

**THE VOCATION AND MISSION OF THE LAITY
IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD OF ASIA**

The Fourth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of
Asian Bishops' Conferences, Tokyo, Japan, September 16-25, 1986

- I. Letter of Pope John Paul II to the Delegates
- II. Homily by Archbishop Peter S. Shirayanagi, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan
- III. The Opening of the Plenary Assembly by Bishop Antony Selvanayagam, Convenor of the Standing Committee
- IV. Words of Greeting from the Holy See by Archbishop José T. Sanchez, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples
- V. Inaugural Address by Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity
- VI. Statement of the Plenary Assembly
- VII. The Reports of the Workshops
- VIII. Growing in Collegiality: Sharing in Prayer, Concern and Mutual Support
- IX. List of Participants

I. LETTER TO THE DELEGATES
by Pope John Paul II

With great pleasure I send warm greetings to you, delegates of the bishops' conferences of Asia, gathered in plenary assembly in Tokyo. In you I greet all the bishops and the priests, Religious and faithful of the Church of God in Asia — the whole pilgrim People of God which in every part of this vast continent acknowledges the Father in truth and serves him in holiness.

This Paper presents the official Statement and Recommendations of the Fourth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), held at the Catholic Major Seminary, Tokyo, Japan, September 16-25, 1986. The theme of the Plenary Assembly was: "The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World of Asia."

In the first place I give thanks to our heavenly Father, whose mercy is from generation to generation (cf. Lk 1,50), for everything that has been accomplished by the FABC since its founding: from the time that the bishops, gathered in Manila for the visit of my predecessor Paul VI, felt the need to give form to the ties that unite them in the service of God's People in Asia, through the various stages of the realization of that fruitful inspiration, the approval of the Statutes and the various meetings held, right up to this Fourth Plenary Assembly which you are now celebrating.

The diversity of races and cultures which marks the heterogeneous reality of the peoples of Asia, amounting to over half of the human family, is the "good soil" in which the seed of the Good News has been sown (cf. Mt 13,24). In every part of this "field" there are men and women who live in the faith and hope of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The purpose and justification of the FABC are the better and more effective pastoral care of these followers of Christ, until "all attain to the unity of the faith ... to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4,13). It is this criterion of pastoral service which guides and animates your assembly.

The theme of your meeting, "The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World of Asia," is certainly most relevant and opportune in view of next year's Synod, which will bring together in Rome the delegates of the bishops' conferences of the world in order to study the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and in the world, some twenty years after the Second Vatican Council. It is in regard to the participation of lay men and women in the life of the Church that I write to you, offering these reflections as an expression of collegial responsibility "for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph 4,12).

The Second Vatican Council gave careful consideration to the role of the laity in the Church and in the world: "Pastors in fact know that they themselves were not meant by Christ to shoulder alone the entire saving mission of the Church towards the world" (*Lumen Gentium*, 30). Above all, the Council stressed that the vocation of the laity is linked to their baptism and confirmation. Through this sacramental configuration to Christ they have their own share in his redemptive work.

The exact nature and the ecclesial task of the laity, which the Council reconfirmed, has been the object of much discussion in the years since the Council. What relation exists between the laity's engagement in the temporal order, in the building of the earthly city, and their Christian vocation which "by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate"

(*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 2), that is, their sharing in the Church's essential mission of evangelization and salvation?

On this point it will be helpful to recall some statements of the recent Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation: "The Church desires the good of man in all his dimensions, first of all as a member of the city of God, and then as a member of the earthly city. Therefore, when the Church speaks about the promotion of justice in human societies, or when she urges the faithful laity to work in this sphere according to their own vocation, she is not going beyond her mission. She is however concerned that this mission should not be absorbed by preoccupations concerning the temporal order or reduced to such preoccupations" (Instruction, 63, 64).

It is altogether appropriate that, twenty years after the Council, the Church should examine how her teachings are being received and implemented. It is good that such an analysis be made also by the Church in Asia.

It may be that here too it is sometimes possible to perceive a certain passivity on the part of the laity, and a difficulty on the part of some of the clergy in sharing responsibility with the laity. The responsibility in question refers not only to the division of tasks within the Church, or to the urgent and necessary role of the laity in promoting human development and justice, but embraces also the proclamation of the Gospel message to those who have not yet heard it.

Regarding this latter point I feel the need to share my concern with you, challenged as we are by the Council's teaching on the missionary nature of the Church (cf. *Ad Gentes*, 2). And while the Church fully respects other religious traditions and engages in dutiful dialogue with each one of them, the command of Christ obliges us still: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28,19). In this sense it must also be stated that the time of the missions has not passed.

Again it is the Council which reminds us of the role of the laity in the missionary task: "the Gospel cannot deeply imbue the spirit, life and work of any people without the active presence of laypersons" (*Ad Gentes*, 21). Hence the following exhortation of the Council Fathers: "Since the whole Church is missionary, and the work of evangelization is a basic duty of the People of God, this sacred Synod summons all to a deep interior renewal. Thus, from a vivid awareness of their own responsibility for spreading the Gospel, they (the whole People of God) will do their share in missionary work among the nations" (*Ad Gentes*, 35).

This awareness and duty on the part of all the Church's members is everywhere urgent, especially in Asia, where uncountable multitudes still have little contact with the Gospel of Christ, and at a time when missionary vocations from traditionally Christian countries have diminished.

The missionary vitality of the Church in the various regions is closely connected with the internal life of the local Churches. The difficult situation in which the Church is sometimes obliged to live, and the fact that in Asia the Christian communities constitute small minorities, have at times led these communities to appear self-absorbed and turned in on themselves. Yet the Church cannot be content with putting her own house in order, creating a safe haven in which to live and grow spiritually. The pilgrim People of God is a missionary people, and it is precisely this missionary role of the Church in Asia which calls for the active and joyful collaboration of the laity, working side by side with the priests and Religious. The example of Korea, where the faith was introduced and spread by laypersons, is symbolic and stimulating.

It is encouraging that in these first twenty years after the Council much has already been achieved in Asia in giving the laity their proper share in the Church's mission. On the local level, together with already proven forms of participation such as catechesis, Catholic education and membership in the various movements of apostolate, the structures advocated by the Council have begun to function, particularly parochial and pastoral councils which engage the laity more responsibly in the life of the local community. On the national level, almost everywhere we find a bishops' commission for the laity with the express purpose of increasingly involving lay men and women in pastoral planning and activities.

Moreover, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences has done much praiseworthy work in this area, especially through its Commission for the Laity. The "Asian Colloquium on Ministries for the Church in Asia" held in Hong Kong in 1977, the meeting in Hong Kong in 1982 organized by the Pontifical Council for the Laity in collaboration with the FABC, the various meetings which the FABC has organized and is organizing at regional level through the Bishops' Institute for Lay Apostolate, and, finally, this Fourth Plenary Assembly: all seek to set your local Churches on the path of a fuller response to the Council's call for the laity to assume everywhere the responsibilities stemming from their Christian vocation. May the Church in Asia continue in this resolve until the splendor of God which brightens the face of Jesus Christ shines upon all people through the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 4,6).

Dear brother bishops, just as the Apostles, after the Ascension, were

gathered in the upper room awaiting Pentecost, so you, delegates of the bishops' conferences of Asia, are gathered to reflect and to pray. May Mary, Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, obtain for you from the Lord the overflowing gift of his Spirit, who will bring about a new Pentecost for your Christian communities and for all the peoples of Asia. It is most important that Christ be able to speak to the men and women of Asia, especially the young, through the loving humility and steadfast authenticity of the Christian life of all his followers.

For my part I wish to assure you that I am close to you in prayer and affection, and to each one of our brothers in the episcopate, especially those who for reasons known to you cannot be represented in your assembly. I feel close to your priests, to the men and women Religious, and to all the faithful of God's holy Church which is in Asia.

To each one, as a pledge of ever closer communion in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I gladly impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 26 July 1986.

Joannes Paulus PP. II

II. HOMILY DELIVERED AT ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL

by Archbishop Peter S. Shirayanagi

Fellow members of the Church of Asia, my dear sisters and brothers in Christ, it is indeed wonderful for us to be here, gathered together in the name of Christ. We represent a rich variety of peoples and cultures, and rejoice in our diversity, while we celebrate our deep unity as members of the Asian Church.

Unfortunately, our joy is tempered with a feeling of sadness that, because of political, ideological or financial reasons, a number of delegates could not be with us.

Listening to God's message in our Scripture readings, I felt greatly encouraged to speak of unity and solidarity. However, God's word, and the significant absence of some of our members, forbid us to be content with a mere superficial solidarity. Rather do we pray that conditions will soon change, and allow us to come together as fully representative of all members of the Church of Asia.

The changes we desire are to take place primarily in the hearts of

people — including changes in the hearts of each of us. We have just heard Christ's prayer for such change.

"I pray that all may be one as you, Father, are in me, and I in you; I pray that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me."

Christ's prayer will undoubtedly be answered — this is also Christ's promise to us. It is a promise that we will indeed be one as the Father and Son are one. That in turn will make the world wonder, and open the way for all to believe in the truth.

Believing the truth involves recognizing, accepting and responding to God's limitless love for us and our call to intimacy in Christ.

Christ showed his unity with the Father by laying down his life and taking it up again, in obedience to the Father. Now when, in being faithful to Christ, the Church suffers, dies and rises to new life, she manifests her unity with Christ. So in every age the Church proclaims that she is the living body of Christ whenever her members confront evil and division, and lay down their lives in martyrdom.

As we were reminded in our first reading today, in the past a barrier divided Gentiles from Jews in the Temple of Jerusalem. And in reality, before Christ came, the Law itself stood like a wall of hostility dividing people into two groups.

But now, through the saving death and resurrection of Christ this wall of enmity has been broken down. Now all people have equal access to the Father in the one Spirit. We are all of us full members of God's new people — all one family. We are "fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God."

Because of this, we speak truthfully of unity and solidarity in our Asian Church. This is a solidarity deeply desired and eagerly sought for — a unity in the diversity of peoples and cultures. This is a solidarity we pray for earnestly to our common Father — realizing that by praying for it, we are committing ourselves to working with God in achieving a communion so profound, that it will be clearly recognized as the wonderful work of God.

This calls for change in the hearts of each of us: for courage and commitment, for strong faith, bright hope and true love.

In such a spirit, I now call on God's help, and the witness of all of you here present, as I make a solemn act and profession on behalf of the Church (and people) of Japan.

On the occasion of this Fourth Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, we Catholic bishops of Japan, as Japanese, and as members of the Catholic Church in Japan, sincerely ask forgiveness from God and from our brothers and sisters of Asia and the Pacific Region for the tragedy brought by the Japanese during the Second World War.

As parties involved in the war, we share in the responsibility for the more than 20 million victims in Asia and the Pacific.

Furthermore, we deeply regret having damaged the lives and cultures of the people of these regions. The trauma of this is still not healed.

During this Eucharistic celebration, we wholeheartedly pray for true peace for the victims of the war, as we express our determination to keep Japan from committing the same crime again.

As the Church of Japan, we hereby renew our commitment to work towards the realization of human liberation and genuine peace in Asia and the Pacific.

Heavenly Father, you are the source of peace. Bless abundantly our Asia with its many difficult problems. Look with favor on our brothers and sisters here assembled, and send your Spirit to us, the bishops, priests, Religious and laity of Japan, to make us your instruments, so that the people in Asia can live truly human lives in peace.

We ask this through Christ, your Son and our Lord. Amen.

III. THE OPENING OF THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY by Bishop Antony Selvanayagam

It gives me great joy and pleasure, as convener of the FABC, to welcome you all to participate in the Fourth Plenary Assembly of the FABC. Although this is the assembly of the Asian bishops, the presence of the various representatives of the Holy See and bishops' conferences from outside of Asia, and of the special participants, especially the laity, gives the character of universality to this assembly. My sincere thanks and appreciation to the Episcopal Conference of Japan and the committees for all their arrangements to make this plenary assembly possible. Last

but not least, my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Preparatory Committee of the Fourth Plenary Assembly.

Plenary assemblies are opportunities for us to come together, reflect together and go forward together as a Church in Asia. The various themes of plenary assemblies of the FABC since its inception in 1972 indicate the growing awareness by the Church in Asia of the mission entrusted to her. Realizing how urgent is the task of bringing the Good News of the Lord to every corner of Asia, the Asian Church began the First Plenary Assembly in 1974 with the theme "Evangelization." The theme "Prayer" at the Second Plenary Assembly in 1978 is indicative of the fact that the mission of evangelization is a task that can only be realized in total submission and dependence on God alone, as exemplified in the evangelizing mission of Christ himself: "... not my will, but yours be done." The theme "The Church — a Community of Faith in Asia" at the Third Plenary Assembly in 1982 indicates that the Asian Church is becoming sensitive to the biblical Christian demand that the Church must appear and function as a community in total submission to the Lord, to be a credible sign, sacrament and instrument of the Good News of salvation. We have gone on a pilgrimage of faith, in 1974 to Taipei, in 1978 to Calcutta, in 1982 to Bangkok.

Today, we are here in Tokyo at this Fourth Plenary Assembly with the theme "The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World of Asia." This is another step in that growing awareness by the Asian Church of the mission entrusted to her.

If the Church in Asia is entrusted with the mission of evangelizing Asia in total submission to God, in Christ, then, what is the role of the laity, the majority of the People of God, in this mission? Vatican Council II says that through baptism and confirmation the laity acquire the priestly, kingly and prophetic roles, and have a right and duty to share in the total mission of the Church. If so, what is their position in the Church? What is their role in the world?

The need to recognize the laity in the Church and prepare them for mission in the world was felt in Asia, and steps were taken to actualize it, when the Central Committee of the FABC in 1981 set up an ad hoc committee to prepare for this task. The proposals of this committee were approved at the 1982 Plenary Assembly. This committee, under the chairmanship of Archbishop Joseph Ti-Kang, assisted in the 1983 continental meeting sponsored in Hong Kong by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and had conducted Bishops' Institutes for the Lay Apostolate

in the three regions of Asia: in Taiwan in 1984, in Bangalore in May 1986, and in Singapore in June 1986.

From the report of BILA I, and from my personal experiences in participating in BILA II and III, and from my involvement in the apostolate of the laity in Peninsular Malaysia, I have been able to observe the emergence of the laity in the Church in Asia. This could be explained by the spreading spirit of the Vatican Council itself, through the various programs of renewal initiated, and especially through the interest in and the study of the Bible. The hierarchy and the clergy have responded to this in many ways:

- Some have provided various training programs to enable the laity to assume roles of leadership and responsibility, and participation in the decision-making processes. Structures of collaboration too have been initiated.
- Others have found an easy way out by saying that “we will look after the affairs of the Church, you can look after the affairs of the world.”
- Yet some others have made “mini-clerics” out of the laity by putting them in the sanctuaries, and have consoled themselves that they have given a rightful place to the laity.

On the other hand, the long-established clericalism in the Church has stifled the laity to such an extent that some laity just refuse to take their rightful place in Church and society.

Some have become very active in the world without having anything to do with the Church as such.

If this is the general situation of the laity in the Church and society in Asia, what are the situations in Asia that challenge the laity today? They are a minority in the midst of teeming millions. They face extreme poverty, militarization, exploitation, bribery, corruption, injustice, threat to freedom of religion, economic domination by a few, both local and foreign, etc.

The consolation they have is that they are meeting peoples who are rich in culture, religiosity, and open to truth and goodness.

It is in this context that we are called to respond to the burning question: “What is the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and in the world of Asia?”

If the laity and the bishops are here today in this meeting to respond to this question together, it is because the bishops want to hear from the laity themselves, so that they can fulfill their role of service to the People of God, especially to the laity.

So, in these days let us all, especially the laity, without fear or favor, share in the workshops the thoughts and insights which are the fruits of our personal faith experiences. Our sharing will be an enriching experience for the whole Asian Church, and our contribution to the Universal Church, which will hold its Synod next year on the theme: "The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World, 20 Years after the Vatican Council."

Trusting in God's presence in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, I, as convenor of the FABC, declare open this historic Fourth Plenary Assembly of the FABC.

May Mary, our Mother and Mother of the Church, be our intercessor during this Plenary Assembly.

IV. WORDS OF GREETING

by Archbishop José T. Sanchez

As one who has seen the birth of the FABC as a result of the first Asian Bishops' Meeting in Manila in 1970, on the occasion of the visit of Pope Paul VI; as one who has attended its general assemblies except one; and as one who has collaborated in its work as member of the Standing Committee and of the newest office, namely, the Committee for the Laity, until my assignment in Rome at the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, it is a rare privilege for me now to present to you my former regional collaborators the prayerful wishes and sentiments of solidarity of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, popularly known as Propaganda Fide.

Taking note on the one hand of the fact that Asia is the home of half of the population of the world today, and on the other, that those who know Christ the Lord and keep full communion with the Church founded by Christ to evangelize the whole world constitute less than 2.5% of its population, one easily understands the profound interest that Propaganda Fide has in the activities and programs of action of the FABC in general, and of the episcopal conferences and ecclesial jurisdictions of the region in particular.

As the only "competent congregation for all mission and missionary

activity, namely, that of directing and coordinating missionary work and cooperation throughout the world" (AG,29), Propaganda Fide understandably views the theme of this assembly, "the Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World of Asia," primarily in its relation to evangelization. The command of the Lord to the Church through the apostles to go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to all men everywhere, and to make disciples of all nations, applies with greater urgency to the Church in Asia to evangelize 97.5% of its own people. With the exception of the Philippines, the boundaries of the established Christian communities and the communities that have not heard of or accepted Christ as the Savior of all men coincide. Asian missionaries do not have to go to foreign lands to be missionaries. Indeed, the Lord's well-known statement that the harvest indeed is great but the laborers are few can find no better place where it fully applies than in Asia.

While it is true that the Vatican II documents consider the temporal order in all its aspects as the peculiar area of the lay apostolate, by penetrating the whole temporal order with the spirit of the Gospel, so that a Christian culture may influence the thoughts, aspirations and actions of men, nevertheless the same documents point likewise to certain activities directly connected with the proclamation of the Gospel and the teaching of the Christian Truth as proper to the lay people. Except for giving the homily proper, the teaching ministry of the Church is open also to the laity. They can be educators, catechists, formators of different services, lecturers, evangelizers through the social communications' media, and authors of religious treatises. The creativity which characterizes the activity of men and women in other spheres of knowledge and technology should apply with no less intensity to lay people in their apostolic work, especially those with gifts and charisms in teaching and communication.

In this connection, the opportunities available in the great diversity of cultures, the resources available and government legislation regarding schools and communications facilities may not allow regional patterns of missionary and pastoral action. Each episcopal conference, and sometimes each ecclesial jurisdiction, will be challenged to draw up its own program for the lay participation in direct evangelization according to the opportunities in every place. But the general principle stands that the laity should be given all the encouragement to involve itself in direct evangelization. The presence, for example, of 58,662 catechists in Asia, according to 1985 statistics, gives an idea of the recognized importance of lay catechists in evangelization.

The cooperation of lay cooperators in all those missionary and pastoral activities that do not require the sacred power given in the

sacrament of Holy Orders will allow the priests more time for those activities reserved to them. We know that the cooperation between the clergy and the laity is something desired by God. This did not just happen by coincidence. God purposely willed that some should receive special power (spiritual) in his Church, and others would complement this spiritual power by their own role in this different sharing in the priesthood of Christ. The proper understanding of the respective roles of clergy and laity in the mission of the Church is the key to the correct understanding of the fruitful relationship between the hierarchy and the laity.

Lack of understanding of this key principle: that the clergy and the laity have respective roles, which should not be confused and should complement their participation in the mission of the Church, could lead to harmful rivalries and misunderstandings that render the missionary and pastoral activity less productive.

Undoubtedly, the specific role that the conciliar teaching has reserved for the laity is the Christianization of the temporal order. The laity who are found in all professions, in all kinds of work, in politics, economics, the communications area, in fine, in every human activity and in all states of life, namely, in the family, in the world of men and women, of the aged, the young and children, they are specifically called to bring the spirit and values of the Gospel to bear in all aspects of human activity. The laity's goal is to have a Christian culture where people will find it not only possible but truly human and fulfilling to live a Christian life. Experience has shown how difficult it is for Christians to remain Christians in the midst of a non-Christian environment, a non-Christian culture. Even when one lives in a Christian environment, one still finds difficulty to live the vocation to holiness which belongs to every Christian!

In this context, the charter for missionary activity, *Ad Gentes*, says: "The Church is not truly established and does not fully live, nor is a perfect sign of Christ, unless there is a genuine laity existing and working alongside the hierarchy. For the Gospel cannot become deeply rooted in the mentality, life and work of a people without the active presence of lay people. Therefore, from the foundation of a church very special care must be taken to form a mature Christian laity."

The younger Churches and missionaries can learn from the experience of the older Churches that have seen the loss of many of their Christian values, to the extent that we speak of dechristianized Christian communities, to have before them the uncompromising goal of all evangelization, namely, to make followers of Christ who are willing to take up their cross, deny themselves and follow him both in trials and in the ultimate glory. Any approach that dilutes this call to follow Christ

will make of the Christian a follower who may give up when subjected to hardships and trials. Those whom we evangelize must realize that when they are converted to Christ and become members of the Body of Christ, they are rejecting an old way of life and accepting a new way of life; that in accepting this new way of life, their chances to win depend on whether they will live with the new Spirit who vivifies and who was sent precisely to help those who accept this new way of life; that their perseverance can be assured if they are willing to use the means given to the Church for this purpose; and that they must remain members of the new People of God, the Church, and be willing to love and to serve Christ by being faithful to their baptismal commitment, and to love and serve the Lord by seeing him in their neighbors. A laity formed steadily in this realistic understanding of the Christian vocation to holiness is needed in the challenges of these years ending our second millenium. A laity and clergy living alongside each other in faith and trusting in the vivifying Spirit will surely share in the promised victory of Christ over the whole creation.

Propaganda Fide joins this Fourth Plenary Assembly of FABC in entrusting this assembly to the Holy Spirit and the loving intercession of our Blessed Mother.

V. INAUGURAL ADDRESS
by Cardinal Eduardo Pironio

My dear brothers in the episcopate,
My dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

I feel very honored to have been asked, in my capacity as President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, to give an address at this the Fourth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.

I readily accepted the invitation to be here because I am convinced of the great value of these federations or associations or councils or symposiums of bishops at a continental level that have emerged over the last three decades. I was myself, at the time that the FABC was being formed, Secretary General and then President of CELAM (the Episcopal Council of Latin America), and I see here today representatives of these bodies from the different continents, together with those of us who represent the Holy See. These federations or associations, while reflecting the enormous variety and legitimate pluriformity of the Church of God, also witness in a striking way to her unity and universality. They are instruments of communion at the service of the ecclesial community. Before leaving Rome I had the opportunity of informing the Holy Father of my participation, together with Archbishop Sanchez, in your

assembly and I can assure you that he follows this gathering with great hope and fervent prayers.

An Ecclesiology of Communion and Mission

In this brief talk, I will merely touch on a few major points, aware that they would need much fuller development.

The positioning of the Plenary Assembly at the half-way point between the Extraordinary Synod of autumn 1985, and the coming Synod of October 1987, is to my mind providential. While the next Synod turns its attention to the laity, who form the vast majority of the baptized, the "*Christifideles*," it will do this against the background of an ecclesiology of communion and mission that received new emphasis at the Extraordinary Synod. This background or framework is necessary, since the vocation and mission of the lay person can only be properly understood in the context of a full ecclesiology. The recent Synod presented us with an ecclesiology of communion and mission that is centered on Christ. It restated the major teachings of the Council in a context of ecclesial unity which it expressed as follows: "The Church in the Word of God celebrates the mysteries of Christ for the salvation of the world." It restored the four great Constitutions — *Lumen Gentium*, *Dei Verbum*, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Gaudium et Spes* — to their rightful place as the fundamental and irreplaceable pillars of the Council. Two of those documents, that on Divine Revelation and that on the Liturgy, must be given their full weight as we reflect on the vocation of the lay Christian. They have as their center the mystery of Christ, the Word in whom the Father's call is uttered to us, the Word made flesh, whose life-giving presence the Church celebrates in her sacramental mysteries.

Christ at the Center

The Synod's Final Report contains a very significant sentence in this regard: "The Church makes herself more credible if she speaks less of herself and ever more preaches Christ Crucified (cf. 1 Cor 2,2) and witnesses with her own life. In this way the Church is sacrament, that is, sign and instrument of communion with God and also of communion and reconciliation of men with one another. The message of this Church, as described in the Second Vatican Council, is Trinitarian and Christocentric" (FR II, A, 2).

Our considerations on the vocation of a lay person must always be in the context of a Christocentric ecclesiology. "The mystery is Christ among you," says St. Paul, "your hope of glory" (Col 1,27). This

Christocentric ecclesiology makes us think of the vocation and mission of the lay person fundamentally in terms of his or her relationship with Christ. By baptism we participate in the death and resurrection of Christ (cf. Rom 6,3-5), and it is the same Christ who has chosen us and sent us forth (cf. Jn 15,16).

Communion

This emphasis on Christ as the center was complemented by another emphasis at the Extraordinary Synod — an ecclesiology of communion, which the Synod recognizes as a central and fundamental idea of the Council documents. In my view the theology of communion dominated the Extraordinary Synod and it is significant that it should emerge with such force at this point in the postconciliar period. I am convinced that it offers rich possibilities for our considerations on the vocation and mission of the lay Christian. Let us look at it more closely.

The fundamental meaning of the complex word communion is communion with God, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the door and foundation of this communion in the Church, taking us into intimate union with Christ and, through Christ, with the Father, in the Holy Spirit. It also establishes links of union with all the baptized. Communion in the eucharistic Body of Christ takes this further. It signifies and produces, that is, builds up, the intimate communion of all the faithful in the Body of Christ which is the Church (cf. FR II, C, 1).

Equality of All the Baptized

It is in relation to this model of communion, together with the spirituality that flows from it, that we need to evaluate the activities and structures that call for and encourage the involvement of the laity in the life of the Church. Communion expresses the fundamental equality of all the baptized. "There is, therefore, one chosen People of God: 'one Lord, one faith, one one baptism' (Eph 4,5); there is a common dignity of members deriving from their rebirth in Christ, a common grace as children, a common vocation to perfection, one salvation, one hope and undivided charity. In Christ and in the Church there is then, no inequality arising from race or nationality, social condition or sex, for 'there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3,28; cf. Col 3,11)" (Constitution on the Church, art. 32). The deliberate decision of the Council fathers to place the chapter on the People of God before speaking of the hierarchical structure of the Church, of the laity and of the special vocations to religious

life, underlines their fundamental equality.

In the words of the Decree on the Lay Apostolate (art. 2): "In the Church there is diversity of ministry, but unity of mission."

Clergy and Laity Relationships

Allow me to dwell on this for a moment because it is of the highest importance. It concerns the relationship, the collaboration, between the laity and the ordained ministers.

The many meetings sponsored by our Council for the Laity in all the continents of the world over the last seven years have convinced us that there has been great progress towards what we might call "a sharing Church," namely, a Church where we share our prayers, our Christian faith and human experience, our gifts, our thoughts, our desires. There is greater awareness that there is truly one mission, with different ministries, apostolates and services, each with its own dignity, an awareness that all the baptized share responsibility for the task entrusted by Christ to his followers.

At the same time in these continental meetings, as in the *ad limina* visits of conferences of bishops, and in countless meetings with national councils and commissions of or for the laity, and in our daily contacts with the international Catholic lay organizations and movements, we have learned that in many places there is still a long way to go both on the part of ordained ministers in adopting a style of ministry which recognizes, enables the gifts and services of the laity, and on the part of the laity in responding fully to the challenges and responsibilities of their baptism.

In the meeting held in Auckland in February this year for the countries of the Oceania/Pacific area, as also a month later in Scotland for the English-speaking countries of Europe, the participants — the majority of whom were lay people — laid great emphasis on the need for joint programs of ongoing formation where clergy and laity could be involved together in the process of learning and reflection. By talking and praying and working together, each of the baptized gradually finds his or her place in the Christian community and, without losing sight in any way of the specific ministries conferred through the sacrament of ordination, a healthy relationship of collaboration and sharing between clergy and laity develops.

Structures of Collaboration and Participation

It is in this context that we can see the importance of parish pastoral

councils and diocesan pastoral councils. They offer structures that can be of great value for shared responsibility in the local Church. Experience shows, however, that it is essential that these bodies should not be merely administrative. When they are reduced to nothing more than material considerations, to pragmatic planning and organization, they dry up and a sense of frustration, and even disillusionment, arises. These councils must be pervaded by a spirit of prayer and of faith, they must keep the person of Jesus Christ at the center of all their activities, and they must ensure that a genuine spirit of evangelization is their moving force.

As I speak to you, I am conscious of the fact that the bishops of Asia have always insisted that evangelization is the first priority of the apostolate. Moreover, here in Japan where we have been made so welcome, the Japanese bishops initiated a program two years ago aiming at making every diocese and parish a community of evangelization. Next year there is due to be a national congress in Japan on promoting the spread of the Gospel. It is the prayer of all of us that the Japanese laity will respond generously and courageously to the call of their pastors in 1987, the year of the Synod on the laity.

Basic Christian Communities

Basic Christian communities also come to mind while speaking of participation and commitment. The phrase "basic Christian communities" contains a great variety, and one needs to be aware of the precise nature of what one is referring to in various countries or regions.

There have been aberrations here and there in the direction taken by some basic Christian communities, and care must be taken that they become neither so "spiritual" and disincarnated that they almost resemble sects, nor that they end up as merely instruments of political or ideological militancy. Nevertheless, after my own long experience in Latin America, and bearing in mind the overall judgment of bishops' conferences — the *ad limina* meetings with ten distinct groups of bishops from Brazil over the last eighteen months are particularly in my mind — I am convinced that often these communities are truly providential as a response to the needs of the Church in the world today. As far as time allows, the pastors must stay close to these communities, conscious of the riches of the Spirit that are often revealed in the poorest and simplest of them. I am aware of the importance played by these communities here in Asia — Malaysia and the Philippines springing to mind as examples.

As we reflect in these days in Tokyo and in the months prior to the 1987 Synod, we must ask ourselves what have been the difficulties and

also, especially, what has been positive, what can be built upon and developed as regards those structures at national, diocesan and parish level that seek to promote consultation, participation and collaboration. Further, we need to consider what realistic steps are still necessary to bring about a deeper partnership and collaboration between lay people, Religious and clergy.

Formation for Ministries, Services, Apostolates

In the years since the Council the ministries, services or apostolic work entrusted to lay men and women in the area of the liturgy and the sacraments, in catechesis, in social service and human development, in direct evangelization and in all sorts of apostolates, have grown enormously. In many areas the lack of priests means that lay people bear great responsibility for the local ecclesial community. Thorough and ongoing formation are a pastoral priority of the highest importance in this situation and surely must be a major concern at the coming Synod.

Many of you will recall the words addressed by Pope John Paul II to the meeting sponsored by our Council for the continent of Asia, which took place in December 1983 in Hong Kong. The Pope said: "It is necessary to make the adequate formation of the laity a pastoral priority in each of the local Churches ... My conviction was, and is still, that the spiritual, moral and theological formation of lay men and women is one of the most urgent priorities in the Church if we are fully to put the teaching of the Second Vatican Council into effect. This formation is not something once achieved and definitively completed. Formation is another word for growing and deepening in that discipleship of Christ which is a mark of every member of the Church and which will not be completed until and including the day of our death."

At this point, I would like to single out for praise the three Bishops' Institutes for the Lay Apostolate of FABC that have already taken place since the Hong Kong meeting. From each of these the process of formation in the different regions of Asia has received a powerful impetus. The style of these institutes is also something I appreciate. In the words of Archbishop Ti-Kang, chairman of the FABC Committee for the Laity and a member of our Council, the approach adopted in these institutes was "participation as a team with the bishop, the director of the lay apostolate and laity coming together as a group, enabling all to go through the process together, and to return to adapt to the home situation what was learned at the institute."

A similar approach has also been adopted at this plenary assembly

where bishops, priests, Religious and lay people are working and planning together. The experience of this assembly will in itself be highly formative for each of us, through the grace of the Holy Spirit who moves among us. I hope that this will also be the style in each local Church, adapting to the culture of each place but keeping at the forefront of attention this practical expression of the theology of communion.

Lay Associations and Movements

In our considerations we must not overlook or undervalue a phenomenon that has been, and continues to be, an important feature of the lay apostolate in the twentieth century. I refer to the emergence of an extraordinary variety of Catholic lay associations and movements. The great majority of them arise spontaneously in response to an apostolic need or from the desire to share with others a particular spirituality, a concrete way of living discipleship of Christ. They have borne much good fruit in the lives of individuals and communities and they continue to do so.

The new Code of Canon Law emphasizes the right of the faithful freely to form such associations, while calling on ecclesiastical authority to exercise discernment if they are to be recognized and encouraged as private or public associations within the Church.

We must seek to discern the action of the Holy Spirit in this areas. It can happen, especially in the early stages of these movements or associations, that there are aspects which appear to upset established patterns or attitudes. Without being naive or passive, we must also be humble and patient. With time it will gradually become evident whether a given association or movement can contribute to the good of the whole community or not. We must not be too quick in rejecting new initiatives, but encourage them with prudence.

As we seek to recognize and make room for the charisms and gifts that emerge within the life of the Church, we must never forget the need to he communion (unity and coordination) between the various movements and associations, as well as the harmony of these with the pastoral activities of the local Churches. We all need to acknowledge with joy the gifts received but place them immediately at the service of the community, without adopting an absolute stance towards our own options or lightly condemning those of others.

At this point my dear brothers in the episcopate and my dear

brothers and sisters in Christ, there are many other important topics on which I would have liked to share reflections with you. They include, for example, the apostolate with and for young people that the Holy Father continues to emphasize most strongly in the work of our Council. There are the important questions concerning lay women in the life of the Church, the vital and primary role of the family, the particular needs and problems of the world of work, the presence and witness of lay Christians in international life, in the mass media, and so on. Many of these themes will be taken up in the workshops during the coming days.

For the moment I want to stress a more general aspect of that theology and spirituality of communion to which I referred at the beginning. This communion is always communion in Christ, in him who was sent by the Father, and who in his turn entrusts to us the gift of the Holy Spirit so that we too are called and sent forth to bear witness and to give to others his saving word. In other words "the Church as communion is a sacrament for the salvation of the world" (FR II, D, 1), and we must ensure that in our reflections we always see the lay person in an ecclesiology of mission and of hope.

Lay Spirituality in the Midst of the World

I do not need to repeat to you the Council's emphasis on the challenge of the Christian presence in the world. To give one well-known quotation, article 31 of the Constitution on the Church: "Their secular character is proper and particular to the laity ... By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will."

Yes, we all know the quotation well, but the experience of the last twenty years shows clearly that there is a pressing need to develop further our understanding of the vocation and mission of the baptized in the midst of the world. Again and again, bishops in the course of their *ad limina* visits have pointed to the need to ensure that the formation and spirituality of the laity equip them to see how in the midst of the world — in the family, at work, at school, in the sphere of culture and sport, of recreation and the means of communication, of social and political institutions — they will enter into profound communication with God and proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom to their fellow men and women.

In the vast continent of Asia where, with the exception of the Philippines, Christians are a very small minority, there are particular difficulties in Christian witness in the world. The momentous questions

of inculturation, dialogue with major non-Christian religions, an evangelization that avoids the accusation of proselytism while remaining faithful in its witness to the uniqueness of Christ and his Gospel, are already receiving careful consideration in the local Churches of Asia.

At its General Meeting in Goa in April of this year the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India decided to call upon the laity to involve themselves actively in the field of politics and so play their part in influencing the destinies of peoples. This is the sort of action that our Council believes to be vital at the present time, even where the Church is very much a minority. Keen interest in and a positive approach to civic affairs, and the efforts of committed lay men and women to influence the legislative process, as well as ensuring that adequate social legislation is then enforced in practice, will, as the Indian bishops have indicated, be a public witness to the dynamism of Christian faith.

We also welcome the emphasis given last April by the First Regional Meeting for the Laity of East Asia to the fact that, "the core of lay spirituality is in the fulfilment of God's will in the very midst of secular existence," and to their statement that "it is only by being in the world and transforming it in the light of the Gospel that faith becomes truly alive."

Here in Asia you have daily experience of a reality I know well from my own continent of Latin America: the existence of vast areas of poverty side by side with the accumulation of enormous wealth. While many of your nations are among the economic leaders of the "newly industrialized countries" and will play a central role in world economic developments over the coming decades, there are also the phenomena of poverty and deprivation in so many regions of the continent.

The preferential love for the poor that has been repeatedly expressed by the leaders of the Church in Asia and the efforts to promote social justice and integral human development are areas that call for commitment from the Asian laity side by side with their pastors. The attempt to discover in the most recent of the FABC Bishops' Institutes for Social Action (BISA VII) "a liberative spirituality for social action among the poor and by the poor," a spirituality which "would change all social action into one of evangelization, pastoral renewal and a milieu of God-experience," touches for me an area requiring development at this time: the spirituality of the baptized in the midst of the challenges of the world.

It is a spirituality that encourages the lay person, and indeed all the baptized, to discover the new signs of the times in the world so as to

respond to them in a way consistent with the Gospel. This means that there is a need for an authentic contemplative spirit which will enable the lay person "to read" the new signs of the times in the right way. In this regard let us listen to what the 1985 Synod tells us: "We perceive that the signs of our time are in part different from those of the time of the Council, with greater problems and anguish. Today, in fact, everywhere in the world we witness an increase in hunger, oppression, injustice and war, sufferings, terrorism and other forms of violence of every sort. This requires a new and more profound theological reflection in order to interpret these signs in the light of the Gospel" (FR II, D, 1).

The Paschal Mystery

This spirituality of the baptized in the midst of the world must always maintain as its reference point, if it is to be a genuinely Christian spirituality, the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Nothing, absolutely nothing, can replace this or be presented as a criterion of equal value of the Christian reading of history and of our own times. The world must be seen in a perspective of redemption: of the salvation already realized by Jesus Christ on the cross (we have been reconciled with the Father by the cross), but not yet completed until Jesus returns to hand over the Kingdom to the Father; and so long as sin, suffering and death continue to exist in the world. They were fundamentally vanquished by Jesus in his Paschal Mystery, but we must still complete in our flesh what is lacking in the passion of Christ; we must continue to celebrate — in the Eucharist and in our life — the death and resurrection of Jesus, and so announce his coming. This is the only way of understanding in depth the relationship between the Church and the world (within which the vocation and mission of the laity are realized in a specific way) without separating the two, yet at the same time without confusing them. Only in this way can a manichaeian and pessimistic view, as well as a too facilely optimistic view, of the world be avoided.

The Extraordinary Synod, reflecting on the Church twenty years after the Council, said: "It seems to us that in the present-day difficulties, God wishes to teach us more deeply the value, the importance and the centrality of the cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the relationship between human history and salvation is to be explained in the light of the paschal mystery" (FR II, D, 2).

The Paschal Mystery is always at the center. It was the Church's point of departure into the stream of history; it is present at the heart of the Church's everyday life; it is the destiny towards which the Church moves in hope. I remember years ago being struck by a phrase in the First

Instruction implementing the Council's Constitution on the Liturgy. It said that the purpose of all the Church's pastoral activity centering on the liturgy was that the Paschal Mystery be expressed in the lives of the faithful. It is here that the vocation and mission of the laity, of the baptized, in the Church and in the world, are fundamentally one and the same. To be immersed in that communion which is the Church is also to be part of, to be committed to, her presence and witness in the world in which she lives.

I am sure that all of us hope and pray that the International Eucharistic Congress due to be held in Seoul, South Korea, in 1989 will bring the Christians of Asia, and indeed beyond the boundaries of Asia, to a deeper contemplation of this Paschal Mystery, of that theology of the cross which is the theology of ultimate hope.

In our thoughts on the vocation and mission of the lay Christian let us end by contemplating Mary, the poor, the believing, the faithful disciple of the Lord. Mary is the model of all Christian life, of the Christocentric Church, of the Church of communion in the Spirit, of the Church of evangelization and hope in the midst of the world.

Let us commend this Fourth Plenary Assembly of FABC and all the members of the Church in Asia, those free to practice their faith and those who are persecuted for their faith, to her maternal love and protection, praying that the Holy Spirit may be poured out in abundance for the good, the well-being and the salvation of all in Asia.

VI. THE FINAL STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE FEDERATION OF ASIAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCES

1.0 Preamble

1.1 May your Kingdom come! (Lk 11,2) This prayer of Jesus is a cry from the heart of Asia — Asia, an arena of conflict and division, the world's exploited market place, the continent of suffering humanity; Asia, cradle of culture, birthplace of great religions; a continent awakening to new and gigantic responsibilities.

1.2 May your Kingdom come! The plea is both a vocation and a challenge to the Church.

1.3 The battered condition of Asia is before us. Its poverty, wretched-

ness and misery bear in themselves the contradictions of humanity. Asia “groans with pain, like the pain of childbirth” (Rom 8,22). It “waits for God” to set its “whole being free” (Rom 8,23).

1.4 Deep in the heart of Asia, the Paschal Mystery of Jesus is being remembered, becomes present and is relived. The immersion into the darkness of suffering, pain, death and despair brings the light of the Resurrection — its hope, justice, love and peace, integral liberation. This we believe because of the promise of the Father.

1.5 We believe that he is calling us to be instruments of his work of liberation. The Spirit of Jesus enables us to discern his call, and we want to listen to his voice today. Our hope based on the Paschal Mystery of Jesus urges us to discover how we can be the instruments of God, the harbingers of the Good News of integral liberation for Asia.

2.0 FABC Background

2.1 Therefore, we bishops of Asia have come together in Tokyo, Japan, with laity, Religious and priests, for the Fourth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC).

2.2 This gathering of ours with the laity marks a very important moment in our common journey that began in Manila in 1970. In that meeting, as well as in Taipei in 1974, we directed our gaze to the task of the Church in the world of Asia. Our gathering in Calcutta in 1978 brought us to the realization that prayer and interiority are indispensable ingredients in facing the tremendous challenges in this continent. When we met in Bangkok in 1982 for the Third Plenary Assembly, it became clear to us that we had to respond to the call of the Lord together, as a community of faith.

2.3 This Fourth Assembly has brought us a deeper and renewed awareness of the urgency of the call, and the need to accelerate the pace of our involvement, since we experience a deep crisis in every sector and a threat to human life and dignity. In the face of the manifold challenges of Asia, we have reflected prayerfully on the theme: “The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World of Asia.” These reflections are made in deep communion with the universal Church. The presence in our plenary assembly of representatives from the Holy See and from other episcopal conferences and federations has helped us to deepen this communion.

2.4 The contribution by countless numbers of the laity to the life of

2.4 The contribution by countless numbers of the laity to the life of faith among the People of God in Asia cannot be measured. The saga of the laity themselves, preserving their faith through long centuries of their history, in countries such as Korea and Japan, stirs our imagination and inspires our hearts. Under changed circumstances, today the laity of Asia continue to share zealously in the mission of the Church as a leaven in the world and a sign of the Reign of God. Many laymen and laywomen are also serving as missionaries in countries other than their own, in various continents. We are grateful to the Lord and to our co-workers, the laity, for this ineffable grace.

3.0 Challenges of Asia

3.0.1 We need to confront the dark realities in the heart of Asia — not in order to moan and wail in despair, but in order that we may be challenged by the magnitude of the task and thus place our hope in the Lord who remains, despite our valiant efforts, the ultimate builder of the Kingdom (cf. Ps 127).

3.0.2 A Basic Presupposition. We are keenly aware that the struggle for a full human life is not confined to the Christian community. We acknowledge that there are many great religious traditions in Asia which form the basis of the establishment, growth and development of the many cultures and nations in this great continent. In solidarity with them, we seek the full flowering of the human person and the transformation of the world of Asia into that which pleases the Creator (cf. Gen 1).

3.1 Politics and the Community of Believers

3.1.1 The impact of misguided and selfish power politics on the reality of Asia today in the form of the massive poverty and degradation is beyond imagining. Today's Asia has spawned structures and relationships in the political and economic community that are widening the scandalous gap between rich and poor, denying to the latter a fair and just access to the resources of the earth. Repression, oppression and exploitation are realities that result from the greed of vested economic interests and political power. Ethnic, cultural and linguistic conflicts which unleash violence, death and destruction are also linked with economic and political divisions. The political situation in many Asian countries has become volatile, and a sense of insecurity permeates particularly the minority groups.

3.1.2 Politics needs, first of all, to become a purposeful activity which

seeks the common good. The entire People of God is called to engage in such "politics," for the task of infusing the Gospel and Kingdom values of love and justice into the political, economic, cultural and social world of Asia is an imperative of the Gospel. Participation and involvement are duties that flow from the secular implications of the Gospel and the Reign of God.

3.1.3 The involvement of the lay person in political activity confirms his/her rootedness in Christ, who called his community of disciples to be a leaven in the world and thus to labor for the common good. A Christian is a member of a God-people and of the wider community, the good of which he/she is called to promote, protect and serve. To shut oneself totally away from the demands of the political transformation of Asia is, surely, in a sense, a denial of Christian identity.

3.1.4 Attitudes of apathy and indifference allow injustice to go unchecked and political powers to become masters rather than servants of the people. Evil is permitted to prevail simply because good men and women do nothing about it.

3.1.5 Hence, we have come to discover with joy that in all parts of Asia the laity are growing in political consciousness. Even in countries where the Church is a minority, they are gradually shedding centuries-old indifference. Protests, processions, vigils, citizen committees, organized for the cause of justice and the rights of the poor, are the signs of this growing political awareness. The people of the Philippines who, in February of this year, were able to achieve a significant political transformation through active non-violence inspired by faith in the Lord have given us much to reflect upon.

3.1.6 The need of the hour in Asia is for competent and principled lay people to enter into the realm of party politics and, from within, influence the philosophies, programs and activities of political parties and personalities for the common good in the light of the Gospel. We commend the lay persons who already have contributed much to this area of public life.

3.1.7 In the past, the Church tended to limit itself mostly to the protection of its interests regarding religious freedom, the family and schools. But now the Church is becoming involved in a wider range of issues pertaining to fundamental human rights and freedom, to labor and business, health, women, the arms race, the international order and other issues of justice and peace that seriously affect the peoples of Asia and especially the poor and the downtrodden.

3.1.8 The response of the Church to the Asian reality has to be communitarian in character, if we hope to respond to the deeply entrenched and widespread network of political, economic, religious, social and cultural injustices. Such a response will clearly indicate the presence of the creative and transforming power of the Spirit in the community of believers.

3.1.9 The phenomenon of religious revivalism and fundamentalism in various Asian countries is likewise a challenge. The positive aspect of religious revivalism is a challenge to the Christian towards a deeper renewal of his/her own faith. The negative aspect of the phenomenon, tending to religious dogmatism, fundamentalism and intolerance in precept and practice, has even led to violence and serious conflicts.

3.1.10 The positive aspect is represented by the holistic view of reality. Asian religious cultures see human beings, society and the whole universe as intimately related and interdependent. Fragmentation and division contradict this vision. In the light of the Gospel, how does the Christian base the struggle for peace, justice and wholeness in this holistic vision provided by the ancient religions of Asia? The negative aspect of religious fundamentalism challenges the Christian to witness to the radicalism of the Gospel of love, even in the most provocative, intricate and exasperating situations, and to be an instrument of unity and fellowship among various groups.

3.1.11 In every situation, the whole Church is called to a dialogue of life with fellow Christians of other churches, the billions of other religions and the members of various social groups. Since the laity live in a more direct and day-to-day contact with people of other faiths, they are the ones most called to this living dialogue, especially regarding common problems which affect the life of the community.

3.1.12 Among such problems are: issues of fundamental rights, the rights of tribals and other minority groups, problems of political, social, economic and religious development, and of justice and peace. Here, collaboration is necessary at the local, regional and international level.

3.2 The Youth of Asia

3.2.1 The youth of Asia are the mirror of Asia. Of the total population, 60% are between 15 and 24 years of age. The life of the youth reflects Asia's manifold economic, political, cultural, religious and educational problems.

3.2.2 One side of the picture of the life of the Asian youth is more visibly negative. Many are living under wretched conditions, unable because of poverty to liberate themselves from the bondage of ignorance and illiteracy, and are shackled to a life severely limited by inadequate skills and knowledge. They are also vulnerable to the temptations of materialism and consumerism; they become prey to various ideologies that claim to offer liberation from poverty and injustice. And because the doors of education are often closed to them, the sense of social belonging, already eroded by abject material conditions, is even more seriously weakened. Many among those who have had the benefits of education and find themselves unemployed or under-employed, or who see the inconsistencies between what schooling has taught them and what society practices and values, look for security and acceptance in the wrong place and among their often equally confused peers. Anxiety about the future, the apparent hopelessness of the present, alienation and other pressures drive them to seek escape in destructive substitutes like drugs, alcoholism, suicide, vandalism, premarital sex and delinquency.

3.2.3 There is also a positive side to the life of our Asian youth. We have discovered in our gathering that in the present struggles for social transformation in various parts of Asia, the youth are playing a substantial role. They are involved in awakening the consciousness of the people; organizing and mobilizing groups working for justice and peace; serving as community health workers, catechists and leaders of Christian communities, organizers and members of pastoral teams; etc. They live their lives in witness to Kingdom values; they stand out in contrast to those whose lives seem aimless, immature and hedonistic. The idealism of youth, their energy, zeal and determination, their commitment — these are some seeds of the Kingdom within them. The Lord's call to be a leaven in the world resonates in a special way in the hearts of Asia's youth.

3.2.4 Full support and acceptance, trust and confidence, presence and availability on the part of other members of God's people will surely empower the youth to become evangelizers, messengers and instruments of God — not only among their peers, but also among their elders and in the wider society. On the other hand, non-acceptance and lack of support could lead to further alienation. Alienated from their families, from the wider society and from the People of God, the youth would have no other option but rebellion or despair.

3.2.5 The youth of Asia are the Asia of today. The compulsive struggles for liberation in Asia are reflected in the pains of growth among the youth and in their deepest longings for a new world and a meaning for

life. The People of God in Asia must become in a certain sense a “Church of the young,” if it is to transform the “face of Asia, the continent of the young” (cf. Asian Bishops’ Meeting, Manila 1970).

3.3 The Laity and the Plight of Asian Women

3.3.1 International media have highlighted how tourism and the entertainment industries have exploited, degraded and dehumanized Asian women. However, this is but one aspect of the reality of Asian women today. Many are the injustices heaped upon them because of the traditional societies which discriminate against them and because of the new economic and industrial situations. Dowry, forced marriages, wife-beating and destruction of female fetuses weigh heavily on them, driving many to desperation and even suicide. Modern industry exploits their work — for example, paying a paltry sum for their hard labor in quarries and on construction sites of local and multinational companies. There is discrimination against them in the employment policies, and as domestic workers they are also abused. In general, Asian society views women as inferior. Such are some of the tragic realities of Asian women that cry out for transformation.

3.3.2 On the other hand, there is a deep and genuine appreciation of women among Asians. A woman is considered the heart of the family. In times of crisis, she is the valiant one on whose shoulders others lean. The advancement and contributions that women have made in the professions — as doctors, lawyers, managers, accountants, political leaders, teachers, etc. — have been phenomenal, despite the obstacles placed in their path by tradition. In the Church, women contribute significantly in various ministries of teaching, healing, catechizing, organizing, etc. They serve as members of pastoral teams. In our assembly we have listened to them and have been made more aware of some fundamental facts and truths about the role of women in Asia.

3.3.3 A woman is an integral human person, no matter what race, class, tribe or religion she belongs to. She is created in the image and likeness of God. To her too was extended the divine call of being responsible for the created world (Gen 1:27). The tragedy is that this image and likeness of God has been degraded and trampled underfoot and she is dominated in various ways. Therefore, women cry out to the Lord for liberation. We have heard this poignant cry from the women themselves, who have articulated here their deepest longings for dignity and freedom. They reminded us that Mary is the Mother of God, that she, a woman, uniquely cooperated with Jesus so that the Reign of the Father may come. It is, therefore, not just a human necessity but a Gospel

imperative that the feminine half of the world's population be recognized and their dignity restored, and that they be allowed to play their rightful role in the world and in the Church.

3.3.4 The laity thus have a special responsibility in their respective fields — be it in business, education, mass media, politics or public service — to uphold and defend the dignity of women, and to change attitudes, policies, practices and legislation that lead to the discrimination against and repression of women.

3.3.5 But recognition of woman's full personhood must equally be evident among the People of God, the Church. For the Church cannot be a sign of the Kingdom and of the eschatological community if the gifts of the Spirit to women are not given due recognition, and if women do not share in the "freedom of the children of God." They expect significant responsibilities in the ministries and decision-making processes of the Church.

3.3.6 The entire People of God would then become a credible sign of the dignity and freedom of women in society and in the world. The Church could then speak powerfully about the plight of Asian women and become their voice, with an authority unlike any other.

3.4 The Laity and the Family

3.4.1 Perhaps the greatest challenge to the Church in Asia is that posed by the Asian family. The Asian family is the cellular receptacle of all Asia's problems: poverty, repression, exploitation and degradation, divisions and conflicts. The family is directly affected by the religious, political, economic, social and cultural problems of Asia, by the problems relating to women, health, work, business, education, etc.

3.4.2 But certain specific problems have been brought to our attention. We have reflected on them in the light of the Gospel. For in the journey towards the Reign of God, the Christian travels not alone but in community, and not only in a general community, but in his/her own family.

3.4.3 The adverse conditions which Asian families have to face today are serious and many. Mothers and children at a tender age are forced to undertake hard labor or migrate to cities — often to alien countries — in search of employment. A hopeless struggle for survival benumbs the conscience, increases the number of unwed mothers and abandoned children, and causes rampant prostitution and abortion. A

contraceptive mentality and population control programs insensitive to moral and religious sensibilities have resulted in the systematic termination of pregnancies. As a result of such a situation, family life is disrupted seriously and traditional family values are progressively undermined.

3.4.4 But we continue to believe that the family as a social unit is a sacred and an important treasure. Most traditions and laws, beliefs and practices are traceable to the family. Closely-knit family ties, filial piety, care and respect of the aged are among the deeply-rooted cultural values in Asia. Such cultural values and traditions are a source of strength for Asian families in deepening their call and providing the most favorable atmosphere for a life of love and communion.

3.4.5 Since grace builds on nature, the centrality of the Sacrament of Marriage for Christian families needs to be underlined. In many Asian countries, the Christian atmosphere also has resulted in a great number of vocations to consecrated life, the priesthood and societies of apostolic life. Christian families have influenced their neighborhood to know and respect the values which Jesus proclaimed, and have produced many lay persons who are true witnesses to the Gospel in their work and professions.

3.4.6 As they listen to the Gospel which calls them to accept their mission in the Church and in the world, the laity will find in the family the most important area for themselves to reflect on.

3.4.7 The first call to be a member of the Church comes normally in the family (cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, 15, 39, 49). Even before the call is heard in the parish, or the mind opens to the catechetical story of the call to growth and maturity in Christ, the child has already seen, heard and experienced at home the reality of belonging to the People of God.

3.4.8 The Christian family is rightly referred to as the “domestic Church,” where members assist one another toward a fullness of life in Christ through the ordinary circumstances and events of life. At home, in the family setting, in the daily events of living and giving, the lay person interiorizes culture as well as belief with an easy connaturality. In the little church of the family, as in the larger Church of the community, the members remain aware of the presence of God, seek to listen to his word in the Scriptures and faithfully practice mutual forgiveness and sacrifice.

3.4.9 The values and attitudes necessary for evangelization of the Asian world are first practiced in the family. Love, justice, peace, truth, freedom, concern for the poor and the needy, faith in God, hope in his

liberating goodness and power, responsibility and self-sacrifice and other Gospel values are first learned by precept and example in the family. Here evangelization initially takes place and a "civilization of love" begins. Thus evangelized, the Asian family is enabled to evangelize, reach out to other families and communities, and together with them journey into the Reign of God.

3.4.10 Certainly, the most direct and immediate task of the laity in the community of God is to make prosper within the family this double event, at the same time a grace, of evangelizing and being evangelized.

3.5 The Laity in the World of Education

3.5.1 Two important factors in the educational scene of Asia immediately strike us: the illiteracy of vast numbers of Asians, and the high visibility and reputation of Catholic educational institutions, especially in non-Christian areas. These indeed urge us to reflect not only on the role of the laity, but also on the role of the entire Church in education.

3.5.2 Two of many major negative observations are well known to us: that some Catholic schools seem to cater mostly to the middle class and to the rich, and that they seem to support traditional structures and values, rather than act as vehicles of change. Such objections are constant reminders of our priorities for the poor and for transformation of society. They should encourage us to undertake regular evaluation, and we should not set these criticisms aside as simply invalid and uninformed.

3.5.3 How, indeed, can our schools reflect the Church's preferential option for the poor? This truly difficult question requires wisdom and evangelical courage. We do not claim to have the answers, but we do wish to make a number of observations.

3.5.4 Undoubtedly, our schools in Asia have contributed significantly to the battle against ignorance and illiteracy, and have prepared great numbers of people to take their place in society and to contribute to the common good through their professions. And here we acknowledge with deep gratitude the great contribution of the laity, who in the field of education greatly out-number priests and Religious sisters and brothers. The large number of women teachers in primary and secondary education may in a certain sense reflect the image of the Church as "*Mater et Magistra*." We may rightly say that the laity in Asia play the major role in the essential task of facilitating the growth and maturity of the human person through formal education. Their role in the educational

apostolate arises from their basic baptismal participation, especially in the character of Christ as prophet and servant.

3.5.5 For education in schools to become more effective as a vehicle of transformation in society, a true and proper vision and spirituality among teachers are needed. This vision requires that the task of teaching be viewed as a call from God to share in the teaching ministry of Jesus who announced and taught about the Kingdom, and that teaching is not simply the communication of knowledge but even more importantly, the formation in values. From such a vision flows a spirituality involving sacrifice, other-directedness, concern, love, justice and other Gospel values. As in catechesis, the more effective is not the one who simply teaches, but the one who also witnesses (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*).

3.5.6 The school has become the setting where it is possible for peoples of different faiths, races, backgrounds, social classes and tribes to become a community. It is also where concern for the poor and the needy and the values necessary to transform the wider society into a true community are actually formed and shared. This kind of community will have to involve the collaboration of the teachers and the families. In a non-Christian environment, such a school community becomes a sign of the peace, justice and love of God's Reign.

3.5.7 We look beyond the formal school system and ask how the laity can carry out the ministry of teaching among out-of-school youth in urban and rural areas. This is not an easy task. Yet we see its beginnings in literacy programs, training in skills and leadership programs through non-formal education. This is particularly true of the educational work that is taking place in basic ecclesial communities. Here again the laity play a major role. In both tasks, we see the need of innovative programs of education for the lay educators.

3.5.8 Some creative programs to prepare lay teachers for holistic teaching, such as Christian Maturity Formation Seminars and Colloquia on the Ministry of Teaching, are now being implemented in some Asian countries. We believe such formation will enable lay educators to become more effective in their response to the Lord's call to share in his ministry of teacher and servant.

3.6 The Laity and Mass Media

3.6.1 This is the hour when the laity of Asia are called to evangelize their milieu through those most powerful instruments of mass media which modern technology has created. Pope Paul VI has drawn attention

to “the growing role being assumed by the media and their influence on the transformation of mentalities and of society itself” (*Octogesima Adveniens*, 20).

3.6.2 Finance and the mass media determine to a very large extent the destinies of nations; in fact, finance uses the media to this end. Those in power are well aware of the potentialities of the mass media, which they manipulate to mold public opinion and to consolidate and perpetuate their positions. One test of the freedom prevalent in any society today is the degree of autonomy enjoyed by the mass media.

3.6.3 Today, the mass media in Asia are predominantly controlled by authoritarian governments or by a handful of economically and politically powerful persons, while the vast majority of the Asian people are passive recipients. It has been noted that the impact of Church-supported media on the masses of Asia is minimal. While the consumer society exploits the mass media to further its materialistic ends, the Church in Asia still lags behind in taking full advantage of these most powerful means of proclaiming the liberating word of God to the Asian peoples. Many of us are still not sufficiently acquainted with the idiom and impact of the media.

3.6.4 Still, we happily note the advances of media directly under the care of the Church or influenced by the Church through the laity. The establishment of mass media centers in various parts of Asia, the efforts to educate Church leadership regarding the complexities and power of media, the training of personnel for this specific apostolate have made great strides. Many of the laity in the secular media are faithful to Gospel values and are witnesses to these values — not only as individual Christians, but also in their professional lives where they exercise a positive influence on their peers and the recipients of their work. An admirable example of collaboration of the People of God — with the laity carrying most of the burden — is the crucial role that Radio Veritas has played in the struggle for truth, justice and freedom.

3.6.5 The power of the media within a plurality of cultures is to be recognized and appreciated. Within such a situation the Asian Church sees its task first of infusing Gospel values, then of drawing out more explicitly “the seeds of the Kingdom” found in diverse cultures and religions. Through the mass media, it thus may bring these values to bear upon all efforts at collaboration, unity and fellowship among various peoples in view of the common good.

3.6.6 This vision will require of the People of God, and especially of

its leadership, a supportive stance toward the systematic formation and training of the laity to assume even greater responsibilities in the media. This is a pastoral priority in the light of our Asian situation, where the People of God must reach out to millions struggling for social transformation, a struggle that requires an interfaith collaboration.

3.7 Laity in the World of Work

3.7.1 When we turn our attention to the world of work, we come to recognize that through work of every kind we are participating in God's own ongoing process of recreating and transforming our world. We are responding to the deep aspirations of vast masses of Asian people for liberation from sin and its consequences.

3.7.2 Nonetheless, we likewise recognize that these dreams and efforts for integral liberation are being shattered by complex, mutually reinforcing powers that are often beyond the control of workers: the dominance of transnational corporations and large local companies in traditional industries and their incursion into agribusiness, taking advantage of cheap labor or appropriating the land of small landowners; the banning of strikes and trade unions and so repressing legitimate protest; the exodus of rural workers into already overcrowded urban slums as the cities' cheap labor; the lack of supportive organizations among the vast majority of urban workers, small landowners and landless peasants; long hours of work, harassment, job insecurity and accident hazards; deterioration of health; unemployment and underemployment. Clearly, political, economic and agricultural structures have made both urban and rural workers cogs of an anonymous productive machine, their work a dispensable commodity depending only on the law of supply and demand.

3.7.3 Reflecting upon this tragic situation, we recall the Church's rich social doctrine of work, the dignity and inherent worth of work, and the workers' fundamental rights and responsibilities. We do not intend to dwell on these at this time. The participation of the laity at our assembly has directed our attention to the spirituality of work, an area of reflection which has been largely neglected.

3.7.4 Work is often considered an obstacle to our life with God, as something worldly or secular with no religious meaning. Prayer and spirituality seem to begin only when work ends. A fundamental mission of the laity in the world of work is to recover the religious meaning of human work as an expression of human creativity and a participation in the work of the Creator. The task of transforming the present dehumanizing

situation of work begins when the worker rises above the routines and monotony of day-to-day labor and questions the whole of life experience: Why work? What is the meaning of work? What is the meaning of life? These are basic religious questions, expressing deep human aspirations for a happy life, liberation and respect of the person.

3.7.5 Rooted in the Spirit of God, these aspirations cannot be stifled by any work system. So when workers struggle to create a work system more conducive to an authentic spiritual life, their efforts are, in the light of the Gospel, really religious acts (cf. *Laborem Exercens*, 24-27). This is especially so when these acts are consciously subsumed into the dynamic movement that makes work a participation in the healing, transforming and redeeming activity of Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega of all endeavor.

3.7.6 It is necessary, therefore, that workers look at the activities which promote and defend their rights within the context of such a spirituality. Some of these activities are the formation of trade unions or agricultural associations, efforts to participate in decision-making processes, and mass action for cheaper agricultural fertilizers. The worker will find the meaning of life in such a spirituality of work.

3.7.7 In the light of the Church's preferential option for the poor, our attention is further directed to certain sectors of Asian workers: children forced to work endless hours in shops, restaurants, farms, etc.; young female workers coming from rural areas and often subjected to sexual harassment, inhuman working and living conditions; domestic workers in countries other than their own, who are exploited as cheap labor; migrants from villages to cities and other countries, who are uprooted and forced to struggle for survival under the most adverse conditions; vast numbers of Asian workers, who remain unemployed or underemployed.

3.7.8 The whole Church has to listen with compassion to the problems of the poor and needy workers, and to direct its pastoral concern and programs to their benefit. The cooperation of all Christians with other groups in society at the local, regional and international levels is imperative so that present exploitative and oppressive work systems can be transformed.

3.8 Social Responsibility in the World of Business

3.8.1 Likewise, the transformation of the social structures of the work process is the mission not only of the workers but also of business people, government officials, managers and policy-makers. Cooperation

among the different sectors of society is indispensable. This cooperation has to exist at national and global levels, and supposes that all sectors of society believe that the resources of this world belong to the entire human family and that social responsibility means stewardship of the goods of this world.

3.8.2 The countries of Asia have been following either a system of free enterprise or a system of centrally-controlled economic development. We realize that neither system exists in its pure or ideal form. Both systems, as they presently operate, have serious drawbacks which prevent people from consciously and creatively shaping the work situation. Free enterprise, or capitalism, proved its ability to organize labor for higher productivity and to unleash the modern technological imagination. Though it has considerably liberated the entrepreneurial and managerial classes, it has also degraded the working class to being a dispensable commodity. It has failed to recognize what Pope John Paul II has called the “principle of the priority of labor over capital” (*Laborem Exercens*, 12).

3.8.3 By contrast, centrally-planned economies, or socialism, have rightly stressed that it is the workers who create the economy, but they have mediated workers’ control and solidarity exclusively through a centralized state. The workers are left with a new form of social domination, viz. the State. Thus neither capitalism nor socialism, despite their contributions, can provide a new model for the social structuring of the whole process of production.

3.8.4 The future, it would seem to us, lies in pioneering new forms of worker participation in industry — ranging from the renewal of the cooperative movement to worker cooperation in mixed or privately-held appropriate technology that prevents the concentration of power in the hands of a few, and supporting the use of technology in the service of labor and not the reverse. Such a model means developing small-scale technology that workers can own and control, at least as a cooperative.

3.8.5 In this context the laity belonging to the world of business hear the call of God to live out their faith according to Gospel values and the needs of others. This involves a number of options in their businesses — from the simple exercise of the values of truth, justice and love to their active participation in transforming the social structure of the whole process towards greater worker participation, more discerning consumer guidance, more responsible interventions by governments and a more equitable society.

3.8.6 There is need for principles guiding the conduct of business, something like a code of ethics for business, to enable people in business to permeate their dealings with Gospel values.

3.9 Laity and Health Services

3.9.1 At our assembly, the laity have communicated their concerns for the world of health. We thank the Lord for the marvelous advances of medicine, the product of human creativity and endeavor in the war against disease. But we are confronted every day with serious problems rising from the application of modern medicine: the prohibitive cost of medical services, the overconcentration of medical health delivery systems in urban areas, the inadequacy of preventive medical services, to name only a few. More seriously, we are today witnessing the emergence of bioethical problems significant not only by their extent but also by their growing complexity. All these confront the entire Church, but more particularly the laity in medical services.

3.9.2 The most significant challenges are: abortion; negative attitudes towards Natural Family Planning; the extensive use of artificial contraception; confusion over moral norms on euthanasia; the high incidence of suicide, particularly among our youth; addiction to alcohol and drugs; and other moral issues arising from biomedical advances, particularly in genetics. The laity in the field of health services, physicians, nurses and other medical personnel, in both Catholic and non-Catholic hospitals, have to live day in and day out with these bioethical issues. The entire Church is called upon to support them.

3.9.3 Beyond professional competence, they need to sharpen their understanding of the moral dimension of modern medicine and its practice. They should recognize the Lord calling them to bring the saving power of Christ that can transform the world of health care and make it wholesome.

3.9.4 They have expressed the need and desire for moral formation, so that they may discern what is morally right or wrong according to the Gospel. A genuine moral formation of the laity in all the health services is imperative.

3.9.5 Our medical schools should not spare any effort to teach medical ethics. At the same time, Catholic physicians should be encouraged and assisted positively to become qualified bioethicists. Centers for bioethical studies should be given a high priority by our Catholic higher institutions of learning, particularly our schools of theology. Such centers

can provide a network of competence that will facilitate the formation of the laity in the field of health services. Wherever in the health services such Catholic organizations exist, we need to show positive interest and support, and provide guidance in the field of bioethics.

3.9.6 But even greater than the concern for the renewal of our traditional health institutions should be our concern for the great masses of the poor in rural areas who are very often deprived of the basic benefits of modern medicine due to their poverty and the lack of adequate medical services.

3.9.7 The forgiving Christ is also the healing Christ who reached out to the poor and marginalized to bring them the healing power of God. God's People, especially the laity in health services, must likewise reach out to farmers and workers, the landless and slum dwellers, so that through them the healing touch of God may be felt. This is why the resources of the Church in health services must be channeled to outreach programs that are community-based and community-oriented. It is with joy that we note the increasing number of Churches in Asia which are responding to this serious need.

4.0 Moving Ahead as Community

4.0.1 The challenges of Asia are "the signs of the times" to be discerned by Christians and the Church of Asia. It is in the faith response we give these challenges that we shall discern and discover the vocation and mission of the laity for the salvation of Asia.

4.1 Communion with Jesus

4.1.1 In order that we may discover our genuine and specific place in the multireligious cultural context of Asia, we need to rediscover Jesus Christ as the Liberator of Asia, and his Church as the servant and instrument of that liberation.

4.1.2 The Spirit of the Lord is upon us and the thirst for liberation wells up from within us (cf. Lk 4,42).

4.1.3 Hence, the call today for us Asian Christians is to become a Church deeply committed to Jesus the Liberator. Such a commitment by all Christians will make the Church a communion of committed disciples — be they clergy or laity — working for the liberation of Asia. Such a communion with Jesus Christ and among ourselves is no alienation from the peoples or realities of Asia. On the contrary, our communion is

strengthened when we become truly Asian Churches, rooted among our peoples and in solidarity with them.

4.2 Communion of Liberation

4.2.1 The communion of liberation is not lived in a static manner as a calm, composed Body of Christ in the sharing of all spiritual and material gifts among ourselves. Rather, it is lived within the dynamism of life in the Church and the dynamism of challenges from outside the Church.

4.2.2 This dynamism implies that we, within the Church and among ourselves, recognize all members of the Church as mature subjects and persons with dignity and freedom, with their gifts and powers as well as rights and responsibilities. Any defect in these basic attitudes will impair our dynamic communion and weaken our liberative thrust.

4.3 A Messianic Mission

4.3.1 The concrete manner of becoming effective agents of liberation is to recall and activate the spiritual characters and functions we possess by Baptism as disciples of Christ. Jesus, who leads us forward on our journey to liberation, envisions the mission as priestly, prophetic and royal. We share his vision and imbibe his character. We nourish ourselves for this journey with him by constantly hearing his word and recalling his memory through his sacraments within our Churches. In this way, we are enabled to actualize the triple function conferred by Baptism in relation to the realities we encounter on our journey.

4.3.2 If we take our journey to liberation with due awareness and seriousness, then we cannot afford to be merely an inward-looking Church. We have to be outward-looking and forward-looking as we go along with him. In the past, we have directed our efforts in a way that has suited an inward-looking Church. We need now to rearrange our priorities and redirect our ecclesial energies to undertake our journey as an outward-looking Church.

4.4 Messianic Functions

4.4.1 Following Christ as the messianic leader of our journey, we have to actualize our messianic functions.

4.4.2 The priestly function belongs to the whole People of God. The Asian realities themselves urgently demand that this priestly function be exercised by all of our Church. Our proper concern for the ministerial or

ordained priesthood — either to improve the quality and number of priests or to meet the problems of formation — must not diminish or distract us from interest in and concern for the common priesthood of the faithful. This latter, though general in the sense of being shared by all Christians, is a real priesthood of life. It has its origins in Christ himself. The Christian disciple lives and participates by his/her day-to-day life in all the mysteries of redemption, viz., suffering, death and resurrection. The ministerial priesthood has meaning and fullness only in relation to the common priesthood. Hence, the clergy have the obligation to live the common priesthood of all before enacting the sacrifice of the Eucharist sacramentally.

4.4.3 The prophetic function of the Church must not be limited to the teaching function of the hierarchy. It must be a witness and a service of the whole community to the saving truth of Christ and his Church. The *sensus fidelium*, or faith-instinct, of the whole People of God is a gift of the Spirit to all as a body. It demands that the leadership should not overlook the spirit and the prophecy of the believing community. Due listening to and consultation of the People of God to discern the spirit and wisdom of God in the people must be undertaken, especially in matters relating to their life in the world and consequent problems.

4.4.4 The royal function which is linked to the royal priesthood must be understood within the background of our human history as leading to the realization of God's Reign. It cannot be seen merely as a basis for our leadership's guiding and governing. The laity too participate in their own way in the building up of the Kingdom. Their actions within and outside the Church have a constructive value in the building up of the Kingdom (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 70). Such an understanding will provide new insights into the apostolate and ministry of the laity in the world.

4.5 Renewal of Structures: Communion, Collegiality, Coresponsibility

4.5.1 In our efforts to give a faith-response to the challenging call of Asian realities we are guided and strengthened in our convictions by the teaching of Vatican II. The Council called for a renewal of inner structures on the basis of collegiality, communion and coresponsibility; and it recognized the values of subjectivity, and the maturity, dignity and freedom of all the members of the Church. Concretely, it asked for a shift of emphasis so as to recognize the laity of our Churches as full-fledged members, with their own gifts and charisms, their rights and duties.

4.5.2 The principles of communion, collegiality and coresponsibility stressed by Vatican II demand that we re-examine our ecclesial structures

with respect to their purpose and thrust and reorganize them to yield optimum benefit. The renewal of inner ecclesial structures does not consist only in strengthening and multiplying the existing parochial and diocesan organizations, nor in creating new ones. It consists in creating the right atmosphere of communion, collegiality and coresponsibility for an active and fuller lay initiation, participation and action.

4.6 Lay Apostolate

4.6.1 Though our needs have become more challenging, some lay structures and their orientation remain unchanged and consequently unproductive. Especially with respect to lay apostolate groups and international organizations, whose inspiration and structures are given from outside, a re-examination is called for.

4.6.2 The lay apostolate of our Churches still remains basically parish-oriented, inward-looking and priest-directed. The need of our Asian context and the thrust of Vatican II to make the apostolate world-oriented or Kingdom-oriented must be increasingly emphasized. The apostolate must involve more lay initiatives and the power of decision-making; and it must respond to the real needs of the people. The ordained leadership need not fear or be overconcerned about juridical problems in starting newer forms of lay apostolate or ministries relating to the contextual realities of their Churches. Instead, they should encourage and promote more vigorous, world-oriented forms, initiated and directed by the laity themselves. Such initiatives will help the laity to mature, and consequently make the whole Church more effective and relevant in its mission to Asia.

4.7 Pastoral Concerns

4.7.0 In the light of the above challenges and theological reflection we urge our local Churches in Asia to undertake some pastoral actions, particularly with respect to the following:

4.7.1 Clergy-Laity Relationship

There is no one-sided renewal of clergy or laity. In a Church of communion we, clergy as well as laity, are mutually related and mutually conditioned. We feel the need for a basic change of mind and heart.

4.7.1.2 In a Church which is a communion that tries to liberate others from oppression and discrimination, collegiality and coresponsibility are urgent. We cannot afford to destroy our communion by words or acts

of domination and discrimination. A magnanimous spirit of understanding and a recognition of the gifts of the other must be promoted. In this respect, the clergy-leadership has a duty to make the initial moves to foster lay involvement and to recognize the emerging leadership of the laity.

4.7.2 Formation of and for the Laity

4.7.2.0 Formation is not a molding of one by the other but a collaboration of persons in the Church with the Spirit of the Church, using appropriate structures. In light of the Asian challenges and theological reflection, three levels of formation appear as necessary:

4.7.2.1 A. General formation of all the Church, especially the laity. This entails an effort to conscientize all the faithful through preaching, teaching, catechesis, adult education, etc., about the new vision of Vatican II with respect to their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world.

4.7.2.2 B. Particular formation is needed for volunteers and selected leaders of our Churches: from lay apostolate groups, parish and diocesan organizations and special professional fields (work, education, health services, etc.). Seminars, weekend courses or block courses can be the main forms of the formation programs. Bishops are already promoting this type of formation. However, in the euphoria about an awakening laity, we must avoid feeding these groups with mini-courses of seminary theology, but rather give them courses suited to their lay context.

4.7.2.3 C. Ministerial formation is needed for those who enjoy the charisms for stable ecclesial service. The clergy, who have the responsibility to encourage, welcome and help these charisms prosper for the benefit of Christian Churches and their mission in the world, must offer assistance in accordance with what is needed. By reason of the lay character, formation should be done on the basis of the laity's own experience of the realities of the world. A secular context and a job-oriented formation must be encouraged.

4.7.2.4 D. The formation programs depend for their support on the local Churches. While we are spending great sums of money to educate and form our clergy in large houses of formation and with well-organized programs, we cannot allow the formation of the laity, as particular groups or as lay ministries, to be neglected. The support of our sister Churches from the West is appreciated. But the local Churches must be encouraged to appreciate and support lay formation programs. Remuneration of lay

persons for their stable services must respect the demands of justice and charity. Much could be improved in their programs of formation by an exchange of personnel and resources.

4.8 Lay Spirituality

4.8.1 We have seen the complexities of challenges that the People of God face in Asia. We have reflected theologically on the vocation and mission of the laity and on some pastoral concerns that flow from this theological vision. At our assembly the laity have asked us in many ways and different forms the age-old question of the rich young man in Scripture: "Teacher, what good things must I do to possess eternal life?" (Mt 19, 16). While the words of Jesus were simple enough, his real demand required a radical following by the rich young man.

4.8.2 Discipleship, the following of Jesus — that is the simple answer to the eternal question. This "radicality of the Gospel" is shown in the radicality of his own life. We wish now to communicate to you the reflections that the laity, Religious and priests have shared with us on lay spirituality.

4.8.3 Discipleship in Asia is rooted in the realities of Asia. Christian spirituality must be incarnated. It grows and matures in the midst of continuous tensions and struggles with the destructive powers of sin and its consequences, of conflict and injustice. Christian spirituality must also be Christocentric and inspired by the Spirit of Jesus, the Liberator. It is a "living in the Spirit" of Jesus (cf. Rom 8, 1-17), urging us to be his disciples through a dynamic process of being incarnated into the realities of the times, as Jesus was, and of discerning in the Spirit those realities that lead to death and those that lead to life. Jesus was Spirit-led (cf. e.g., Lk 4, 1), and full of the Spirit (e.g., Lk 4, 14); so too should be the Christian. Our spirituality is one of discerning the movement of the Spirit who re-enacts in us the mysteries of Jesus Christ in the contextual realities of daily living and struggling. Here is seen the value of the contemplative dimension, of Asian peoples who discern the movement of God in mundane events and activities. Such a prayerful attitude is immersed in life.

4.8.4 Intermingling with reality and inseparable from it, discipleship is lived in the community of the Church. Christian spirituality is ecclesial and communitarian. It emerges out of our incorporation into the Body, the People of God, realized and expressed in Baptism and Confirmation. Communion with Christ moves from an individual sharing in his suffering, death and resurrection to the Paschal Mystery as lived concretely by the

community — a community that is struggling against evil, suffering the pains and anguish of a people, dying and reaching out for new life. Rootedness in Christ means communion with him and his people.

4.8.5 To be rooted in Christ and the community, Christian living and action must be based on the word of God. Christian spirituality is biblical. It is through the word of God that we meet Jesus. It is also the word of God that gathers us together. We need to listen to Christ as the Word, in the Scriptures and in the Church, but we need also to listen to the Word in persons and in events, in the ebb and flow of life; to listen to the poor and the needy and to reach out to them as Jesus did, for they are the least of his brethren. Here is where a preferential option for the poor, after the example of Jesus himself, demands a spirituality of incarnated “otherness,” all that is meant by the simple words “love of neighbor.”

4.8.6 Discipleship of Jesus, becoming a memory of him, is also based on the sacraments of the Church. Christian spirituality is sacramental. We have already mentioned Baptism and Confirmation as the gateway to Christian discipleship and Church membership. By these two sacraments Christians are not only destined by Jesus to become his witnesses, but are sent by him on his mission. However, at the heart of the Church’s sacramental life, and consequently of Christian spirituality, is the Eucharist, by which the Paschal Mystery of Jesus becomes sacramentally present in our life. Here is found the summit of the Church’s sacramental economy and the source of the power of activity, for here Jesus himself becomes sacramentally present among us in his act of utter self-gift for the world.

4.8.7 The memory of Jesus brings the disciple to seek the Reign of God (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 31) in the world, to be poor, to thirst for justice, to trust completely in the Father as little children do, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Seeking the Kingdom that Jesus proclaimed is really to build it in the concrete experiences of the social, political, economic, religious and cultural world of Asia. In Jesus, the Reign of God began; he came that we might have life to the full. The struggle for fullness of life in Asia is a seeking of the Kingdom. Discipleship then is not at all a withdrawal from the world, but an immersion into the wellspring of Asian reality so that it might have life. Communion, solidarity, compassion, justice, love are keynotes of a spirituality of discipleship. And since Jesus came to reconcile sinners with the Father, to remove divisions among people — that all may be one — this impulse from the Spirit of Jesus to be reconciled, to be one, is an essential ingredient of the spirituality of the People of God.

4.8.8 Incarnational, Christocentric, biblical, sacramental, ecclesial

and communitarian, the spirituality of the People of God is a journey in the Spirit of Jesus into the Kingdom of the Father; it is a journey of discipleship, of love and service, after the pattern of the dying and rising of Jesus himself. From the above, it is clear that fundamentally there is but one Christian spirituality, namely that which is common to all disciples of Jesus in his Church, whether lay or clerical, priests, bishops or Religious. If a specific lay spirituality can be identified, it is in the sense that lay people are called to live their discipleship of Jesus and share in his mission according to their proper lay state in the Church. Stress must be laid here on the secular character of the lay vocation and mission. While through various charisms and ministries lay people are increasingly called today to share in the Church's inner life, this must not overshadow the specific character of their witness and action in the world. Lay people are sent by Jesus himself to infuse the Gospel values into earthly realities and human society. The Christian witness and action must penetrate the various dimensions of their life — familial, social, professional and political. Only then will they respond to their vocation and mission according to the spirit of the Gospel. To give such a response is what lay Christian spirituality is all about.

4.8.9 Some of the practical suggestions that we have heard in this assembly are the following: the deepening of our baptismal commitment, our incorporation and communion with Christ; growth in meaningful and inspiring ways of reading the Scriptures and of making the word of God the guiding and integrating norm of our daily life; exercising the mission of reconciliation out of a deep life of communion with God and with others; molding mind and heart towards a Christian-like sensitivity to the cries and sufferings of the poor in order to respond generously and courageously to their needs; joining these poor and those who struggle for a full life in committed solidarity; discovering forms of prayer transformative of values and attitudes and undivorced from life; integrating traditional practices and devotions from popular religiosity into a spirituality of involvement; becoming more deeply aware of the Paschal Mystery, the cross and resurrection of Christ as the basic paradigm of Christian life and of the struggle towards God's Reign; the deepening of our appreciation of the sacraments as a participation in the memory of Jesus, becoming alive and active in the realities of our lives; assuming a discerning way of life.

4.8.10 Fullness of life, while being a gift from God, is then also a hazardous task for the People of God. It implies the challenging task of becoming involved in the transformation of Asian realities. The two dimensions, the divine and the human, though not identified with each other, involve each other. We thus reiterate our determination to exercise our service of the word of God and of building up the community in such

wise as will provide for our laity a more dynamic spirituality.

4.8.11 This will involve a deeper formation of the laity, but it will also require training the clergy for mutuality and service and team ministry. We are hopeful that there will then result a deeper integration of the priests' ministry and lay services for a better service of our Churches to the peoples of Asia.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 We now wish to conclude our sharing with you, dear brothers and sisters. We are thankful to the Spirit who opened our eyes and led us in these days to share with one another, bishops, priests, Religious and laity, the anxieties and joys of Asia, its sufferings and its hopes (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 1). Even more vividly than before, we realize that the path we all have to take as God's people is similar to the Paschal Mystery of Jesus, a journey to life through the cross in courage and hope. The following of Jesus is the following of him "whom they have pierced," the Alpha and Omega (cf. Jn 19, 37; Zech 12, 10; Rev 1, 8) of all journeys undertaken in faith.

5.2 We believe that God, who promised us his Kingdom, is with us in the midst of darkness. Within the Paschal Mystery the cross of Jesus is both death as well as victory over death. He is saying to all of us: "It is I. Do not be afraid" (Jn 6, 20).

5.3 As the laity, Religious, priests and our fellow bishops spoke to us at our assembly, it was as though the Risen Lord were speaking to us on the road to Emmaus, and we can only wonder: "Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?" (Lk 24, 32). Let our hearts remain warm and our spirits vibrant in the certainty that the Lord is walking with us as we move ahead grappling with the challenges of Asia.

5.4 Journeying in faith through this great continent of Asia and among its peoples, we repose our hope in Mary who is for all of us Mother and Guide on this journey. We commend to her the Church in Asia and ask her to be with us as she was with the first community of disciples (Acts 1, 14).

May glory and honor be to Jesus Christ, the light of the East, the Sun that never sets.

May his Kingdom come!

VII. THE REPORTS OF THE WORKSHOPS OF THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY

(Please note: Each workshop had a discussion guide which was published and sent to the participants before the convening of the Plenary Assembly. These guides provided part of the background for the workshop activity. This report gives only some of the highlights of the discussions. We refer the reader to these more detailed discussion guides.)

1. WORKSHOP: THE LAITY WITHIN THE CHURCH

The participants in this workshop came to the conclusion that there are four areas that deserve special attention and consideration in relation to the laity in the Church: formation of the laity; clergy-laity relationships; involvement in the world, especially regarding social issues; and organizing laity in basic ecclesial communities (BEC).

A. The Formation of the Laity

1. We suggest the setting up of an Asian committee composed of theologians and lay experts whose task will be to develop a formation program of the laity.

2. Any formation of the laity cannot be developed without the major collaboration of the laity themselves. It is necessary that in the setting up of a program, the educators must be aware of what the laity want, what are the needs of their situation. It goes without saying that their training in faith is an indispensable part of this formation.

3. Simultaneous formation of clergy and laity regarding their roles in the Church should be encouraged. It should be a training program for the laity that also affects the clergy, with the priest attending most of the sessions. The experience of being there with them will serve to encourage the laity, to understand better their role in the Church, and to contribute to better relationships.

4. Very importantly, there should be a serious commitment on the part of the whole Church: the Holy See, episcopal conferences, bishops, priests, Religious, laity to make necessary provision for this formation by way of financial support, trained teachers, facilities, teaching materials, etc.

5. The training should always present prominently the teaching of

the Church's magisterium, so that it will remain ecclesial in a true sense. The laity in minority situations will need also proper guidance in their continuing dialogue with people of other religions.

B. Clergy-Laity Relationships

1. Bishops and priests, foremost of all, must be aware and convinced of the vocation and mission of the laity as described by the Second Vatican Council. Through their own personal study and formal course work, perhaps by living with them and sharing their lives, they will be able to give them genuine animation and support in their living-out of the Gospel values in society.

2. Seminary courses and training should be updated so that they include a contemporary theology of the laity, and thereby contribute to forming in seminarians correct attitudes for their work with the laity.

3. The group recommended the establishment of a finance committee, or other similar structures described in Canon Law, whereby the laity will become more active participants in the management of the temporalities of the Church.

4. There is an urgent need to evaluate, in view of updating and reorganization for more effective coordination, present ecclesiastical structures and apostolic associations at the national and diocesan levels.

C. Involvement in Social Issues

The mind of the group can be summarized in the following statement:

“With regard to the involvement of the laity in the world we come to a clearer understanding that we should not talk so much about the involvement of the laity in the world but of the involvement of the whole Church in the world, each one according to his/her charisms. The whole Church, not only a part of it, exists to minister to the world as Christ's instrument to save it from sin and its consequences. The whole Church is at the service of the Kingdom.

In this perspective, the laity, already in the world, have to be fully conscious of the full support of the clergy and religious by way of:

- a) sacramental nourishment;
- b) spiritual and theological guidance;
- c) unitive and organizational support;

- d) specific formation to deepen Gospel values in their lives;
- e) strong solidarity in the face of suffering due to poverty and dehumanizing elements;
- f) inspiration and motivation.

The whole Church, though separate from the State, is never separate from society. For this reason, in situations of clear degradation of human dignity, clear injustices, and violations of human rights the whole Church (the laity with the clergy and Religious accompanying them) must speak out courageously, truthfully and tactfully in defense of the victimized through the proclamation of Gospel values that must renew the oppressive situations, and out of love and compassion. In this task, the Church does not pretend to dictate political programs or specify technicalities. Furthermore, she always seeks to respect the mature judgment of every individual.

In relation to the involvement of the whole Church in the world, there is a need of widening the horizons of ministry which should not be limited to the liturgical celebrations, though this is very important. Ministry should embrace all human affairs, sufferings, fears, hopes. In this sense the Church has a universal ministry, and all its members must, in one way or another, according to each one's condition, exercise this ministry even if not all the members have the same function."

D. The Basic Ecclesial Community

We believe that smaller caring communities, like the Christian Family Movement in India, the Basic Christian Communities in the Philippines and other countries, which provide an effective forum for the deepening of faith, for living the Church, for mutual support and sharing, for training, participation in the apostolate of the Church, should be strongly encouraged.

2. WORKSHOP: LAY SPIRITUALITY

The group identified the following areas as deserving special attention: the concept of "lay spirituality"; lay spirituality as a process of growth; the role of Sacred Scripture; and the role of the sacraments.

A. The Meaning of Lay Spirituality

1. How do we conceive lay spirituality both in its personal dimension and in its outward manifestation?

The descriptions given were:

- a) it is the manner in which a lay person becomes a true disciple of Christ, centered on the word of God, for the transformation of the world;
- b) it is the union with Jesus, our model, that leads to a commitment of service to him and to his people;
- c) it is a way of life and a process of growth lived in a network of relationships, and is a long journey to the end.
- d) an integration of faith, life and action, within the framework of one's life experiences.

2. To fully understand the spirituality of the laity, three factors have to be considered:

- a) the individual factor (intrapersonal dimensions);
- b) the family factor (interpersonal dimension);
- c) the world factor (metapersonal or societal dimension).

3. A deeper question arose: How does the spirituality of the laity differ from that of priests and Religious?

The answer was: Fundamentally and substantially, they are the same, except in the "where" and the "how" of it. By the "where" and the "how" is meant the total context, situation and commitments in which the laity or clergy are involved, without reducing it to any particular field.

B. Recommendations:

The following recommendations were made:

1. to develop a formation program for lay spirituality that will include:

- a) the study, research and understanding of lay spirituality;
- b) the training of spiritual animation groups;
- c) the promoting of Basic Bible Seminars (BBS) and formation of Lay Bible Leaders;
- d) the inclusion of a course on lay spirituality in seminary training;
- e) the deepening of the lay person's knowledge of the teachings of Vatican II;
- f) the development of a correspondence course on lay spirituality.

2. to intensify the prayer and spiritual life, especially in the Basic Ecclesial Communities;

3. to provide education for the laity in the other Great Religions of Asia;

4. to prepare an ongoing catechesis on the sacraments;

5. to promote the concept of lay apostolate and spirituality in our Catholic schools;

6. to devise ways and means to bring the Bible to every Christian home in Asia;

7. to offer the laity models of social help and tools of social analysis in the light of the Gospels;

8. to help Christians address happenings and events in a Christian way;

9. to circulate in print experiences of lay people in spirituality;

10. to help form interfaith communities with non-Christians.

3. WORKSHOP: THE LAITY IN MISSION

The participants found these points of special importance: theological and canonical motivation for mission; lay leadership in mission, particularly of catechists; modes of lay participation and mission.

A. Theological and Canonical Motivation for Mission

1. Select groups of "evangelizers" could be formed in parishes and diocesan communities, directed towards general groups such as non-Christians, special groups as tribals, minorities, the oppressed or exploited classes, or specialized social sections as youth, workers, university students, etc.

2. Specialized training is to be given to groups of evangelizers according to local and regional needs.

B. Lay Leadership in Mission

1. Bishops and pastors should create a greater awareness among the

educated and professional lay people of the need for greater participation, not on an ad hoc basis but on a permanent basis, in the life of the Church.

2. Formal education and training should be made available to the lay leaders to enable them to fulfill their vocation and mission in the Church as God's People. This will require greater exposure to Christian doctrine.

3. The establishment of institutes for the formation of the laity and catechists is recommended.

4. If and where possible, the Church must consider increasing the salary of catechists. This will attract better-equipped lay people to be catechists.

C. Lay Participation

1. Parish and diocesan councils should be mandatory. (Canon Law makes financial councils mandatory and has only recommended pastoral councils.)

2. Suitable courses and seminars should be conducted to equip the lay people for the mission of the Church.

3. The structures which exist should be made meaningful and effective.

4. Community style of functioning should be the norm. The Religious should also be included in parish councils. Representatives of youth groups should also find place in the councils and should be given an opportunity to participate, Basic Ecclesial Communities should also be represented.

D. Mutual Accountability

1. Mutual accountability in financial administration and pastoral planning and action are based on the theological reality of the Church being a communion, and on the principle of collegiality at the diocesan and parish levels. The Church is a body with different members, and therefore all should collaborate with each other in the mission of the Church.

2. The main structures suggested are the parish and diocesan councils. Apart from parish groups, specific groups, i.e., associations of doctors, lawyers, teachers, business men, etc., should also find

representation on the parish and diocesan councils, since these groups can provide specialized services to the parish and the diocese.

E. Lay Ministries

Wherever there is a lack of priests, *missio canonica* (canonical mission) should be given to lay people to preach, teach and baptize. However, *missio canonica* should not only be given when there is a shortage of priests but should also be given to suitable persons in order to involve the lay people in the mission of the Church in the light of the future of the Churches in Asia.

F. Lay Participation in Administration

There should be a committee for financial administration at the parish and diocesan levels. This should be made up of members of parish councils and diocesan councils respectively. Administration should always be jointly conducted by members of the councils and pastors.

4. WORKSHOP: WOMEN IN THE CHURCH AND IN SOCIETY

The Church is to be a model community where women are given their proper place and where justice and equality prevail.

The Church must be a "sign of the Kingdom," a sign of hope for all peoples in society. A place where experiences and successes are shared, a place where we listen to and love one another.

A. Women in the Church

1. Therefore we wish the Church:

a) to take up seriously one or two issues concerning women as sample cases, and resolutely implement them in the Church;

b) to initiate a process of change to eradicate entrenched patriarchal traditional attitudes;

c) to reclaim or rediscover Jesus' way of life, and Jesus' upholding of the dignity and personhood of women.

d) to mobilize action against all discriminations and injustices perpetrated against women in the Church;

e) to tap the latent potentialities of women as Christian apostles;

f) to intensify efforts to conscientize the masses of Catholic women and men;

- g) to institute special studies on the role of women in the Church.

B. Women in Society

1. The Church has to spell out for all concerned the proper understanding of religion in society: to focus attention on the formation of a right conscience based on Gospel and human values and not on secondary religious tenets; to encourage the option of right priorities for the making of a more just and equitable society; to emphasize reverence and respect for the person of women and fidelity and love in married love.

The Church must be a prophetic voice, take a stand to protest (without falling into generalizations) against evident and obvious discriminations and cruelties suffered in society by women. Protest should be followed up by planned action in the Church and in society to conscientize all on the personhood, dignity and equality of women in the world.

2. Therefore, we wish to crystalize our intense and open discussions to ten priorities of thought and action for the attention and implementation of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.

a) to dialogue with leaders of patriarchal religions about religion's oppressive role in women's lives; and to collaborate with people of other faiths and people of goodwill to fight for the basic human rights of women, long eroded by the horrors suffered by women because of abortion, dowry, bride-burning, labor exploitation, acid-throwing, etc.

b) to combat entrenched and discriminatory attitudes and mentalities against women which stem from patriarchal religions and societies.

c) to evaluate the women's liberation movement in Asia so as to avoid its extreme and destructive features in order to focus its attention on the basic human rights denied to the vast majority of Asian women.

d) to foster as an ongoing process theological reflections based on the word of God, and in the context of the lived experience of women, on the distinctive, God-given strengths and gifts peculiar to women.

e) to promote the need for a feminine spirituality. This means the unfolding of the female experience and the imparting of faith formation to sustain women in their mission and vocation.

f) to undertake seriously an ongoing family life and value education on the role of woman as wife and mother, as laborer and professional

worker, as single and married woman, in the rapidly changing situations of today's world.

g) to recognize and to develop the charisms of Religious women. Their numbers are a blessing for the Asian Church, and therefore their corresponding mission and responsibility to the teeming millions of oppressed women in Asia are vital to the Church in Asia.

h) To show special care and concern for neglected and lonely women: widows, single women, divorcees, etc.

i) to offer opportunities to women for active participation in decision-making bodies in the Church and, therefore, to prepare for this participation by organizing intensive formation courses, especially for the youth. Bearing in mind they constitute half of the world's population, they seek a fair and proportionate representation in Church-related bodies and institutions.

j) to encourage and support the key role women can play, because of their inherent feminine nature and charism, in protecting life in its totality, and nature in its globality.

5. WORKSHOP: THE LAITY AND THE FAMILY

In the long run, everything moves around the ideal of the family as the "domestic church." What we wish to say has been said well in our discussion guide.

A. Our Ideal: The Family as the Domestic Church

1. The Church is where God's life and love is shared. This takes place first in the family. There should be more emphasis on the common priesthood where lay people live and share their being Church, feeling one with all the bishops, priests, the People of God. And from life's experience, let the whole Church be the prophetic people. There is a need to shift from a hierarchy-centered Church.

2. The understanding of "common priesthood" as the basis for all apostolate should be implemented by bishops and priests, gradually changing their own attitudes and practices, and as trusting more the laity, and encouraging them.

B. Therefore, we wish to recommend:

a) to the bishops in Asia: to establish in each diocese a core group of Christian families who can look into the problems and find solutions for families either on the diocesan or parochial level.

b) to all episcopal conferences: exercise collegiality in combatting the problems connected with migrant workers, tourism, and other forms of exploitation of families in Asia.

c) the need of a proper formation of priests with regard to the family — the lack of support of the family apostolate, the lack of respect and appreciation of the family as domestic Church;

d) the need of formation of lay people, of parents, to appreciate the vocation and call of being parents, of being a family where each one is called to be Church, to build the Kingdom in the ordinariness of family life.

6. WORKSHOP: LAITY IN THE WORLD OF WORK

The fundamental mission of the laity in the world of work is to recover the religious meaning of human work as an expression of a God-given human creativity and a participation with the Creator in the ongoing process of recreating and transforming the world. Creation is the fundamental doctrine of the theology of work.

A. The Response of the Church to Workers

1. The Church in Asia must be aware of the deep human aspirations of workers at all levels of the work structure and must recognize these as Spirit-inspired. The Church must recommit herself to the workers as the main focus of its preferential option for the poor, because the workers constitute more than half of the entire population of Asia.

2. It is to the concrete situation of this sector of society that the Church must constantly listen to in order to gain insight, before we can theologize on the nature of work and on the situation of workers. Specifically, the Church must be aware of and be sensitive to the struggle the young workers have in living their Christian faith amidst serious difficulties and problems, and to encourage as well as their efforts at standing alongside other workers not of our faith, in the workers' movements for transformation of the work structure.

B. Our Recommendations — Few But Important:

1. The Church recognizes the valuable presence of the Young Christian Workers' movement in Asia and supports its programs, while at the same time is aware of its problems at the international level of the movement. We request that the International Team of the YCW and the Pontifical Council of the Laity continue the dialogue to sort out the

present problems, and avoid splitting the Catholic workers' movement in Asia.

2. We also support and encourage priests and religious who join the rank of workers and earn their livelihood from their work.

3. The Church in Asia should enter into collaboration with other secular movements, like Consumer Guidance Movements, movements for the protection of the ecology, which are also involved in the social transformation of society. We should collaborate with them on common issues and problems, at least on a temporary basis and on a limited scope.

4. It is imperative that Christians cooperate with other sectors of society for the transformation of the present organization of work. The basic principle in Christian cooperation with others should be mutual respect for each one's freedom and identify in their commitment to common issues. Such loose solidarity with non-Church groups facilitates a dialogue of life and of faith that can be mutually enriching.

5. In order that this collaboration is not misunderstood and manipulated, the Church must be clear about its own identity as an institution, yet should not impose itself on others it is bound to serve. After all, the Church is a servant Church; the Church is not for itself, but for the service of the world.

7. WORKSHOP: THE LAITY IN IN THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

It became quite clear to our group that there is not much difference in essence between the spirituality of lay persons in business and lay persons engaged in any other temporal activity.

A. The Christian Business Person

1. One's Christianity can be a disadvantage in business. It restricts one's action to what is moral. It can get one in trouble with one's boss. But is not this true of Christianity in any other activity?

2. On the other hand, Christian practice can be good business. A business person who exercises Christian ethics generates more public confidence. The products produced, designed and sold with love should not only be better, but should look better. As a result: better business. Is this not true of Christian ethics in all other lay activities?

3. There need not be any conflict between employer and employee,

if both are truly Christian, giving to each other their due and more. Is this not true of Christianity in any other situation of potential conflict?

4. A Christian business person's aspiration for maximum profits is to be interpreted not in material profits alone. Spiritual values have a definite place in a Christian business person's profit and loss statement. Is this not true of any other layman who is truly Christian?

5. It became clear to the participants that the life of the lay person in business is just another aspect of lay spirituality, another means of building up the Kingdom of God, another means of attaining sanctity, of achieving Christian perfection in the midst of the world.

Without this perspective of working for the Kingdom, the life of the business person is totally fragmented. There is no connection between his work and his family, his hobby, his religion. This experience of disintegration merely articulates man's search for God in a secular setting, a search that has led many to "leave" the world, to "flee" from the world in order to find God. It is precisely in the world, in an activity as secular as business, where the lay person can and should find God — a God who would integrate one's life because we do everything for and because of him.

B. The Group Especially Recommends:

1. The FABC convene a body of theologians, economists, sociologists and business people to draw up an integrated set of ethical guidelines, taking into account the various cultural and religious pluralities of the Asian setting, for the moral guidance of Christian business persons.

2. In connection with this study, it is urged that a long and hard look be taken at the intercultural and interreligious settings of Asia, to inquire into:

a) whether or not Christian business people in Asia are sensitive enough, or open enough, to the cultural and religious values and needs of the majority of the people of Asia; and

b) whether or not Christian business people should be more aware of their limitations and more concerned with listening to the other cultures and religions, as well as their own needs and aspirations.

3. Emphasis should be laid on the need for business people to reform existing socio-economic structures in such a way as to make these

congenial to the realization of social justice. Individual efforts may turn out to be very ineffective in supporting moral standards for business. There are many cases in which a business person with all goodwill will find it almost impossible to put into practice the moral standards even in one's own company, unless the socio-economic structures support one's efforts. For such universal support in a country, there must be effective legislation.

4. The Church should promote social justice by giving good example when it acts as economic agent as well.

a) In the case of selecting a company for a contract, the facts taken into account must not merely deal with the best economic terms offered, but also with the company's wage level and the working conditions it provides its employees.

b) Social justice should be realized inside the Church first. The Church itself should put into practice what it proposes in the matter of wages, job security, labor unions and other working conditions for the employees of Church institutions.

8. WORKSHOP: THE LAITY IN EDUCATION

The basic theology of the role of lay teachers appears quite clear. They are to be identified as disciples of Christ who has entrusted to them the specific saving mission of instructing the young. As such they share the priesthood, kingship and the prophetic mission of Christ. Their task, therefore, is not merely to produce good academic results but includes the inculcation of Kingdom values in the students through word and example.

A. The Lay Teacher — A Responsible Person

1. It is not easy to give a comprehensive and satisfactory definition of a Christian school. But one could easily recognize the constituent elements of a Christian institution. Briefly, a Christian school is one that functions according to a Christian philosophy. It is one that inculcates Christian values of social justice, concern for others, equality, etc. According to Fr. Pedro Arrupe a school should produce men and women who are not for themselves but for others.

2. The problem of lay teacher motivation and work lies with the school management. We have not succeeded in helping the teachers see their work of teaching in the true light of the Gospel. We have not shown their teaching as an expression of Christ's salvation. And so they have difficulty seeing teaching as vocation and more than job. If we are serious

about bringing the lay person into the administrative and decision-making process of our schools, it is necessary to provide the means of growth in Christian spirituality and a true vision of their task.

B. Recommendations of the Group:

1. The way of sharing responsibility among Catholic educators will involve the following consequences:

a) Lay persons should, together with priests and Religious, formulate the philosophy of the school and be associated in the evaluation of performance.

b) A collegial type of government in schools should be introduced.

c) In order to avoid conflicts, teacher responsibilities should be defined.

d) The clergy and Religious should give good example of team leadership.

2. If the above ideals are to become a reality, the laity i.e., teachers, students, and parents, should be prepared spiritually, psychologically and technically.

3. There is a need for a center which will provide facilities for the catechetical and spiritual formation of the teachers.

4. Sharing responsibility requires the sharing of spirituality and vision. We should therefore look for avenues for sharing spiritual values with our Christian and non-Christian teachers to foster a Christian atmosphere in our schools. Special attention and effort should be made to educate the parents towards a right sense of values in society. This sharing should also involve our graduates, inspiring them to devote part of their lives towards special service of society.

5. The curriculum of our schools at all levels should provide for exposure programs of the students to actual social realities. Catholic institutions of higher learning should establish centers of advanced socio-political research to serve the intellectual formation of the enlightened Catholic political minds, to enable them to analyse critically the policies and practices prevalent in the country.

6. Catholic universities and similar institutions of advanced studies should seriously put basic scientific research in education in the first place of priority.

9. WORKSHOP: THE ASIAN LAITY IN THE WORLD OF HEALTH SERVICES

There is great need to consider health services as an integral part of the Church's vocation and saving mission, if it is to continue the work of Christ the Healer.

A. The Catholic Laity in the Health Services

1. Long ago Mahatma Gandhi — a great Asian — is reported to have said that if Christ were to come to Asia today, he would have come in the form of bread.

Today we can say if Christ were to come to Asia, he would come in the form of "medicine" to heal both body and mind of the people of Asia.

2. There is also need to foster and inculcate a sense of Christian vocation and mission in the medical personnel.

3. As an integral part of the Church's vocation and mission, health services have to be incorporated in the overall diocesan pastoral plan; and the Church's structures used to implement a pastoral plan for health services, i.e., grass-root level moral education and animation, inservice training and ongoing spiritual and ethical formation of the health workers.

B. Some Basic Recommendations to the Whole Church:

1. The laity in the health services need an ethical, moral and doctrinal formation. This is the special need of the hour if we want the laity to shoulder their responsibility in the midst of contemporary developments in the practice of medicine. And the clergy must also be trained in what is going on in medicine, for better rapport, for understanding, and for cooperation with the health worker. Clinical pastoral education is a basic requirement for most priests.

2. Wherever there is need, new infrastructures should be created at the diocesan, national and international levels which will bring the laity, along with the clergy, into management and decision-making in Catholic institutions for health services.

3. There are Catholic regional and international associations of health personnel, e.g., physicians, nurses, pharmacists, etc., which have rendered notable service to our laity. These associations should be found in every country, and where possible, in every diocese of Asia.

4. Biomedical ethics centers should be established (after the model of centers in Bombay and Manila). Interdisciplinary dialogue should be fostered in order that Catholic ethical teaching may influence medical personnel and create informed public opinion about medical issues.

5. Lay workers in the health services should be promoted and encouraged within the institutions, and the overwhelming presence of Religious in the administration of the health services should give way to more lay participation at the top levels of administration in this apostolate.

6. For better communication and sharing of experience and Catholic thinking in the field of health services all existing mass media — religious and secular — should be used more, in a coordinated way.

7. The group felt that the recently established Pontifical Commission for Health Workers and the proposed International Catholic Health Service meet the needs of the hour. And therefore we feel that the Pontifical Commission should be strongly supported in its function as a coordinating body of all international Catholic health service organizations.

8. In many countries of Asia, fear of death is very strong. In this hopelessness the Church of Asia has a tremendous challenge and an opportunity to bear witness to Christ the Risen Lord and to her Easter hope. Hence, the "hospice movement" should be a pastoral priority in Asia.

10. WORKSHOP: LAITY IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Action on behalf of justice is a constitutive dimension of the teachings of the Gospel. The call to be fully human necessitates a concern for government and the fulfillment of civic duties. It was felt that the Church in Asia had a long way to go in these regards.

A. The Christian Duty to Serve the Common Good

1. Politics is not dirty; politics is not merely the art of the possible. It involves organized, purposeful activity for the common good. In a sense, the Catholic is called upon to participate in activity that leads to the common good. The consequences for the individual and the Church through non-participation are serious and many. A community response is more effective than an individual one in terms of strength and communion.

2. The minority situation of the Church in most of Asia can account for a policy of non-confrontation with the party in power. But as the Church in Asia becomes more self-reliant and more mature in its understanding of itself, and as the laity become more aware of their call by God to be living members of the community, concerned with the common good, the hour has come to discern how to become more truly a community concerned with human rights and a people with a clear option for the poor.

3. The local Church's role vis-à-vis governments may have to become more critical and prophetic, in a way that marks out clear priorities based more on the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights and not just concerned with Christian or minority rights. The Church will have to work with other Christian Churches and religious groups and with men and women of goodwill in order to achieve these goals.

4. In this effort good Catholics dedicated to political activity are an essential need of the times to effect legislation for human rights. Asia has been blessed with many men and women of integrity who have served well in political office. Some others, we know, have been tempted by graft and become corrupt. It is clear that the Church should not support individual candidates or particular parties in a public way — what is usually called “partisan politics” — because of the division this can bring to the community. But there is a need to support all politicians morally, to challenge them to maintain Gospel values and to be informed of the social teachings of the Church. A “think-tank” composed of representatives of the hierarchy, theologians and lay experts in related fields could be a very practical way to achieve this support and challenge. In situations where the Church is a majority, even this kind of general support may be misunderstood.

5. As the local Church takes more prophetic stances in relation to human rights and the needs of the poor, it is imperative that these stances truly reflect the whole Church, and that people be well informed of their role and the Gospel values out of which they are operating. As a community the local Church can discern the proper means to be used. While we shall always strive to preserve the institutions of the Church, the advancement of prophetic positions will become more and more our primary concern.

6. Sometimes, the People of God are called to make a heroic response. Equally heroic is the politician who takes a conscientious stand against the government and his or her party, because he or she sees this courageous position to be the one demanded of him or her. There is another side of the same situation: what if a politician in a pluralistic

society votes in such a way that he or she judges will benefit and be accepted by the majority of society whose consensus is not in accord with his or her own religious belief (for example, sterilization)? Does the politician deserve rebuke by Church authorities? Can the Church insist in every political question that its morality be preferred to the morality of the majority, for whom the common good, in the case of the example use, is population control?

7. In the political process, Catholics have to work with other religions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam, with some religious groups which will take an adversary position to the Church, with racial groupings, or with Marxists. In a pluriracial situation, the work of the Church should be to encourage multiracial parties or activities which contribute to reconciliation and prevent polarization. With Marxists — though Catholics cannot accept Marxist ideology — they can dialogue and work together in a practical way under certain circumstances for the common good.

8. There has developed a whole process of “active non-violence,” with its origins in India in the person of Gandhi. This process of active non-violence involves many stages, with more rigorous demands on the participants as the stages develop. The ordinary political process involves the ballot, other administrative means, dialogue, the use of the media, legal action, paralegal action, public-interest litigation, mobilizing public opinion, both national and international, demonstrations, and finally, civil disobedience which leads to active non-violence. Many feel that to be authentic and true to Gospel teachings, “active non-violence” is the final point. Catholic teaching adds that only when all these means have been exhausted and the tyranny continues, would a violent response be considered a possibility.

9. These examples of non-violence and conscientious objection point up the importance of adequate formation in the true meaning of politics and public service for the entire People of God. It is most important for the Church to expend its resources for training leaders in the Catholic social teaching on politics and public service. The principal part of this training should take place at the grass-roots level, perhaps through Basic Ecclesial Communities. The training should be non-formal education, value formation, basic leadership, participation, integrity, responsibility taking the consequences of one's decisions. It should involve three dimensions: knowledge, action and a spirituality based on prayer and sacramental life. The process should seek for reflection and action in a community setting, training people where they are. Manuals should be prepared: concise, clear statements on the Church's teaching

about family, social and political life. The whole process should rise up from the Asian context and respond to that context, both in content and method. Those who show promise as a result of this training should be encouraged and helped to take more formal training, even at a university level, perhaps some day to assume a role within the structures of government or public service. The training should be available for the whole Church: bishops, priests, laity, with special emphasis on the laity.

10. The will of the Holy Father is clear: priests and bishops are not to involve themselves in partisan politics. This makes so clear the need for training the laity.

At the same time, Christians must be involved in a kind of political activity which means organized, purposeful activity for the common good. This may include a whole range of activities from indirect to direct political action, involving intervention always at the level of values and ethical judgments, education in the Church's social teachings, analysis of issues in their social and moral dimensions, measuring public policy against Gospel values, speaking out publicly on human rights issues. At times a more direct public action may be required by way of referendums, candidacy in elections, etc.

B. Recommendations:

In view of the seriousness and complexity of the political situation in Asian countries, there is an urgent need for the bishops to commit sufficient resources to the formation of clergy and laity with regard to their Christian responsibilities as citizens in political and public life. Concretely, the FABC should hold institutes in this field for clergy and laity, along the lines of the Bishops' Institutes for Social Action, Missionary Apostolate, Dialogue, etc.

11. WORKSHOP: LAITY AND MINISTRY TO YOUTH

Our workshop discussions and analysis of the Asian youth's problems and needs revolve around three basic needs, namely, survival, relational, formational.

A. The Basic Needs of Youth

The one common denominator among Asian countries is poverty — economic and/or moral poverty: the economic poverty of the poor, and the moral poverty of the rich/poor.

Youth find it difficult to relate with the adult groups, due perhaps to differences of language or lingo, values, mentality and attitudes towards

a vertical or horizontal type of relationship, traditional structures and contents expected of the young to accept. The "rat race," conditioned by stark materialism brought about by the so-called "computer age," has hit the Asian family the hardest. The basic education in love that children have the right to expect from their parents is no longer there, all because of absentee-parents whose physical presence to their growing children can never be substituted by anyone or with something else. Thus, the Asian youth seem to show emotional and psychological insecurities in manifold forms — drugs, alcoholism, suicides, vandalism, violence, prostitution, premarital sex and live-ins-made quite easy and convenient because of the contraceptive mentality of the irresponsible adult-generation.

B. Implications and Recommendations:

If the Asian youth is truly the Church of today and not of tomorrow, then they do deserve no longer just the usual "lip service" given by pastors and members of the Church but their utmost honest-to-goodness concern, attention, and availability and service.

2. In view at least of their number, the Asian youth should be given greater responsibility in the task of ministering to or evangelizing their fellow youth. If well-formed in the Gospel values and spirituality, they are the most effective ministers to their peers because their natural peer-belongingness brings them in direct contacts with fellow youth, with few, if any, psychological, mental or physical barriers between them.

3. The physical presence and availability of the Church to them through its pastors and an involved laity can yet change the apparent negative attitudes of the Asian youth toward the Church and its authority figures.

4. Because of the widespread poverty in Asia, there is a staggeringly growing number of jobless or unemployed and underemployed out-of-school youth. This, indeed, is one great challenge to the sensitivity, responsibility, ingenuity and pastoral resourcefulness of the local Church, as of Asia. A feasible, balanced development program drawn up and pursued at the local Church levels (diocesan and national) for the youth's continuing socio-economic, educational and spiritual growth for productive and gainful living may be one possible response of the Asian laity of the Church.

5. There are signs that the seemingly spiritually "dehydrated" Asian youth, because of their materialistic and consumeristic environment, are

beginning to look for peace of mind and for out-of-this-world happiness beyond the material confines. Thus, the Asian youth's apparent turning now to spiritual things and practices (transcendental meditations, yoga, Bible reflections, charismatic movements, etc.). Accordingly, the local Churches of Asia should read these signs and be able to provide the youth with meaningful "faith experience" by way of exposures to Gospel-values-oriented programs and movements.

6. One apparent weakness of many a youth-ministry program in the local Churches in Asia has been its lack of well-trained and formed youth directors/chaplains or youth ministers, who should work full-time.

7. The school campuses are now the breeding centers of all sorts of ideologies — particularly, godless ideologies. It should therefore be the concern of the individual local Churches to develop and put up a strong program for campus ministry that will offer the alternative Christian option and lead the youth to the faith.

8. Youth ministry embraces both the in-school and the out-of-school youths. Special attention must be paid to the socially handicapped and marginalized youth (school drop-outs, out-of-school youth, special under-privileged groups, etc).

9. Seminary formation should include a stress on programs on youth ministry.

10. Christian youth have a role to play in dialogue with youth of other cultures and religions.

11. This workshop on Laity and Ministry to Youth recommends:

a) that the FABC Education and Student Chaplaincy Office further develop its programs for youth through education, especially through value education.

b) that at diocesan and conference level Youth Commissions be established to animate, organize youth programs.

c) that at FABC level a special instrument (similar to those offices which sponsored the BISA, BIMA, BILA, etc.) be instituted, which can provide guidelines and aids for youth ministry for Asian Churches.

d) that a Pontifical Commission for Youth, distinct from the one for laity, be established.

12. WORKSHOP: THE LAITY IN AND FOR THE MASS MEDIA

In Asia, undoubtedly, there are media; there are media people; and, of course, there is media power.

There are “Church-owned” media, print and broadcast; there are media “run by Christians”; there are “State-sponsored/controlled” media; and there are “privately-owned and operated” media.

Needless to say, in Asia there are media people.

On the one hand, there are Christian and non-Christian lay professionals in the media; and on the other hand, in the other end of media, that is, there are the end-users: the readers, the listeners and the viewers.

Media power, of course, is perceived by all as all-pervasive in its presence and ever-increasing in its influence.

Value-wise, media power is deemed ambivalent — power for good or evil, that is.

A. Some Problems Identified

After an interesting exchange of “notes” ... with *Inter Mirifica* in mind, and *Communio et Progressio*, and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *Puebla*, some problems were somehow identified.

Since problems lie with people, some people were identified somewhere.

Problem No. 1:

Among Church leaders in Asia the awareness of the importance of social communications as well as of the impact of its means, the so-called mass media, is not developed enough to perceive the need and the urgency:

- 1) to adapt pastoral responses to the media world and its workings;
- 2) to integrate social communications into the over-all coordinated pastoral plan;
- 3) to train and trust Christian lay media professionals; and

4) to reach out pastorally to all other media people.

Problem No. 2:

Little or no Church finances are allotted for:

- 1) the selection, formation and training of lay media personnel;
- 2) the setting up and the running of media centers, with preferably full-time directors.

Problem No. 3:

Little spiritual/pastoral assistance is provided to lay professionals in the media, and not enough official recognition of, and reward for, their honest, hard, and sometimes hardhitting work.

Problem No. 4:

Parents at home, and teachers in school, lack the relevant knowledge and attitudes and practices to equip their children and pupils/students with a positive, critical and responsible Christian approach to the powerful idiom — language and image! — and impact of media.

Problem No. 5:

Little “taste” for “purely/explicitly religious” programs on radio or TV, as well as for “churchy” news and views on print, is manifest in urban areas especially. One “sign of the times”!

Problem No. 6:

The youth, in school and out of school, lack a “sense of vocation and mission” for the media apostolate.

Problem No. 7:

The absence of media professional associations for mutual support and mutual commitment is obvious on the diocesan level.

(There is, of course, the East Asia Catholic Press Association — for China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macau, Taiwan; and there is the Southeast Asia Catholic Press Association — for Burma, Indochina, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand; and there

is the UCAN — the Union of Catholic Asian News, which produces regularly the “News Service,” the “Diocesan Profiles Series,” and “Asia Focus.” On the broadcast side of things, there is, of course, the UNDA/Asia.)

Problem No. 8:

The last, but definitely not the least, problem identified is the misuse or abuse of beautiful but bare women in media advertising and marketing.

B. Some Recommendations:

Conscious, convinced and concerned about the various people with varied problems vis-à-vis today’s mass media in Asia, the following recommendations are made as possible approaches to gradual solutions on two levels.

1. On the level of the pastors (that is, bishops, priests and Religious, and priests-to-be), in order to help them be able and become available to lead the laity — to show them the way and go the way — in and for the media apostolate, it is recommended that

a) Each — bishops’ conference, or several together, along FABC lines, should now organize (before the Fifth Plenary Assembly, that is) at least one seminar/workshop on social communications for bishops themselves.

b) All — bishops’ conferences in Asia should now fully participate in the enrichment of the Radio Veritas’ overseas service programs, as well as in the selection, formation and training, and compensation of the staff and personnel.

c) For possible integration of pastoral efforts through the media, the secretariates of the various FABC Offices should meet regularly.

d) A “sense of vocation and mission” in the world of media should now be made an integral part of the ongoing formation and information of priests and Religious.

e) The FABC recommendation that “basic training in the principles and methods of mass communications be part of seminary studies, in preparation for their ministry in a world so profoundly influenced by communication in its myriad forms,” should now seriously be implemented by all dioceses.

2. On the level of the laity — since the involvement of lay people in

evangelization through the media should now be a “prime pastoral priority” —, it is recommended that

a) In Catholic families, parents and children should receive “media education” as part and parcel of family catechesis, so that, although exposed to media, they may not be exploited — and “idiotized” — by media.

b) In Catholic schools, “edu-communication” should now be extended to primary and secondary classes; and in universities, researches should now be undertaken on mass media influence, wise or otherwise.

c) Out-of-school youths should also be afforded the chances to develop a critical-minded attitude towards media “culture.”

d) Christian lay media professionals should be trained and trusted in the field of social communications for evangelization — and entrusted with the mission to evangelize, through words and witness, other media people on a peer to peer basis.

e) So-called “secular media” practitioners should be provided with “spiritual formation” and “pastoral guidance” towards a deeper sense of social responsibility.

f) Preferably during the annual celebration of “Social Communications Day” (which, by the way, is a “must”), Catholic Media Awards, among other things, should be given to any and all deserving lay media professionals, after having been freely screened and fairly judged by their own peers.

VIII. GROWING IN COLLEGIALLY: SHARING IN PRAYER, CONCERN AND MUTUAL SUPPORT

The plenary assembly quickly and easily became an expression of the “Church-communion.” Bishops, priests, Religious and laity joined together to search out the implications of the baptismal mandate given equally to all in the Church, and, their concern here, to the laity.

In the early years of FABC a bishop suggested that their meetings be always a “prayerful experience.” This suggestion has become a FABC tradition. Several hours of each day were given over to prayer together, and this experience perhaps did more than the other parts of the program to bring about a sense of a common discipleship of the Lord in the Church. At the center of the day was the Eucharist, with all the participants from each conference taking their turn in preparing the liturgy and leading the celebration.

The Sunday Eucharist at the Tokyo Cathedral was a particularly

stirring event for the participants and the Catholics who had come from all the parishes of the Archdiocese to welcome the bishops and the other delegates to Japan and to share in this witness to the universality of the Church. Archbishop Peter Shirayanagi gave a moving homily. At the close of the Mass, the bishops were introduced by country to the congregation. A group picture on the steps of the modern cathedral, a moving around the square to greet their fellow-Catholics, and then the participants sat down to a lunch provided for them by the laity of Japan.

Continuity with the Synod

An increased sense of the "Church Universal" and of a continuity of the proceedings of the plenary assembly with the forthcoming World Synod of the Bishops was contributed to by Archbishop Jan Schotte. The Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops gave a summary of the work of the secretariate in its preparation for the Synod, and an analysis of the principal topics emerging from the reports of the episcopal conferences.

Business Meeting

The Plenary Assembly is also a time to conduct the business of FABC. The Secretary General and the bishop-chairman of the six Offices made their reports to the bishops. During the week the Central Committee met twice, and individual Offices met with their committee members to continue their planning in light of the assembly deliberations.

The Reports Conference-by-Conference

Several plenary assemblies back in time, a bishop-delegate enlivened the discussions: "We have heard," he said, "of the successes in the different countries, tell us now of the difficulties." The exchange of pastoral experiences among the conferences is now an important part of the plenary assembly. It has become a kind of collective witness, with a representative of each bishop's conference sharing in turn with the assembly the critical concerns facing the local Church in each country. While languages, cultures and social contexts were different, there was enough similarity to detect what seemed to be common patterns in the challenges of the apostolate. This personal sharing of their brother-bishops, together with the lived experiences of the other participants, helped keep the discussions of the assembly theme very much at the so-called "grass-roots" level.

The Open Forum

The Open Forum has also become a vital part of the plenary

assembly. The Open Forum provides the bishops with an opportunity to discuss problems from the "Asian perspective."

To provide for the Open Forum each conference, and then every bishop in Asia, was invited to submit beforehand, individually or in groups, topics they would wish to see placed on the agenda. In the assembly itself each delegate could make additional proposals. The Steering Committee made the final decisions on what proposals time allowed for discussion.

A fundamental problem arose at the beginning of the Open Forum: "Who speaks for the member conferences?" FABC is a voluntary association of episcopal conferences, and no decision of the assembled representatives binds the individual conference. The bishop-participants came to a consensus that any statement of the plenary assembly expresses the mind of the Plenary Assembly, and can be received later by each member conference as it should decide to or not.

The topics chosen for the Open Forum pertained mainly to pastoral problems, world-wide in themselves but particularly relevant to Asia. A presentation was usually made by experts; the subjects were discussed at length; and in some instances the bishops came to agreement, while some topics were received with interest, without any action being required or taken. In this short report only the resolutions can be given.

1. Difficulties of the Church in Latin America

The bishops voted to send a cable to Cardinal Francisco Fresno, President of the Episcopal Conference of Chile, expressing their prayerful support for the Catholics of Chile in their time of political harassment.

The bishops also sent a cable to President Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua:

"Asian bishops assembled in Tokyo at Fourth Plenary Assembly of Federation of Bishops' Conferences protest expulsion Bishop Pablo Vega. Regret no response to appeals of Holy See. Request immediate recall of Bishop Vega."

2. An Appeal for Peace

"We, the bishops attending the Fourth Plenary Assembly of

FABC, conscious of our solidarity with our Japanese brothers and sisters, especially those still suffering from the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and those too whose lives were so tragically ended, pledge ourselves in this International Year of Peace, to working for a world without war, and a society founded on truth, freedom, justice and love.

North, South, East, West, there is only one peace, to be built not on arms and armaments, but on the full human development of peoples everywhere and our human solidarity in the Lord.

The Asia-Pacific region still continues to be the testing ground for nuclear bombs and missiles, and even serves as the dumping ground of nuclear waste. This region and even outer space are in danger of being militarized. This continuous threat to the lives and destinies of our people is a matter of growing concern and anxiety.

We unequivocally condemn the use or threat to use nuclear weapons as a crime against humanity. We call for serious disarmament, negotiations by the nuclear super-powers and urge that they turn their resources now being spent on weapons of destruction toward the development of the suffering and oppressed peoples of the world. We regret the postponement of the United Nations' conference on the relationship between disarmament and development, and express the hope that it will be speedily convened.

The choice now lies between bombs and bread. Both are not possible. Bread for the world, especially for the great masses of Asia who are poor and hungry, is not only a material question. For us it is a moral and spiritual challenge facing mankind.

We call upon all our people and all our brothers and sisters of all living faiths in Asia to join the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, and the religious leaders of the world during the month of October, and especially on and around the 27th October, as they make a pilgrimage to Assisi in Italy to pray together for peace with justice in our troubled world.

‘Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who seek to do so.’”

3. The Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China

The episcopal conferences of Asia feel a special attachment to and concern for the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China,

because it is at once Catholic and Asian. The journals have described the Chinese Government's determination for modernization and the resultant changes that are taking place in this vast part of the Asian continent.

A presentation of modern trends in China was made by the Reverend Ismael Zuloaga, S.J., delegate of the Jesuit Superior General for Chinese affairs. Bishop John B. Wu of Hong Kong also gave a lengthy report on his recent visits to China.

The bishops received both reports with intense interest and approved a resolution that the FABC Central Secretariate sponsor a study seminar in order that the Church in Asia may better understand — and assist where possible — contemporary developments in China.

4. The Catholic Church in Asia and Political Life

The year previous to the Plenary Assembly had seen political changes in almost every Asian country. Several bishops' conferences requested that the Plenary Assembly provide time for discussion of what the role of the Church could be in the light of Church teachings. The Very Reverend Bienvenido F. Nebres, Jesuit Provincial in the Philippines, presented a paper in which he examined the guidelines and norms appearing in Church documents regarding the Church and political action, the response to justice, human rights, cooperation with different political groups, and, more particularly, the role of clergy and religious.

Father Nebres used as a context of his talk the recent developments in the Philippines. Archbishop Orlando Quevedo of Nueva Segovia described the process of consultation through which the Philippine bishops went to provide some moral principles of political judgment for their people.

5. Seminary Education and Formation for the Priesthood

The improvement of education and formation in seminaries was accepted as a concern common to all the member conferences. Rather than attempt a discussion of such a multifaceted subject within the short time allowed by the plenary assembly, the bishops agreed that the Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy conduct a bishops' institute on seminary education in the near future.

6. Ecclesiastical Recognition of International Apostolic Movements

What criteria are there for the ecclesiastical recognition of associations

in individual dioceses which are branches of a national, regional or international organization? At times these branches operate in a diocese without the bishop's knowledge and/or permission. After a brief discussion, the bishops saw this as one of the pastoral concerns that would be treated at the forthcoming Synod on the Laity.

This discussion led into a consideration of the crisis existing in the Young Christian Workers' Movement, with two groups claiming to be the authentic organization, and only one — the one more recently established — having received recognition by the Holy See. This situation of conflict has occasioned upset among some of the Asian membership in the YCW. Cardinal Pironio explained the background of the Holy See's decision, and proposed that the bishops and laity with special concern for YCW meet with him and his staff members during the plenary assembly for a discussion at length.

Finally, other issues of concern were proposed for discussion. In most cases the items were postponed for discussion until a later time or were withdrawn by their proposers. The items are simply listed.

1. The promotion in Asia of human rights in general, and of religious rights in particular.
2. The pastoral care of refugees.

IX. PARTICIPANTS

The Holy See

Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity

The Most Rev. José Sanchez, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

The Most Rev. Jan Schotte, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops

The Apostolic Pro-Nuncio in Japan

The Most Rev. William Aquin Carew

Bangladesh

The Most Rev. Michael Rozario, Archbishop of Dhaka, President

The Most Rev. Michael D'Rozario, Bishop of Khulna

The Most Rev. Theotonius Gomes, Bishop of Dinajpur

Mrs. Monica Gomes

Mr. A.G. Mullik

Burma

The Most Rev. Gabriel Thohey, Archbishop of Rangoon

Hong Kong

The Most Rev. John B. Wu, Bishop of Hong Kong

Mr. Paul Lee Lai Min

Miss Theresa Tsang Tak Lan

India

The Most Rev. Simon Pimenta, Archbishop of Bombay, President

The Most Rev. Benedict Mar Gregorios, Archbishop of Trivandrum

The Most Rev. Casimir Gnanadickam, Archbishop of Madurai

The Most Rev. Kagithapu Mariadas, Bishop of Visakhapathnam

The Most Rev. Alphonsus Mathias, Bishop of Chikmagalur

The Most Rev. Joseph Powathil, Archbishop of Changanacherry

The Most Rev. Telesphore Toppo, Archbishop of Ranchi

Mrs. Stella Faria

Mr. Theodore Francis Lall

Mr. Austin Paul

Mrs. Daphne Stockman

Indonesia

The Most Rev. Francis X. Hadisumarta, Bishop of Malang, President

The Most Rev. Leo Soekoto, Archbishop of Jakarta

The Most Rev. M.D. Situmorang, Bishop of Padang

Mr. Marcel Beding

Mr. Paul Tanditasik

Drs. Frans Seda

Japan

The Most Rev. Peter S. Shirayanagi, Archbishop of Tokyo, President

The Most Rev. Francis X. Kaname Shimamoto, Bishop of Urawa

The Most Rev. Raymond K. Tanaka, Bishop of Kyoto

Dr. Paul Y. Anno

Mr. Augustinus K. Fujiya

Mrs. Maria M. Hamaguchi

Mr. Ignatius J. Hashimoto

Ms. Francisca K. Hata

Mr. Raphael Paul Y. Hayashi

Mr. Franciscus N. Kato

Mrs. Maria Catharina S. Nagashima

Mrs. Maria Agnes K. Nishimura

Mr. Aloysius S. Sakai

Mr. John T. Samuta

Mr. John T. Samuta
Ms. Maria Sophia Agnes Mitsuyo Sawa
Mr. Thomas More R. Suzuki
Prof. Franciscus H. Takeichi
Mr. Joannes S. Tomoishi
Mr. Thomas Oscar I. Tsuchiya
Mrs. Maria Magdalena H. Ukita

Korea

Cardinal Stephen S.H. Kim, Archbishop of Seoul, President
Most Rev. Nicholas J.S. Cheong, Bishop of Cheong Ju
Most Rev. Michael J.I. Pak, Bishop of Jeon Ju
Prof. Thomas H.S. Han
Mrs. Anna Nam-Im Suk

Laos-Kampuchea

The Most Rev. Yves Ramousse, President of the Bureau for the
Cambodian Apostolate

Macau

The Most Rev. Arquimínio R. da Costa, Bishop of Macau
Mr. Wan Wai I
Miss Teresa Vong Sou Kuan

Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei

The Most Rev. Gregory Yong, Archbishop of Singapore, President
The Most Rev. James Chan, Bishop of Melaka-Johore
The Most Rev. Anthony Lee, Bishop of Miri
Mr. Richard Dorall
Mr. Daniel Kong
Mr. Michael Thio

Pakistan

The Most Rev. Armando Trindade, Bishop of Lahore
Mr. Dacian Mascarenhas
Mr. Mahboob Sada

Philippines

Cardinal Ricardo Vidal, Archbishop of Cebu, President
The Most Rev. Cirilo Almario, Bishop of Malolos
The Most Rev. Fernando Capalla, Bishop of Iligan
The Most Rev. Carmelo Morelos, Bishop of Butuan
The Most Rev. Alberto Piamonte, Archbishop of Jaro
The Most Rev. Orlando Quevedo, Archbishop of Nueva Segovia

The Most Rev. Ramon Villena, Coadjutor Bishop of Bayombong
Mr. Manny de Guzman
Ms. Carmelita de Veza
Mr. Roman Mabanta
Mr. Antonio Salazar

Republic of China

The Most Rev. Joseph Lin, Bishop of Chiayi
The Most Rev. Luke Liu, Bishop of Hsinchu
Miss Lin Shu Ling
Dr. Ou Chin Der

Sri Lanka

The Most Rev. Frank Marcus Fernando, Bishop of Chilaw, President
The Most Rev. Henry Goonewardena, Bishop of Anuradhapura
Mr. Newton Fernando
Mr. Amirthanathar Santhiapillai

Thailand

The Most Rev. Lawrence Khai Saenphonon, Archbishop of Thare
The Most Rev. Lawrence Thienchai Samanchit, Bishop of Chant-
haburi
Prof. Kirti Bunchua
Miss Therese Siriphen Limsirikul

The Standing Committee of the Federation

The Most Rev. Antony Selvanayagam, Bishop of Penang, Malaysia,
Convenor
*Cardinal Ricardo Vidal, Archbishop of Cebu, Philippines
The Most Rev. Leobard D'Souza, Archbishop of Nagpur, India
The Most Rev. Stephen F. Hamao, Bishop of Yokohama, Japan
The Most Rev. Anthony Lobo, Auxiliary Bishop of Karachi, Pakistan

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan

*The Most Rev. Peter S. Shirayanagi, Archbishop of Tokyo,
President
The Most Rev. Joseph S. Fukahori, Bishop of Takamatsu
*The Most Rev. Stephen F. Hamao, Bishop of Yokohama
The Most Rev. Peter S. Hirata, Bishop of Fukuoka
The Most Rev. Peter T. Hirayama, Bishop of Oita
The Most Rev. Peter T. Ishigami, Bishop of Naha
The Most Rev. John S. Ito, Bishop Emeritus of Niigata
The Most Rev. Paul S. Itonaga, Bishop of Kagoshima
The Most Rev. Joseph H. Matsunaga, Auxiliary Bishop of Nagasaki

The Most Rev. Joseph A. Misue, Bishop of Hiroshima
The Most Rev. Paul K. Mori, Auxiliary Bishop of Tokyo
The Most Rev. Francis K. Sato, Bishop of Niigata
The Most Rev. Raymond A.C. Sato, Bishop of Sendai
*The Most Rev. Francis X. Kaname Shimamoto, Bishop of Urawa
The Most Rev. Aloysius N. Soma, Bishop of Nagoya
*The Most Rev. Raymond K. Tanaka, Bishop of Kyoto
The Most Rev. Benedict T. Tomizawa, Bishop of Sapporo
The Most Rev. Paul H. Yasuda, Archbishop of Osaka

* Listed above

The Offices of the Federation

The Office of Human Development

The Most Rev. Anthony Soter Fernandez, Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Chairman
The Rev. Desmond de Sousa, Executive Secretary

The Office of Social Communications

The Most Rev. Paul Shan, Bishop of Hualien, Taiwan, R.O.C., Chairman
The Rev. Jean Desautels, Executive Secretary

The Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy

The Most Rev. Leonardo Legaspi, Archbishop of Carceres, Philippines, Chairman
Brother Lawrence Manuel, Executive Secretary
Brother Anthony Rogers, Secretary for Non-Formal Education

The Office of Evangelization

The Most Rev. Thomas Menampampil, Bishop of Dibrugarh, India, Chairman
The Rev. Sebastian Karotemprel, Executive Secretary

The Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

The Most Rev. Angelo Fernandes, Archbishop of Delhi, India, Chairman
The Rev. Albert Poulet-Mathis, Executive Secretary

The Committee for the Laity

The Most Rev. Joseph Ti-Kang, Coadjutor Archbishop of Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C., Chairman

The Most Rev. Alan de Lastic, Bishop of Lucknow, India
*The Most Rev. José Sanchez, Vatican City
The Rev. Jess Brena, Executive Secretary
Ms. Cora Mateo

The Central Secretariat

The Most Rev. Henry S. D'Souza, Archbishop of Calcutta, India,
Secretary General
The Rev. Edward F. Malone, Assistant Secretary General

Fraternal Delegates

The Australian Episcopal Conference

The Most Rev. William J. Foley, Archbishop of Perth

The Council of European Episcopal Conferences (CCEE)

The Most Rev. Maurice Taylor, Bishop of Galloway, Scotland

Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM)

The Most Rev. Dario Castrillon Hoyos, Bishop of Pereira, Colombia,
Secretary General

The Episcopal Conference of the Pacific (CEPAC)

The Most Rev. Petero Mataca, Archbishop of Suva, Fiji, President

The United States Catholic Conference

The Most Rev. John Cummins, Bishop of Oakland, California

Special Participants

Mr. Charles Amjad Ali, Christian Study Centre, Rawalpindi,
Pakistan

The Rev. Msgr. Peter Coughlan, Pontifical Council for the Laity,
Vatican City

The Rev. Msgr. Achilles Dakay, Cebu, Philippines

The Rev. S.J. Emmanuel, National Seminary, Ampitiya, Kandy, Sri
Lanka

The Rev. Msgr. Norbert Herkenrath, Misereor, Aachen, Federal
Republic of Germany

The Rev. Adolfo Nicolas, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan

The Rev. Bienvenido Nebres, Provincial, Manila, Philippines

The Rev. Anthony McGuire, Ethnics Apostolate, Archdiocese of
San Francisco, California

Mr. George Menezes, Member, Pontifical Council for the Laity,
Bombay, India
The Rev. Park Sang Jung, the Christian Conference of Asia,
Singapore
The Rev. Lucien Schmidt, Missio, Aachen, Federal Republic of
Germany
The Most Rev. José Sorra, Bishop of Virac, Philippines
Mr. Wendolin Sue, Catechist, Kolonia, Pohnpei, Caroline Islands
Mr. Vedamuthu Susairaj, International Young Christian Workers'
Movement, Asian Team, Bombay, India
Miss Zita Tan, International Young Christian Students' Movement,
Asia Pacific Team, Singapore
The Rev. Fernando Vergez, Pontifical Council for the Laity, Vatican
City
The Rev. Felix Wilfred, St. Paul's Seminary, Tiruchirapalli, India
The Rev. Ismael Zuloaga, Jesuit Delegation for the Chinese Apostolate,
Manila, Philippines

Arrangements Committees

The Most Rev. Stephen F. Hamao
Sister Filo Hirata, Catholic Council for Justice and Peace
The Rev. Peter J. Iwahashi, National Catholic Committee of Japan
The Rev. Stephen H. Kambayashi, National Catholic Committee of Japan
The Rev. Peter Joos, National Catholic Committee of Japan
The Rev. Mark HH. Kanai, Tokyo Catholic Center
Sister Toyoko Sugiura, Sacred Heart University
The V. Reverend Rectors of the Major Seminary and Jesuit House of
Studies, and the Director of the Retreat House, the Faculty Members
and Seminarians, and their Staffs
The Religious Sisters of the Committees
The many members of the Japanese lay groups who have given of their
time and talent

A Statement of Gratitude

The Plenary Assembly expresses its special gratitude to the People of God in Asia, and in particular to the Catholics of Japan, to the Bishops of Japan, and to the Archbishop of Tokyo, for their enthusiastic support of this collegial enterprise of the bishops of Asia.

Only through the generous contributions of many Catholic associations in Europe and Asia has this Plenary Assembly come to be. We all pray it will continue to be a significant moment for the Church in Asia and for our Asian world.

FABC Papers:

- No. 34. Summons to Dialogue, by Archbishop Angelo Fernandes. A National Seminar on Dialogue and Evangelization, 1983
35. Challenges to Human Development in the 1980s: Response of the Church in Asia. The Sixth Bishops' Institute for Social Action, 1983
36. Lead Me to the Real: The Hindu-Christian Dialogue. The Third Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs, 1984
37. Our Quest for Justice. The Second Consultation on Justice and Peace, 1984
38. Christian Presence among Muslims in Asia. A Consultation on Inter-Religious Dialogue, 1985
39. Social Action Groups: Harbingers of Hope in Asia, by Felix Wilfred, 1985
40. Trusting, Entrusting the Laity. The First Bishops' Institute for Lay Apostolate, 1985.
41. Building the Church of Christ in a Pluricultural Situation, by Robert Hardawiryana, 1985.
42. Towards a Theology of Local Church, by Joseph Komonchak. The First Colloquium of the FABC Theological Advisory Committee, 1986.
43. The "Abba Experience" of Jesus: the Model and Motive for Mission Today. A Project in Formation for Mission, 1986.
44. Contemporary Catholic Thought on the Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World. A Position Paper for the Fourth Plenary Assembly, by S.J. Emmanuel, 1986
45. Sunset in the East? The Asian Reality Challenging the Church and Its Laity Today. A Position Paper for the Fourth Plenary Assembly, by Felix Wilfred, 1986
46. Fourth Plenary Assembly: Workshop Discussion Guides
 - a. The Role and Relationship of the Laity in the Church
 - b. Lay Spirituality
 - c. Towards a New Understanding of Women's Role
 - d. Laity and Ministry to Youth
 - e. The Laity in the World of Education
 - f. The Asian Laity in the World of Health Services
 - g. The Laity in Mission
 - h. The Laity in Politics and Public Service
 - i. The Laity and the Family
 - j. The Laity in the World of Work
 - k. Trusting, Entrusting the Laity in Media
 - l. The Laity in the World of Business

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(s) 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.