation and development.

2) that living together in daily life and forming a community, in which the members are good neighbours to one another (often even to the extent of not making note of differences of religious beliefs), is for many Asian societies in itself of the highest value. Diversity in faith does not necessarily result in tensions, and especially in rural areas, which are the major part of Asia, such diversity is even compatible with living in a closely-knit community.

30. Section III of the Bangkok Conference states in general that renewal in mission depends primarily and fundamentally on the way in which local communities witness that Jesus Christ's salvation is for everyone.¹²³ The question was also raised in the official monthly journal of the Church of South India whether there was not a danger of shifting "the responsibility from the Churches to the Assemblies, from the 'laos' to an elitist supra-Church leadership," and whether the conferences were not in this way finding "more gratifying self-fulfillment" in functioning "themselves as the People of God or as the 'Remnant,' leaving the millions of unenlightened members of the Churches in Asia to stew in their own juice."¹²⁴

Indeed, all too many negotiations, and even unions, have been clergy-dominated and implemented with little, or at best insufficient, attention paid to the members of the Church. Perhaps it is more important for our Asian societies than for those of the West to shift ecumenism or dialogue away from being a merely or predominantly clerical activity, i.e., done by priest and religious, and try rather to get the Christian people of all levels involved.¹²⁵

Many apprehensions and prejudices can often be removed by bringing members of one Church into direct contact with those of other Churches who are involved in ecumenical activities.¹²⁶ Even at the local level this could be true, for the experiences of united congregations or Churches bear witness to their greater freedom in mission.¹²⁷

Not least in importance, indeed, is the stewardship of resources, Church union results in countless amounts of time and energy being freed through the simple avoidance of reduplication and competition, whether in education, ministry of the word, institutions or social service. When all has been said, though, the heart of Church union is a fully-shared experience of interconnected life, where a single stream of life flows through all parts of a community of faithful and no part of it is shut off from any aspect of the common experience.¹²⁸

31. The Directorium stresses that, in ecumenical matters, the more fully and solidly the faithful are educated and instructed in the teachings and authentic traditions of the Catholic Church and the non-Catholic Churches and ecclesial communities, the more efficacious will be the pastoral activity.¹²⁹

Speaking of the maturing of ecumenical awareness, the appended Survey states that some progress has been made in increasing the consciousness of the Christian people as a whole. (Perhaps we may speak of an ecumenical "conscientization" at the local level.) There has already been some development in seeing ecumenism as an inter-confessional activity to seeing it

as a dimension of Christian life, from ecumenism as an inter-Church concern to ecumenism as service in the world, from doing things together to witnessing together.¹³⁰

This Survey warns us, however, not to have any illusions about the extent of ecumenical awareness. Often the impression is given that we must begin all over again the work of information and education of opinion, things which were generally thought to have been successfully completed. We have to realize that quite a large proportion of countries know very little about the ecumenical problem and do not really understand it, and that a minority everywhere is fiercely hostile to it.

The Survey summarizes the situation as follows: a) ecumenism is now a Church problem and not simply the concern of a few pioneers; b) in pastoral terms, most of the work that remains to be done is among Christians who have no partner with whom to begin a dialogue; c) even supposing they know about the ecumenical movement, the majority of Christians still need more education and information; d) the more dynamic elements in the Churches have now progressed beyond a certain stage; for them it is a situation of finding imaginative new patterns.¹³¹

32. Particularly in Asian countries, ecumenical education should be much more than doctrinal instruction on the "history of divisions," or, for instance, on issues like the "different ways of explaining the Real Presence." It should teach all the faithful how to read and interpret the meaning of events and facts in faith, and how to commit themselves in the today of history. This is in no way to hold in disdain the aspect of doctrine, but to give doctrine new expression and bring it into contact with everyday reality, which is, after all, a cloth woven out of the lives of ordinary people.¹³²

Dialogue among theologians, for instance, cannot bear fruit if it is not accompanied by a progress in dialogue expressing an encounter among Christians in the life of the Churches. The dialogue among theologians is called upon to shed the light of truth on the dialogue which expresses itself in the lives of Christians, so that love shall abide in truth.¹³³

By ever more involving our faithful at the local level, as best we can, in ecumenical activities, we hope to bring it about that the whole local Christian community will find in its particular life-situations, by "action and reflection," its way of fulfilling together its common mission of evangelization. If we take into consideration these circumstances, a true balance should be maintained between living experience and doctrinal training. At this level, decisions about practical means depend in the first instance on the particular conditions of the local Churches.

The life-situations in our Asian countries are often very different. Joining the dialogue among our Christian brothers, we must try to visualize and discover the unity appropriate to each region at present and at its stage of development, and to find a common response to the needs of the time.¹³⁴

EPILOGUE

33. At the end of our reflections on the Churches in Asia as they are developing amid various religious and cultural traditions and contemporary ideologies, and particularly on their ecumenical situations, we have no doubt become more deeply aware than ever of what is even for Asians the overwhelming plurality of peoples, cultures and religions. Even the "existential" content of terms such as "justice," "injustice," "faith," "unbelief," "liberation," "development," "welfare," etc., will disclose such an immense variety of meaning, that it seems out of the question ever to arrive at an adequate portrayal of Asian realities.

We may ask ourselves to what extent there has been hitherto coherence between ideals and concrete achievements on our part, between the challenge of life-situations and what we have actually contributed so far towards the solution of problems, between words and deeds. Some of the causes for the lack of coherence, no doubt, are almost impossible to avoid. Yet there may have been factors that to some extent depend on ourselves. What are we Jesuits expected to do?

Since the Society of Jesus was founded to labor for Christ our Lord and the Church His Bride as a priestly Order,¹³⁵ it shares in the ministry of the Church. It also has a special responsibility for service to the Church,¹³⁶ in preserving and confirming the communion of her faith. Hence, ecumenical activities are of particular relevance to us.

There is, however, another aspect of our mission. While Jesuits in Asia wish eventually to arrive at concrete program proposals, at "existential application," it is not theirs alone, as "the Jesuits' East Asian or Indian Assistancy," to define what their contemporary mission is to be. Never may we act as though we were a self-enclosed or self-sufficient unit within the Church.¹³⁷ It rather must be the mission of the Church as a whole, in which we take part. Therefore, it should be clear that we cannot alone set up our concrete programs. Not only have Asian Jesuits to situate their mission within the Asian context; we also have to integrate our apostolic activities into the mission of the Asian Churches.

We cannot honestly draw up concrete apostolic programs without at least consulting other "agents" with whom we share our common mission as Church, religious as well as lay people, and particularly without recognizing

what the Bishops' Conferences of Asia actually wish us Jesuits to contribute to the building up of their particular Churches.

It is of vital importance, to ask ourselves, particularly in Asia, how we, with respect to this integration, understand our *sentire cum Ecclesia*. To what extent, for instance, do we take into account the real concerns of the Bishops' Conferences, and enter into consultation with the hierarchy of our particular Churches?¹³⁸ Are we convinced that this integration is an integral aspect of our contribution to the inculturation of Christian faith in our regions, which our Father General, Pedro Arrupe, in his concluding address, alluded to as "somewhat new in the history of the General Congregations"? It was fine that a true inculturation already began in the Congregation itself, as an experience that was lived.¹³⁹ But do we wish to be consistent by pursuing this inculturation to its ultimate consequences, also with regard to ecumenism?

The Jesuit Decree on Our Mission concludes with an appeal for international cooperation, as necessary to meet the major issues of our times which frequently have international dimensions; and as vital also to answer better the demands of apostolic availability and mobility which are inherent in our vocation, to be at the service of the universal mission of the entire People of God.¹⁴⁰ Such collaboration is what we now intend to achieve. And hopefully with great success!

Footnotes

¹ L. Vischer, "Drawn and Held Together," *The Ecumenical Review*, 26 (1974), 170.

² "Dialogue with men of these religious and spiritual traditions is the central area of ecumenism in Asia," in "Final Statement and Recommendations of the First Asian Congress of Jesuit Ecumenists in Manila, June 18-23, 1975," *Towards a 'Dialogue of Life', Ecumenism in the Asian Context* (Cardinal Bea Studies IV, Manila, 1976), p. 299, Statement 4. In our opinion, however, this dialogue is not to be called "wider ecumenism." Cf. also Ary A. Roest Crolius, S.J., "Seeking Community: the common Search of Various Faiths, Cultures and Ideologies," *Towards a 'Dialogue of Life',* p. 53; A. Pieris, S.J., "Contemporary Ecumenism and Asia's Search for Christ," *Towards a 'Dialogue of Life',* p. 154, footnote 2.

³ Cf. "Statement of the Ecumenical Dialogue of Third World Theologians, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, 5-12 August 1976," Part I, considering the systematic exploitation by the European peoples as the principal cause for the underdevelopment of the Third World (n.7), and explaining the mechanism of underdevelopment and domination (n.8), *IDOC Bulletin* (Rome), n.46 (August 1976), 4-5.

⁴ The Philippines and Thailand will double their populations in 21 years; Indonesia, 24; Malaysia, 25; Hong Kong and Korea, 28; Singapore, 29; Taiwan, 31. In 1976 there were 738 million children below the age of 15 in the ECAFE region.

⁵ A number of countries have gained their political independence: India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Pakistan, Bangladesh.

⁶ Thus, according to the third Bishops' Institute for Social Action (BISA III), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, November 2-16, 1975, on "the social dimensions of the Gospel." See *Info (OHD)*, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), (December 1, 1975), 3.

⁷ For this section we are indebted to Pieris, *loc. cit.*, 154-174.

⁸ Confucianism, more an almost irresistible substructure than a religious force, is by Matteo Ricci considered useful as a cultural soil in which to implant Christianity, whereas Buddhism was regarded as unhelpful. Cf. Y.E. Raguin, S.J., "Father Ricci's Presentation of Some Fundamental Theories of Buddhism," *Chinese Culture*, X/1, 37-38. To Maoists Confucianism is even more destructive than animism: Yang Jung-Kuo, *Confucius, "Sage" of the Reactionary Classes* (Peking, 1974); and Anon., *Ghost of Confucius, Fond Dream of the New Tsars* (Peking, 1974).

⁹ D.J. Steinberg, *In Search of South East Asia: A Modern History (a symposium)*, DUP, 1971, 59ff.

¹⁰ There are almost as many Buddhists in Asia as there are Catholics in the world. H. Saddhatissa, in *The Buddha's Way* (London, 1971), 121, quotes a figure of 516,975,000.

¹¹ Buddhism is the official religion and/or culturally influential factor in about 20 different political territories covering the major part of Asia. We may mention here: Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Mongolia, the republics of Buriat, Kalmyk and Tuva in Siberia, Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim.

¹² Cf. the Russian Marxist Parfionovich's thesis in "Relevance of Buddhist Studies," *World Buddhism*, XXI/3 (1972), 67ff.

¹³ E.g., the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB), the World Buddhist Sangha Council (WBSC), the World Buddhist Social Service (WBSS), etc.

¹⁴ Pieris, *loc. cit.*, 173f.

¹⁵ The Christians of South Vietnam are, therefore, faced with the same problems which confronted the Christians of China after 1949, North Korea since 1950, and North Vietnam since 1954. All these Christians could not count on help from the Churches of other countries. At the most they were encouraged to resist or even to face martyrdom. Furthermore, the leaders of these Christians were not prepared to cooperate with the new regimes, especially at the beginning. In China this even led to a kind of schism when some Christians chose bishops for themselves without Rome's approval. See T. Balasuriya, "An Asian's Reflections after Vietnam," *Info OHD*, 3 (Jan. 1, 1976), 11. On the situation of Communism in Laos, see M. Zago, "Le dialogue avec les Bouddhistes au Laos," *Bulletin Secretariat pro Non-Christianis*, 1975-X/2, sub C: "Le tournant communiste," 285-291.

¹⁶ Dulamzhavyn Dashzhamts, "Non-Capitalist Development and Religion," *World Marxist Review*, 16 (1973), 27-29.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁸ Namely, that of Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka, U Nu of Burma and the earlier Sihanouk of Cambodia.

¹⁹ Cf. "Theological Implications of New China," (Lutheran World Federation and *Pro Mundi Vita*, Geneva and Brussels, 1974), for a further expansion of this subject.

20 Cf. e.g., Chang Chun-chiao, "On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship over the Bourgeoisie," *Peking Review*, 14 (1975), 5-11.

21 Pieris, *loc. cit.*, 165-170.

22 Speech by Philip A. Potter, General Secretary, World Council of Churches, to the Synod of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, Rome, October 10, 1974, *WCC Communication*, N. 17/74, 6.

23 "Statement and Recommendations of the First Plenary Assembly of the FABC, Taipei, Taiwan, China, April 22-27, 1974," sub II: "to find new meanings in their lives and endeavors, to overcome destructive forces and to shape a new integration in our societies, to free themselves from structures which have created new forms of bondage, to foster human dignity and freedom and a more fully human life, to create a more genuine communion among men and nations."

24 Cf. *L'Eglise des cinq continents: principaux textes du Synode des Evêques, Rome 1974*, (Paris, 1975), 95.

25 S. Rayan S.J., "Theological Reflections of BISA III," *Info OFD*, 3 (Jan. 1, 1976), 8.

26 T. Balasuriya, "An Asian's Reflections after Vietnam," *Info OHD*, 3 (Jan. 1, 1976), 12.

27 BISA III, "Final Reflections," *Info OHD*, 2 (Dec. 1, 1975), 3. Also: the Reflection on Church and Squatters," at the seminar on Religion and Development, Baguio City, Philippines, August 31 - Sep. 20, 1975, puts it strongly: "the Church is found to be perpetuating and reinforcing present unjust structures in society. She has economic and political power, and because of so much vested interests she is afraid to act in favour of the interests of the poor. She sits among the elite, and to quiet her conscience she does social action in a paternalistic manner through her welfare programmes. This manner of exercising social action helps the continuance of the status quo since it keeps the minds of the people away from the real problem: the unequal distribution of economic, social and political power and wealth and the unequal opportunities of access to the same," in *Info OHD*, 2 (Dec. 1, 1975), 11.

28 On "trans-ecclesial ecumenism," see *infra*, Chapter III.

29 Several centers of encounter between Christianity, Buddhism and Socialism are mentioned by Pieris, *loc. cit.*, n. 171, footnote 42.

30 "A Reflection on Analysis of Micro-level Action" (A Workshop Report of the Baguio City Seminar on Religion and Development), *Info OHD*, 3 (Feb. 1, 1976), 11.

31 This report was based on the reports of several episcopal conferences, and especially also on the "Statement and Recommendations." The text is found in *L'Eglise des cinq continents: principaux textes du Synode des Evêques, Rome 1974* (Paris, 1975), 92-100.

32 For example, cf. P. Phichit, "Dialogue Situation in Thailand," *Bulletin Secretariatus pro Non-Christianis*, 1975-X/2, no. 30, p. 270: "The foreign elements of the Church in Thailand are so clear that we can hardly avoid the accusation that Christianity is a foreign religion. Those who were converted to Christianity were held as betrayers of the local customs, families and national religion, and nationality."

33 The teaching of the Church is presented, e.g., in *Lumen Gentium (LG)*, 13, 17; *Ad Gentes (AG)*, 16-18, 22, 26; *Gaudium et Spes (GS)*, 53-58; *Populorum Progressio (PP)*, 65. See also FABC "Statement and Recommendations," sub III, on the local Church.

34 J. Ratzinger, "Ecumenism at the Local Level," *SPCU Information Service*, no. 20 (1973/II), 8.

35 *Ibid.*, 9.

36 "A Plan of Union for the Church of Christ Uniting," Consultation on Church Union, Princeton, N.J., 1970, pp. 12-13, in G.F. Moede, "Church Union as a Model of Christian Unity," *The Ecumenical Review*, 26 (1974), 257.

37 "General Report by Charles Moeller, Secretary of the SPCU," *SPCU Information Service*, no. 23 (1974/I), 12. See also: "A Survey by the Roman Catholic - World Council of Churches Joint Working Group": some consequences of the need to agree on the meaning of the word "local," the problem of "conciliarity" (touching also on the problem of the nature of the Church and authority in the Church), the meaning of "unity and plurality." It concludes: "..... above all we must remember that the ecumenical movement takes many forms. It must contain *diversity* if it is a serious movement at all because it is born out of local situations, out of the life and faith of individual communities. It is made up of bilateral relations in many different places; it tries to bear witness in particular social, cultural, and economic situations from which it cannot be independent," in *One in Christ*, II (1975), 48.

38 FABC "Statement and Recommendations," *loc. cit.*, sub III. Also: "Evangelization in East Asia Today," General Conclusions of the Regional Assembly of FABC, Fujen University, Republic of China, August 26-31, 1973, pp. 1-2.

39 Reports on the works of the sections at Bangkok are to be found, for example, in *International Review of Mission*, 62 (1973), 144-57; 170-79.

40 "Culture and Identity. Report of Section I of the Bangkok Conference, December 1972," *International Review of Mission*, 62 (1973), 185-97.

41 "Culture and Identity," *loc. cit.*

42 E. Lanne, *Irenikon*, XLVI (1973), 209, quoted by C. Moeller in his "General Report," *SPCU Information Service*, no. 23 (1974/I), 9s.

43 Donald McGavran, *The Clash between Christianity and Cultures*, (1974), 5.

44 On the concept of "contra-structure," cf. A. Roest Crolius, S.J., "Seeking community: the common Search of various Faiths, Cultures and Ideologies," *Towards a 'Dialogue of Life'*, 60f., where the concept is applied to "prayer, mystical experience and the homeless existence of the religious."

45 *Euntes*, 8 (1975), 34-36.

46 FABC "Statement and Recommendations," *loc. cit.*, sub V.

47 Cardinal Stephen Sou Hwan Kim, *loc. cit.*

48 FABC "Statement and Recommendations," *loc. cit.*, Note also how here the cause of justice and the service of faith are mutually connected.

49 *Ibid.*

50 D.S. Amalorpavadass is not in favour of simply calling these religions "pre-Christian," "pro-Christian," and even less, "non-Christian," since they are not to be seen as over against the Church, but to be understood and evaluated in reference to it. On the other hand, we cannot call them simply "Christian." It is thought better to speak of "the religions," "the world religions," "the religions of the world" (Bombay Seminar), "the great religions of mankind," or "the religious traditions

of mankind" (Nagpur Conference), in *Approach, Meaning and Horizon of Evangelization* (Bangalore, 1973), 55. To mention just a few publications on our topic: J. Masson, "Les religions invitées en dialogue," *Spiritus* (1957); H. Yay Sing, ed., *Interreligious Dialogue* (Bangalore, 1967); Sri Mar Sunder Ras, *Interfaith Dialogue and Spirituality* (1956); C. Valles, "Pastoral Approaches and Dialogue Method," *Clergy Monthly*, (1968); Y.M.J. Congar, et al., *Reflexions sur le dialogue* (1967); S.J. Samartha, "Dialogue as a Continuing Christian Concern," *The Ecumenical Review*, 23 (1971); J. Bakker, "Piagam *Nostra Aetate*, Tafsiran. Zaman kita saman dialog antar agama," *Seri Orientali*, no. 8 (Yogyakarta, 1972).

⁵¹ J. Neuner, as quoted by J. Bakker, *op.cit.*, p.23.

⁵² Cf. H. Maurier, *Essai d'une théologie du paganisme* (Paris, 1965), 50. A few publications on the salvation of "non-Christians": L.W. Bernard, "The Church and the Non-Christian Faiths," *Anglican Theological Review*, 45 (1963), 264-69; J. Daniélou, "Non-Christians and Christ," *The Month*, 223 (1967), 137-52; M. Eminyan, *The Salvation of Infidels in Current Theology 1943-1958* (Rome, 1960); S.J. Killian, "The Catholic Theologian and Non-Christian Religions," *Thought*, 49 (1974), 21-42; J.J. King, *The Necessity of the Church for Salvation in Selected Theological Writings of the Past Century* (Washington, 1960); A. Leonard, "Toutes les religions ont-elles la même valeur?", *NRTH*, 79 (1957), 704-14; A. Luneau, "Pour aider au dialogue: les Pères et les religions non-chrétiennes," *NTh* 89(1967), 821-41 and 914-39; N. Nys, *Le salut sans l'Evangile* (Paris, 1966); H.R. Schlette, *Towards a Theology of Religion* (New York, 1966); G. Thils, *Propos et problèmes de la théologie des religions non-chrétiennes* (Paris, 1966).

⁵³ Among the texts of Vatican II which merit our special attention we mention the following: the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*; *Lumen Gentium* 16-17; *Ad Gentes* 7-8; *Dignitatis Humanae* 4. For the general approach to others in the spirit of dialogue, see also *Unitatis Redintegratio* and *Gaudium et Spes*. In addition, we also mention *Towards the Meeting of Religions* (Washington, 1967), and suggestions for dialogue by the Secretariat for Non-Christians.

⁵⁴ J.H. Miller, C.S.C., ed., *Vatican II: An Inter-faith Appraisal* (London, 1966), 601-02.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 608. Also G. Thils makes a distinction between "universal" and "particular" (Judeo-Christian) revelation. For this idea, cf. *Propos et problèmes*, pp. 84-121. See also in this context, G. Moran F.S.C., *Theology of Revelation* (New York, 1966), 162-78; R. Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation* (Staten Island, 1966), 329-41.

⁵⁶ Thils, *op.cit.*, pp. 96-100.

⁵⁷ J. Maritain, *Approaches to God* (New York, 1954), 2-9; C.R. Meyer, *The Touch of God* (New York, 1971), 16.

⁵⁸ Nys, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-13; also K. Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions," *Theological Investigations V* (Baltimore, 1966), 115-34.

⁵⁹ Besides the opinion on the salvation of non-Christians *in virtue* of their religions (K. Rahner, A. Röper, R. Panikkar, H. Schlette, etc.) and another opinion on their salvation *in spite* of their religions (K. Prümm, J. Ratzinger, J. Masson, Ch. Journet, H. de Lubac, H. van Straelen, etc.), two lines of thought may be considered complementary one to the other. D.S. Amalorpavadas proposes his theory in a balanced way: "The universal will of salvation implies that God's grace reaches men in their life situation and hence that their religions are for them channels of grace and providential

ways of salvation. Yet, we do not say that men are saved *through* their religions; for their ambiguous character and the defect inherent in their very structure and signs prevent them from being *means* of salvation; hence, we better call them '*milieu*' of God's grace and salvation. Indeed not even a Christian is saved by Christianity as a religion, but by God, by Jesus Christ..." See *Approaches in our Apostolate among Non-Christians, Mission Theology for our Times*, 3 (Bangalore, 1970), 3-4. Cf. Bakker, *op.cit.*, pp.85-86. On the positive evaluation of those religions, see A. Balchand, *The Salvific Value of Non-Christian Religions according to Asian Christian Theologians writing in Asian-published Theological Journals, 1965-1970* (Manila, 1973), chapter V, pp. 42-53; on the negative evaluation, chapter VI, pp. 54-60.

60 Cf. *L'Eglise des cinq continents*, p.96.

61 *Ibid.*, pp.95ff.

62 Without a deeply religious and spiritual experience our contribution to the service of faith and to the promotion of justice would lose all its specific originality and renovating force. The 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus brings us back, once again, to the Spiritual Exercises, a school of prayer and of spiritual and apostolic discernment. Cf. Decree *Our Mission Today* n. 38.

63 Cf. FABC "Statement and Recommendations," *loc. cit.*, sub IV. In his address to the Indonesian people on the occasion of his visit to Jakarta, December 3, 1970, Pope Paul VI quoted *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964), saying: "We acknowledge with respect the spiritual and moral values of the various non-Christian religions, for we desire to join with them in promoting and defending common ideals in the spheres of religious liberty, human brotherhood, teaching and education, social welfare, and civic order." Cf. Bakker, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

64 Amalorpavadass, *op.cit.*, p.16: "Dialogue is an eloquent proof of our solidarity with men, and a necessary means of knowing them. Thus dialogue becomes a condition and form of service. And as such it is a new form of missionary action compared with the old system of adaptation by concession." Cf. *Ad Gentes* 11 and Bakker, *op.cit.*, p.87.

65 FABC "Statement and Recommendations," *loc. cit.*, sub IV.

66 Cf. "Declaration of the Synodal Fathers," no. 11, in *Evangelization in Asia Today II* (Manila, 1974), 20.

67 FABC "Statement and Recommendations," *loc. cit.*, sub IV. The North African Bishops' Conference formulated the purpose of dialogue as follows: "1. To find out in a sympathetic way how our non-Christian fellow-countrymen live, what their deepest aspirations are, and what gives meaning to their lives. 2. To try to learn from them, in order to share the wisdom of their life, and to make our own 'the hopes and joys, the sorrows and anxieties' of their community." Cf. "Rapport de la Conference Episcopale d'Afrique du Nord pour la preparation du Synode des Eveques 1974, Tunis 1974," *Prospective*, International Center for Research and Communication, EVA/200/74.

68 On the concepts of "prophetic and mystical religions," cf. Roest Crolius, *loc. cit.*, pp. 53-55. Also Pieris' concept of "gnostic soteriologies" and "biblical theism," "Contemporary Ecumenism and Asia's Search for Christ," *loc. cit.*, pp. 165-67, 173f.

69 M. Fang Chih-Jung, "Common Christian Witness in Asia: Facts and Perspectives," in *Towards a Dialogue of Life*, p. 146f.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 143.

- 71 A. Roest Crollius, S.J., "Four Notes on Dialogue (more especially regarding Islam), *Bulletin Secretariatus pro Non-Christianis*, 1975 - X/2, no. 30, p. 245.
- 72 Even the commonest terms, such as "dialogue," "prayer," "monotheism," "revelation," "will of God," have a diverse meaning for them and for us.
- 73 "Report of the 'Seminar on Islamic-Christian Dialogue,' held in Tripoli (1st-5th February 1976)," *Bulletin Secretariatus pro Non-Christianis*, 1976 - XI/1, n. 31, p. 13. See also "Text of the Final Declaration of the Tripoli Seminar on the Islamic-Christian Dialogue," *Bulletin Secretariatus Pro Non-Christianis*, 1976 - XI/1, n. 31, 14-21.
- 74 Cf. R.A. Bütler, S.J., "Note on Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Pakistan," in *Towards a 'Dialogue of Life,'* particularly pp. 195f. See also A. Roest Crollius, "Four Notes on Dialogue (more especially regarding Islam)," reporting on some reactions from Muslim religious leaders, *Bulletin Secretariatus Pro Non-Christianis*, 1975 - X/2, n. 30, p. 247. Similar reactions are frequent also in Indonesia.
- 75 Christians have not withheld, it is argued, from giving their own interpretation of the Old Testament, even though it has always been contested by Israel. Cf. Youakim Moubarac, "L'Islam," *Bilan de la théologie du XXe siècle*, I, R. Vader Gucht and H. Vorgrimler, eds., (Paris, 1969), 389.
- 76 R. Casper, "Islam and Secularization," *Bulletin Secretariatus pro Non-Christianis*, n. 15, (1970), 154.
- 77 Th. J. O'Shaughnessy, S.J., "Muslim-Christian Dialogue and the Quran," *Towards a 'Dialogue of Life,'* pp. 204-9, particularly 204f.
- 78 Here we return to what was said in Chapter I, n.7, that most of Asia's hope appears to be placed in the rural population. Even in urban areas, e.g., in Indonesia, most of the population still seems to maintain the main patterns of village community life although they live now in a completely different setting.
- 79 Pichit, *loc. cit.*, p. 272.
- 80 J.B.M. Shirieda, "Dialogue Situation in Japan and Korea," *Bulletin Secretariatus pro Non-Christianis*, 1975 - X/2, n. 30, p. 296.
- 81 Cf. J. Shih, S.J., "Dialogue Situation in Taiwan and Hong Kong," *Bulletin Secretariatus pro Non-Christianis*, 1975 - X/2, n. 30, p. 296.
- 82 One of the topics of the Fifth Assembly of WCC: "Seeking Community: the Common Search of People of Various Faiths, Cultures and Ideologies." Also discussed at the First Asian Congress of Jesuit Ecumenists, Manila, June 18-25, 1975. See A. Roest Crollius' paper referred to above.
- 83 S.J. Samartha, "Reflections on a Multilateral Dialogue," *The Ecumenical Review*, 26 (1974), 642-43.
- 84 With regard to Marxism one may hesitate to deny to it all sense of transcendence. Thus, e.g., R.C. Zaehner, *Concordant Discord: the Interdependence of Faiths* (Oxford, 1970), particularly pp. 404ff. Cf. Roest Crollius, "Seeking Community," p. 59.
- 85 P. Nemeshegyi, S.J., "Second Bishops' Institute for Social Action (BISA II), Tokyo, Japan, April 7-19, 1975," *Info OHD*, 2 (Nov. 1, 1975), Part III, Theological Reflections, p. 19.
- 86 This could be considered a politicized version of the traditional controversy about contemplation and action. Cf. Pieris, *loc. cit.*, p. 172.

87 A.G. de Péligny mentions this last point as belonging "aux principales acquisitions positives, en matière d'œcuménisme," "La portée œcuménique du Décret sur l'Activité Missionnaire de l'Eglise," *Rythmes du Monde*, 41 (1967), 96. Msgr. Nkuo, bishop of Sangmélima, Cameroun, asserts that to the Church ecumenism is as necessary as evangelization: "...il (i.e., le travail œcuménique) appartient, dans le monde entier, à la moelle même de l'activité missionnaire." Cf. L. Vischer, "Avant la 4e Session du second Concile du Vatican," *Rapport de la division des études 'Foi et Constitution' au Conseil Œcuménique des Eglises*, (Juillet 1965), p. 92. Cf., *ibid.*, Msgr. J. van Cauwelaert, bishop of Inongo, Zaire, stating on behalf of 72 Fathers at the Council that missionary activity necessarily implies the collaboration of all who have been baptized, to whatever community they belong, so that they all by a common effort can give testimony to the Gospel. Cf. the Decree on Ecumenism, 12: Cooperation among all Christians "should be ever increasingly developed, particularly in regions where a social and technical evolution is taking place Christians should also work together in the use of every possible means to relieve the afflictions of our times, such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, lack of housing, and the unequal distribution of wealth."

88 The intimate relationship between ecumenism, evangelization and the credibility of our witness to Christ is stressed, for example, by L. Newbigin, asserting that a driving force for our efforts towards unity in Christ ought to be our missionary responsibility, i.e., the conviction that the disharmony, the mutual dissensions of the Churches, inevitably destroy all credibility of Christian witness to the reconciliation of the world, in H.W. Gensichen, "From Minneapolis 1957 to Jakarta 1975. Variations on an Ecumenical Theme," *The Ecumenical Review*, 26 (1974), 479.

89 L. Vischer, *loc. cit.*, p.90, note 2, raises the question to what extent the separated Churches can give one testimony of faith and cooperate with each other. Should unity be established prior to the possibility of cooperating in the missionary field, or rather are the Churches from now on, before dissensions can be overcome, called upon to give common testimony as best they can? The answer to these questions will be decisive indeed for the reality and the extent of collaboration, since only when the Churches join their efforts to proclaim Christ's name can one speak truly about ecumenical collaboration.

90 I.e., through collaboration in the tasks of development, promotion of justice, fostering of human rights, and the like. For Asians the openness and sharing at the level of persons and in concrete situations of prayer, reflection and joint work must precede and accompany all other efforts.

91 From this encounter should emerge the development of a "new Asian spirituality" (much closer in many ways to the religious traditions and practices of Asian religions), and also a "new Asian theology." Our centers of spirituality and of theology in Asia must really dedicate themselves to these purposes.

92 Jean Delumeau, "Les Réformes, la protestante et la catholique, ont imposé aux masses la religion de l'élite," (extracts of an address given at College de France on February 13, 1975), *Informations Catholiques Internationales*, no. 479 (1975), 21ff.

93 For a critical analysis, see A. Pieris S.J., "The Church, the Kingdom and the Other Religions," and address (1968), *Dialogue*, no. 22 (1970), 2ff.

94 Pieris, "Contemporary Ecumenism and Asia's Search for Christ," *loc. cit.*, pp. 156-160.

95 Cf. the Decree on the Eastern Churches, art. 5 (and the parallel passages in the Decree on Ecumenism): The Council "solemnly declares that the Churches of the East,

as much as those of the West. fully enjoy the *right*, and are in duty bound, to rule themselves." Adrian Hastings, *Church and Ministry*, (Kampala, 1973), in his chapter "The Meaning of the Local Church," holds this to be the most revolutionary statement of Vatican II, and that this is the only instance when the word "solemnly" has been used in any of its documents.

96 See chapter I, no. 7, and chapter III, no. 22.

97 Pieris, "Contemporary Ecumenism and Asia's Search for Christ," pp. 160-63.

98 FABC, "Final Statement and Recommendations," No. 1; also: "*Towards a Dialogue of Life*," p. 298.

99 FABC, "Statement," sub V: In dialogue with the people, especially the poor. Cf. *Evangelization in East Asia Today*, General Conclusions of the Regional Assembly of FABC, Fujen University, August 26-31, 1973, pp. 2f: "Evangelization in East Asia must reassert, in deeds more than in words, our full commitment to establish a better world through integral human development and the needed reform of structural abuses." Only by intensifying her action in the fields of justice and charity will the Church find credibility and relevance for the vast majority of Asians.

100 Some of the characteristic features determining the ecumenical work in Asia are: a) the complex nature of the Asian reality; b) the strong sense of belonging to a community and sharing in a common human experience; c) the importance of the dialogue at the grass-roots level; d) the importance given to spiritual experience, and to prayer, poverty and "homeless existence," as ways leading to it; e) the necessity of close collaboration within the local Church; f) the need of integrating the service to faith with the promotion of justice according to the 32nd General Congregation. Cf. "Final Statement and Recommendations," II, Recommendations, no. 1, p. 301.

101 *Ibid.*, "Statement," I, no. 3, p. 299.

102 *Ibid.*, "Statement," I, no. 6, pp. 300ff.

103 *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 12.

104 Our mission to evangelize — according to the Conference of the Catholic Bishops of India, Ernakulam — "takes place through all the channels of human society. Men work in many ways towards progress, liberation and unification of our world. We recognize such works (for example, education, social, medical and all works for a just society) as Evangelization when they are expressive of and transparent to the action of God who is bringing about the new creation and when they manifest God's demand for that radical renewal of heart which results in a change of human society and a transformation of the human conscience," "Communication to the Synod of Bishops in Rome," Calcutta, January 14, 1974, in *Prospective*, under "Church and Ministries: Evangelization," EVA, 201/74, sub II.

105 S.J. Samartha, "Reflections on a Multilateral Dialogue," *The Ecumenical Review*, 26 (1974), 646. Some other positive points made in the "Memorandum": "The participants "acknowledged real common links, based on a sense of the universal interdependence and responsibility of each and every person with and for all other persons." They recognized that each "belongs simultaneously to different communities — religious, national and cultural — as well as to communities of concern cutting across these lines." Cf. *Directorium ad ea quae a Concilio Vaticano Secundo de re oecumenica promulgata sunt exsequenda* (Vatican, 1971), Pars I, I A, no. 6 E, p.7: "*promovere commune testimonium fidei christianae necnon mutuam operam, veluti in educatione, ratione morali, re sociali, cultu humano, doctrinis et artibus, ad normam n.12 decreti De Oecumenismo.*" Cf. also, *Ad Gentes*, 15.

106 "The Conference of Bangkok, 'Salvation Today,' Report by B. Meeking, *L'Osservatore Romano*, February 15, 1973, *SPCU Information Service*, no.21 (1973/III), 6. Section II of the Bangkok Conference, asked to examine the saving activity of God in relation to the struggles taking place all over the world for social justice, identifies in its global notion of salvation four special dimensions: a) the struggle for economic welfare against the exploitation of man by man; b) the struggle for human dignity against political oppression; c) the struggle for solidarity against the alienation separating people from each other; d) the struggle for hope against despair in personal life, in *International Review of Mission*, 62 (1973); *Prospective*, EVA, 215/74. Cf. H.W. Gensichen: "The essential fact was (in Minneapolis 1957) and is (for Jakarta 1975) that there is an objective connection between profession of faith in Jesus Christ as liberator and liberation from enslaving dependence of any kind, and an ecumenical assembly is even less able to escape this fact today than it was twenty years ago," *The Ecumenical Review*, 26 (1974), 476.

107 *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 1 and 5.

108 "A Survey by the Roman Catholic - World Council of Churches Joint Working Group," *One in Christ*, 11 (1975), 39-40.

109 "The Conference of Bangkok, 'Salvation Today,' Report by B. Meeking, *SPCU Information Service*. no.21 (1973/III), 6.

110 We may mention also, for example, that since 1900 the International Congress for the History of Religions has been held periodically. At its 7th meeting in Amsterdam the International Association for the History of Religions was founded. The 9th Congress took place in Tokyo in 1958. Philosophical principles, important for the understanding of world religions, were discussed in the East-West Philosophers Conferences at Hawaii University, 1939, 1949, 1959, 1964. World Conferences of Religion for Peace were held in Washington 1966, New Delhi 1968, Kyoto 1970; Interfaith dialogues at Madras, 1966-1970; etc.

111 S.J. Samartha, ed., *Dialogue Between Men of Living Faiths*, (Geneva, WCC, 1971).

112 S.J. Samartha, J.B. Taylor, eds., *Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, (Geneva, WCC, 1973).

113 S.J. Samartha, "Reflections on a Multilateral Dialogue. An interpretation of a meeting held at Colombo, Sri Lanka, 17-26 April 1974," *The Ecumenical Review*, 26 (1974), 637-38.

114 Thus we notice that, speaking of individual Churches, the New Testament refers primarily to the gathering of Christians in a certain place. "The stress on local unity," L. Vischer remarks, "also has theological significance. The Church is always a concrete fellowship. It exists wherever the Gospel is proclaimed, and men have felt themselves called, wherever they celebrate the eucharist, and are sanctified as a fellowship and as individuals. It always exists in particular places," in "The Church - One People in Many Places," *What Unity Implies*, R. Groscurth, ed., (Geneva, WCC, 1969), 68. Cf. G.F. Moede, "Church Union as a Model of Christian Unity," *The Ecumenical Review*, 26 (1974), 259.

115 LG. 23: The particular Church is "fashioned after the model of the universal Church. In and from such individual Churches there comes into being the one and only Catholic Church."

116 J. Ratzinger, quoted in "Survey," *loc.cit.*, p.47. Also J. Ratzinger, "Ecumenism at the Local Level," *SPCU Information Service*, no.20. (1973/II), 4.

117 Cf. "Survey," *loc.cit.*, pp. 48f. See also "Common Witness and Proselytism," a paper by the Joint Working Group of the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church, *SPCU Information Service*, no.14 (1971/II) and *One in Christ*, 8 (1972), 82-92.

118 Cf. E. Lange, *Die ökumenische Utopie: oder Was bewegt die ökumenische Bewegung* (Stuttgart/Berlin, 1972), 15.

119 Or in the terms of the New Delhi Statement of 1961: "breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer." Cf. *New Delhi Report* (London, 1962), Chapter II, no.8.

120 Considered to be basic realities are faith, worship, sacraments, congregational fellowship and mission.

121 Cf. Moede, *loc.cit.*, pp.250f.

122 Or, according to the New Delhi Statement, "having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all." Already at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 one of the themes was that the world mission of the Church could not be accomplished by a divided Church. Cf. Moede, *loc.cit.*, p.251, also quoting the *Limuru Report*: "Unity and mission are indeed very closely linked, but it should not be overlooked that the achievement of union is in itself a witness to Christ," Notes from the Limuru Discussion," *Mid-Stream*, Conference on Church Union Negotiations IX (April 1970), 23.

123 The Report of Section III added that – among others – this salvation affects situations of injustice to the extent that local Christians are prepared to try to change them. Cf. "Churches Renewed in Mission," Report of Section III of the Bangkok Conference, December 1972, *International Review of Mission*, 62 (1973), 216-23. Also: *Prospective*, EVA, 216/74.

124 *The South India Churchman*, August 1973, p.2, in H.W. Gensichen, *op. cit.*, p.470.

125 "Summary of Response by the Participants" (of the First Asian Congress of Jesuit Ecumenists, Manila, June 18-23, 1975), *Towards a 'Dialogue of Life'*, p.309, sub E 4.

126 At the Bossey and Limuru consultations, for example, the needs for education, information-sharing and personal encounter at all levels were continually stressed. Cf. Moede, *loc.cit.*, p.260.

127 In commemoration of the founding of the Church of South India L. Newbigin wrote: "The most obvious advantage of unity has been its ability to tackle new issues quickly and with concentration The new problems and opportunities could never have been tackled by a lot of competing denominations," "25 Years with the Church of South India," *The Christian Advocate*, XVI (1972) 14.

128 Moede, *loc.cit.*, pp.251f.

129 "*Directorium ad ea quae a Concilio Vaticano Secundo de re oecumenica promulgata sunt exsequenda*," *Secretariatus ad Christianorum Unitatem fovendam* (Vatican, 1971), *Pars I, Prooemium*, art.2, p.6.

130 "Survey," pp.39f.

131 "Survey," pp.36f.

132 *Ibid.*, p.44.

133 "Opening Address" at the Plenary Session, November 6-14, 1973, by His Eminence Cardinal Willebrands, *SPCU Information Service*, no.23 (1974/I), 3.

- 134 "Editorial: What Unity Requires," *The Ecumenical Review*, 26 (1974), 164.
- 135 *Formula Instituti Iulii III*, no.1.
- 136 Decree of the 32nd General Congregation on *Our Mission Today*, no.13: "The mission we are called to share is the mission of the Church herself ..."
- 137 What the decree on *Union of Minds and Hearts and the Spiritual Life*, no.18, says, applies also to our Society as a whole: "Since our communities are communities for mission, they should not be self-enclosed," although of course it particularly speaks about the inter-relationships of our communities.
- 138 See *Union of Minds and Hearts*, 33, on our thinking with the Church: "Our being united among ourselves depends, in the last analysis, on our being united in both mind and heart to the Church that Christ founded".
- 139 "The Jesuits," Year Book of the Society of Jesus, 1975-1976, p.32.
- 140 *Our Mission Today*, 81.

FABC PAPERS is a project of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), designed to bring the thinking of Asian experts to a wider audience and to develop critical analysis of the problems facing the Church in Asia from people on the scene. The opinions expressed are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent the official policies of the FABC or its member Episcopal Conferences. Manuscripts are always welcome and may be sent to: FABC, G.P.O. Box 2984, Hong Kong.

FABC Papers:

- No. 1. A Christian Alternative, by Alopen, 1976
2. Harmonious Approach of Christianity to Other Faiths, by Pedro S. de Achutegui, 1977
3. Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church, 1977
4. Pastoral Action in Tertiary Education, by the Secretariat of the Association of Catholic Universities of the Philippines, 1977
5. The Proclamation of the Christian Message in a Buddhist Environment, by Marcello Zago, 1977
6. The Bishops' Institutes for Social Action, by Bishop Julio X. Labayen, et al., 1978
7. The Encounter of the Gospel with Culture, by Parmananda R. Divarkar, et al., 1978
8. The Service of Faith in East Asia, by Robert Hardawiryana, 1978
9. In the Philippines Today: Christian Faith, Ideologies...Marxism, by Francisco Claver, et al., 1978
10. The Christian Contribution to the Life of Prayer in the Church of Asia, by Ichiro Okumura, 1978
11. Prayer in Asian Traditions, by Ignatius Hirudayam, 1978
12. Second Plenary Assembly: Workshop Discussion Guides
 - a. Evangelization, Prayer, and Human Development
 - b. Christian Prayer and Interreligious Dialogue: Enrichment of Christian Prayer
 - c. Education for Prayer in the Catholic Schools of Asia
 - d. Seminaries and Religious Houses as Centers of Formation for Prayer in the Asian Context
 - e. Prayer as Witness in the Everyday Life of the Church of Asia
 - f. Prayer, Community Worship, and Inculturation
13. Prayer—the Life of the Church of Asia. The Final Statement and Recommendations of the Second Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, 1978
14. The Growing Church: Amid Various Religious and Cultural Traditions and Contemporary Ideologies, by Robert Hardawiryana, 1979