

**THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH:
FOUNDATION FOR A NEW EVANGELIZATION IN ASIA**

A Colloquium of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences
Pattaya, Thailand, January 20-25, 1992

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I. Introduction

by

Brother Anthony Rogers, F.S.C.

While the full proceedings will be published later, I wish to share with you now some of the insights and reflections at the colloquium on the social doctrine of the Church in the context of Asia. This was an attempt by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) to examine what relevance and meaning the social doctrine of the Church has for the people of Asia. This was an opportunity for 108 lay persons, religious, clergy and bishops from 12 Asian and 5 non-Asian countries, in the light of their diverse experiences, to make the social doctrine of the Church an integral part of our common Christian faith.

What seemed very clear to many of us is that the Church in Asia has to continue unceasingly to bring the Gospel and our faith to all our people.

The seeds of this Gospel can only grow if we recognize the "beauty" of the land of Asia. Its beauty lies in the deep "spirituality" that has emerged from cries of anguish and sorrow. The values of the Gospel, centered on hope, cannot give way to despair.

Many individual Christians and communities, having truly understood the meaning of "preaching" the Good News, have become signs of hope by living out this Gospel of love. It is not just the "social doctrine" of the Church that they have been living out but the Gospel as applied to their "social lives." It is the basic message of the Gospel that has been the source and motivation of their actions. They have come to the realization that for a Christian there can be no "private life" apart from "social life." All true and genuine involvement in the "world" has to be rooted in the "transcendental," in the "spiritual." By their fruits you will know them. Genuine peace, a new sense of meaning in life, greater concern for justice and the promotion of the common good are all part of living out the social doctrine of the Church.

What came through very clearly to us during the colloquium and in the numerous reflections that have been going on throughout 1991 as the Year of the Social Doctrine of the Church is that the social doctrine is not based on mere attempts to bring solutions to a world torn apart by greed and strife. It is an attempt by all in the Church to bring Jesus back into our personal lives, and into the workings of the Church, sign and instrument of God's salvation in the world. We are called to *a new way of seeing, a new way of being and a new way of doing*. The need to narrow the gap between our creed and our deed seems to be the greatest challenge for the Church.

In order to see ourselves and the world in a new way, we need the light of the Gospel as enunciated in the social doctrine of the Church; we need the principles of reflection to begin to see what it means to become new persons in Christ. This will lead us to formulate new directives for action, rooted in the varied realities of Asia. The living out of the Gospel will make little sense if we have not truly understood and experienced the Jesus of today, Jesus who comes alive when we become sensitive to his promptings in our hearts and responsive to his cries among our brothers and sisters in Asia. It may be our fears to lose ourselves and to put on the "real Jesus" that may be preventing us from getting to understand the meaning of the social doctrine of the Church.

The colloquium was thus an opportunity for the Church in Asia to deepen our understanding of Jesus and his Gospel and its implications for Asia. The final statement of the colloquium reflects this attempt on our part to bring the social doctrine of the Church into its life and workings.

The many suggestions and recommendations point to the need to bring "our best-kept secret" not just out of our books and publications but also out of our hearts and into our lives and all our pastoral efforts. We are sure that for many in the Church this has been a secret, but for many communities in Asia the lives of Christians living out the values of justice, freedom and peace have spoken louder than words on the meaning of evangelization. To be evangelized by the liberating Gospel of Jesus is obviously the mission of the Church in Asia. It is this integral Gospel that is expressed in the social doctrine of the Church and it is this same Gospel that is seen as the "foundation for a new evangelization in Asia."

II. A Colloquium on the Social Doctrine of the Church in the Context of Asia

by

Bishop Stephen F. Hamao

It is my honor to welcome all the honored guests and participants to this colloquium on the social doctrine of the Church in the context of Asia.

It is indeed a unique occasion for us to have with us so many people from various parts of the world to reflect and share with us their insights on the social doctrine of the Church and its implications for the Church in Asia. It is appropriate that the Gospel reading for this opening Eucharist brings to our consciousness the social dimension of the Gospel. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for holiness (justice); blessed are the peacemakers; blessed are they who show mercy." As the Church in Asia, we are becoming more and more aware of the integral nature of our Faith and the Gospel that is to be preached and lived. The Beatitudes embody this integration.

It is also interesting to note that Jesus is urging us to look at the present and at the future attitudes of persons, not just their past behavior. This is the challenge for us as individuals and as a community for tomorrow.

This colloquium on the social doctrine of the Church is the result of year-long preparations by our national episcopal conferences, taking seriously the suggestion of our Holy Father, John Paul II, to make 1991 the Year of the Social Doctrine and to make it an essential part of our evangelizing mission. Our own study and searching over the past year have brought us to the realization that the wealth of the social doctrine has much to offer: "principles of reflection, criteria for judgment and directives for action." These point to the need to return to the core of the Gospel message as it is understood by the Church today.

We have also become more aware of the numerous challenges facing our nations and our peoples. We are being called to take up these challenges. There have been dramatic changes all over Asia. A brief overview points to numerous changes that are taking place in the "Dragons of East Asia" and in the Newly Industrializing Countries of Southeast Asia. The turn of events in South Asia also points to the need for great urgency to respond to conditions of dehumanizing poverty and increasing violence. The political and economic changes in the socialist countries of China, Viet Nam, Cambodia and Myanmar are also significant. These forces of change seem to call for new ways of seeing and doing things. Our reflections at our last plenary assembly of the FABC have been a milestone in our journey as the People of God in Asia. It was an event that has challenged us to respond in new ways to the world around us.

It is this basic recognition of, and a new and deeper sensitivity to the Asian realities that have encouraged us to take upon ourselves the responsibility of becoming a new missionary Church in Asia. It is therefore appropriate that we have chosen as the theme of our Asian colloquium, "The Social Doctrine of the Church: Foundation for a New Evangelization in Asia."

The Holy Father, in *Centesimus Annus*, No. 5, has this to say:

The new evangelization, which the modern world urgently needs and which I have emphasized many times, must include among its essential elements a proclamation of the Church's social doctrine. As in the days of Pope Leo XIII, this doctrine is still suitable for indicating the right way to respond to the great challenges of today, when ideologies are being increasingly discredited. Now, as then, we need to repeat that there can be no genuine solution of the social question apart from the Gospel, and that the "new things" can find in the Gospel the context for their correct understanding and the proper moral perspective for judgment on them.

We hope during the next five days to discover further the wealth of our social doctrine, to listen to the experiences of many persons and communities that have attempted to make the social doctrine of the Church an integral aspect of their living out their faith. We hope that the insights we shall discover will serve not only to chart new directions but also to plan how to bring these to our local communities. If a new evangelization is our thrust and focus, it seems inevitable that we have to incorporate the social doctrine into our teaching, being and acting.

Our first phase of evangelization in Asia during our colonial past did

not give too great an attention to the need for social justice. Our new phase has to be an evangelization that not only promotes justice but will strive to make us a Church of justice. This calls us to truly embody the values of the Gospel. It has to seek to become the leaven, salt and light in the context of Asia, if it is to prove its value and worth among the deeply religious people of Asia.

Our Holy Father's words in No.57 of *Centesimus Annus* drive home the point very clearly:

Today more than ever, the Church is aware that her social message will gain credibility more immediately from the witness of actions than as a result of its internal logic and consistency.

In welcoming you to this colloquium, I also invite you to journey with us in our search to make the Gospel more relevant to the people of Asia. Every single one of us, bishops, members of the clergy, Religious and laity, have a very special task of participating fully in making this colloquium a success. It is therefore my duty once again to extend my cordial welcome and to pray with the Lord during this Eucharist to make his "thought and his ways" clear to us, so that we can carry on the task entrusted to us by the Universal Church.

III. An Overview of the Colloquium

by

Archbishop Orlando B. Quevedo, O.M.I.

1. Objectives of the Colloquium

In the light of *Rerum Novarum*, *Centesimus Annus* and the Fifth FABC Plenary Assembly:

- a. To have a deeper understanding of the social doctrine of the Church, its development and application;
- b. To reflect on the Asian context of the social doctrine (to "scrutinize the signs of the times" in Asia);
- c. To have a deeper understanding of the mission of the Church in the development of Asian peoples;
- d. To evolve new pastoral strategies to realize the mission;
- e. To explore the dimensions of relevant integral spirituality for social transformation.

2. Content (material)

The social realities of Asia; personal experiences; the Gospel; the social teachings of the Church; the interlinking of all the above.

3. Process

a. Methodology

Part I. Overview of the Church's social doctrine in the context of Asia;

Part II.

A. How the social doctrine is being lived out in the context of the religio-cultural heritage of Asia. A sharing of experiences — aims, process, "joys and sorrows," impact on self, on community; requirements of a spirituality of social transformation.

B. Analysis of Asian issues, in the light of *Centesimus Annus* and the Statement of the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC.

Part III. Concrete Planning — strategies to bring reflections and results of the colloquium into FABC structures and priorities, national conferences, dioceses.

C. The Articulation of all the above in a pastoral message

b. Programming

- Day One: Input at plenary sessions — keynote address and Asian response;
- Day Two: Panel Presentations — based on what is being done, has been developed in the context of each country and community, focus on *Centesimus Annus* and the FABC Statement.
- Day Three: Workshops on Areas of Concern. Issues are to be seen in the light of the Gospel, of the social doctrine of the Church, especially *Centesimus Annus* and FABC statements: analysis of issues and current responses, positive and negative learnings; pastoral imperatives.
- Day Four: Reports
- Day Five: Presentation of a model of a new way of being Church: BEC. Implications and recommendations for

the Church in Asia. Workshops on renewal of liturgical and spiritual life, family life and value education, catechetics, formation of clergy, religious and laity; media formation and education; interfaith co-operation.

Reports, summary, conclusion

(c) The Colloquium in the light of the OHD Pastoral Spiral:

- *Day One* and *Day Two*: Situation analysis and reflection in faith (the Scriptures, the social teachings of the Church) Input and Panel Presentations
- *Day Three* and *Four*: Situation analysis, reflection in faith, and judgment/decisions/resolutions. Workshops.
- *Day Five*: Pastoral planning for action, bringing all the above into FABC priorities, to national conferences and individual dioceses. Colloquium message.

4. Conference Dynamics

- a. The interplay between belief and life, between teaching and situation. In the wider framework of Church and world, between the Church community, its milieu, and other peoples; towards a self-understanding of the Church immersed in cultures — in view of mission in Asia.
- b. In the light of the FABC vision of a Church:
 - faithfully following the way of Jesus,
 - immersed in the Asian reality,
 - announcing the Good News of salvation,
 - and serving the Kingdom of God,
 - as a Church of the Poor

IV. The Social Doctrine of the Church: Foundation for a New Evangelization in Asia

by
Cardinal Roger Etchegaray

If I take the word “keynote address” literally, I am only to give you the pitch, the key, of the scale: it is up to you, then, to play the music, with all the modulations that each one of you can bring to it, according to his own experience, culture, sensitivity.

As you know, a European Synod of Bishops was held last month in Rome. In my personal intervention, I dared to define Europe as nothing more than a peninsula of the Asian continent, thus indicating that, from there, we should feel in solidarity with here, not only geographically but also vitally! I must admit that, when I go to America or even to Africa, I feel less out of my element than when I come to Asia. Here, above all, I feel that I need to listen to what is different in order to be able to breathe more in harmony with the rhythm of a world that God has willed to be an entire symphony. Is this not also the mysterious force of the Gospel, that of being able to make all peoples vibrate in unison at the proclamation of the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ?

Our meeting in Pattaya is based on the social encyclicals from *Rerum Novarum* to *Centesimus Annus*, as well as on the final document of the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC held in Bandung in July 1990, "Journeying Together Toward the Third Millennium." In the chapter on specific pastoral directions, this document requests that "the social doctrine of the Church be part of the formation in faith for everyone, at all levels of laity, religious and clergy" (and therefore also of the episcopate!).

One could, one should, just as easily, just as well, say: "Walk in man and you will arrive in God ..." Walk in God and you will arrive in man."

With the help of Nicolas Buttet, my young Swiss collaborator, I have become acquainted with many of your declarations, many of your initiatives within the framework of the Year of the Social Doctrine of the Church, from Faisalabad to New Delhi, from Colombo to Seoul, from Manila to Djakarta. But how could I not mention the countries where nothing has been done because nothing can as yet be done: Cambodia, Viet Nam, China, that immense and fascinating China that must be very present to us in our thoughts and prayer.

The bishops of Thailand have declared one Sunday of the year "Human Rights Day." How many countries there are where such a thing could not be done and, even where it can be, how many human rights are still being violated!

Because the Church is, by its very nature, a pilgrim among persons and peoples, it has always tried to face up to the challenge of a world in constant evolution. The same Gospel, proclaimed yesterday to the shepherd of Bethlehem and to the fisherman of Capernaum, must speak today to the businessman of Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, or simply to that broad range of poor people in the slums of Calcutta, in the deterrence camps of Hong Kong or in the flooded islands of Bangladesh.

If *Rerum Novarum* marked a turning point in the history of the social thought of the Church, it is because history as such, accelerating at a dizzying pace, has not only turned the Old World upside down, but has turned all worlds into a New World. We are new Adams and Eves, strolling with uncertain steps along the paths of a Garden that seems more like hell than paradise. Never before have people been so threatened in their physical and moral being. Never before have these same people so longed to survive.

If, from the tribune of the United Nations, Paul VI dared to present the Church as an "expert in humanity," it was because he was well aware of its centuries-long experience, an experience constantly being enriched, an experience always on the watch for "the signs of the times," an experience able to discern where the true progress of humanity lies amidst the maze of a society becoming ever more complex. That is what the "social doctrine of the Church" is: a teaching which must be neither over- nor under-estimated, which speaks to us in a manner at times imperative, at times optative, but never facultative.

But how many Christians really know this social teaching? How many Christians, even if they are aware of this teaching, do not hesitate to challenge the right of the Church to address economic and political questions? Both liberal and Marxist ideologies converge in passing a verdict that would make the City of Man forbidden territory for any word of the Church.

Leo XIII had already suffered greatly from the indictment of his encyclical by certain Catholic milieus. Forty long years had to pass (*Quadragesimo Anno*) before another pope, outraged at the far-too-long and widespread conspiracy of silence that had kept *Rerum Novarum* out of the public eye, would dare to celebrate what he called the "Magna Charta of the Worker."

If there now is a new rise of interest in the social teaching of the Church, we owe it to John Paul II who has forcefully grasped the human person in his or her totality. He never ceases to contemplate Christ, "true God and true man," who fully reveals the human person to him or herself. It is easy to understand that even non-Christians are impressed by a Pope who is, as one of them said, "sure of himself because he is sure of the One from whom he draws his strength."

If I had to summarize, in one stroke, the social doctrine of the Church, I would compare it to a building site, a site wide open, above all to the laity. It is the fruit of the ever-shifting life of humanity and the sign

of an equally shifting vitality of the People of God. It can be said, without paradox, that in applying one social encyclical, the laity prepares the next one, and thus spreads the leaven of the Gospel throughout society.

The Second Vatican Council said that: "The demands of justice must first of all be satisfied; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity" (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, No. 8).

It is true that what was yesterday's charity is often today's justice, and that we must do all possible to make today's charity tomorrow's justice. But the Gospel teaches us that charity, which transcends any cold balancing of rights, finds in God's love the creative strength needed to love others beyond all limits of justice. To share out of charity takes us much further than to share out of justice. We all remember the kiss that John Paul II gave, in a Roman prison, to the man who had attempted to kill him. When I was recently interviewed by Turkish television, I learned that this gesture had shocked certain minds. Justice could perhaps dwell in a land from which pardon had been banished, but it would be so frigid there that people would shiver with the cold. Merciful love is, perhaps, the greatest challenge to the hardness, to the ferocity, of our modern times, so enamored with justice.

The Church, in the words of John Paul II, is the voice of "the moral conscience of humanity which, in its pure state, longs for peace, needs peace." Peace is waiting impatiently for pioneers that will open up new ways. A peace to be secured in time of peace is much more difficult than a peace to be won in time of war. One thing is certain: we know where we are going. Less and less can we work for peace with the arms of war. More and more must we work for peace with the arms of peace.

Up to now, I have spoken about justice and peace separately. But the word of God does not allow us to do so. The poetic image of David's psalm joins them together in an embrace so intimate that the two cannot be torn apart: "justice and peace have kissed" (Ps. 85).

My last word will be to invite the Church to live what it teaches about the social field. We have the serious responsibility to offer to all people the witness of our own experience of the life of a Church where Christians of all sizes and shapes and colors can learn — not without difficulty — how to live together as brothers and sisters; and whose communities are able to engender, if not finished models, at least rough drafts of fresh and expanded social relationships.

V. A Response to the Social Teaching of the Church From The Asian Perspective

by
Father George Lobo, S.J.

1. Introduction

The general principles and orientations of the social teaching of the Church are of universal validity. However, diversity of situations in various countries, cultures and religions calls for an adaptive response.

As Pope Paul VI remarks, the social teaching has been worked out in a particular historical context, and hence calls for discernment in its application. In fact, Pope John Paul II, in his latest encyclical *CA* proposes a "re-reading" of Pope Leo XIII's *RN* in the light of current events in the world and intervening documents. It is an invitation to "look back" at the text itself in order to discover anew the richness of its fundamental principles; to "look around" at the "new things" in which we are involved; and to "look to the future" to face the new challenges with a sense of responsibility (n. 3). Hence understanding the relevance of documents implies a hermeneutical exercise on the part of the local Churches.

The situation in Asia is marked by massive poverty and exploitation as well as by religious pluralism and increasing fundamentalism. This leads to unrest among the masses and acute conflicts between various religious and ethnic groups. The rigid caste system in India has a particularly inbuilt structure of injustice. Remnants of feudalism and nascent capitalism foster systems of injustice and massive violation of human rights. Even slavery persists in the form of bonded labor. Discrimination against women is still rampant even in economically developed Asian countries. One of the main obstacles to genuine progress is the workings of neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism.

2. Human Rights

The social teaching of the Church from the time of *RN* has provided a solid human and Christian basis for human rights.

ABBREVIATIONS

RN - *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII, 1891.
QA - *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pope Pius XI, 1931.
MM - *Mater et Magistra*, Pope John XXIII, 1961.
PT - *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII, 1963.
GS - *Gaudium et Spes*, Second Vatican Council, 1965.
PP - *Populorum Progressio*, Pope Paul VI, 1967.

OA - *Octogesima Adveniens*, Pope Paul VI, 1971.
JW - *Justice in the World*, Second Synod of Bishops, 1971.
EN - *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 1974.
LE - *Laborem Exercens*, Pope John Paul II, 1981.
SRS - *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Pope John Paul II, 1987.
CA - *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II, 1991.

RN, in the context of the exploitation of the underprivileged, rightly stresses social and economic rights like a living wage and proper working conditions. While later documents show an increasing concern for civil and political rights, the stress on economic rights is particularly relevant for those who are struggling for their very survival.

However, it should be noted that the theory of civil rights in Western Europe was first developed in rationalistic circles that overstressed the individual good. This so-called "liberal" view is both against the biblical concept of the human person essentially related to others in a community and the traditional Asian view of close human solidarity.

Even now, the battle is raging between those who give priority to economic rights and those who stress civil rights. Marxist regimes tried to provide equal economic rights to all. But this was done by depriving the citizens of basic civil rights. The "liberal" mentality upholds the civil freedom of individuals. But this often results in the domination by the more powerful. When the poor rise in protest, their movements are often brutally suppressed by "national security" regimes in the name of combating alleged Communist subversion.

The social teaching of the Church, rightly understood, provides sufficient basis for transcending this fatal dialectic. But Christians have generally tended to support liberal capitalism because of the fear of Communism induced by the monopoly press. Now it is high time to adopt a more balanced perspective and defend all the different human rights in a positive and realistic way.

This balance is to be attained not so much by State intervention but by vigorous and concerted activity in organizing the masses to fight for their basic right for both bread and freedom. The Church in Asia has a very important role to play in this matter. Christians must refuse to be drawn into the dialectic between socialism and capitalism and seek to foster human dignity and rights, especially of the poor. They must refrain from laying undue stress on the violation of "minority rights," but fight for their own rights in the arena of human rights. This would imply that they are sensitive to the violation of the rights of any people even if they are not Christians.

3. Socialism vs. Capitalism

CA repeats the reasons for condemning socialism already proposed in RN. However, the term "socialism" today is used in highly differing meanings in different parts of the world. In fact, some kinds of soci-

alism in Asia are no different from "social democracy" in Western Europe, which Church documents did not seem to want to condemn. CA often calls unacceptable the system of "real socialism." A more careful drafting could have avoided the ambiguity which may be exploited by liberal capitalist circles.

The fundamental error of "real socialism" which CA condemns is "anthropological in nature." "Socialism considers the individual person simply as an element, a molecule, within the social organism, so that the good of the individual is completely subordinated to the function of socio-economic mechanisms" (n. 13). While this error takes on the form of collectivism in socialism, it manifests itself in the domination and exploitation of the poor by a privileged class in liberal capitalism.

Hence, the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe must not make one conclude that capitalism is the only alternative. This has been strongly emphasized in CA. The Pope explicitly states: "It is unacceptable to say that the defeat of so-called 'real socialism' leaves capitalism as the only model of economic organization. It is necessary to break down the barriers and monopolies which leave so many countries on the margin of development, and to provide all individuals and nations with the basic conditions which will enable them to share in development" (n. 33.). Still, during the past two years, there is a frantic effort to impose monopoly international capitalism on poorer countries. The elite in these countries is loudly proclaiming the end of all socialism and the establishment of an unfettered market economy. This view is sedulously propagated by interested elements in poor Asian countries.

It is high time that Asians disengage themselves from alien ideologies, whether they be of the right or the left. CA should provide an impetus to design a new vision of society based on ideals such as the Indonesian *Pancasila* and the Gandhian *Sarvodaya*. The ferment of the Gospel can come to perfect these ideals.

Pancasila deserves special attention as it was accepted by the leaders of a large number of Afro-Asian countries at Bandung in 1955. The five principles embodied therein are: 1) belief in the Supreme Being; 2) a just civilized humanity; 3) nationalism as working for the unity of the country; 4) democracy guided by the wisdom of unanimity resulting from common deliberation; and 5) social justice for all citizens.

Through *Sarvodaya* (integral development), Mahatma Gandhi conceived an integral program for the development of backward and impoverished villagers — spiritual, moral, social and economic. His idea was

to develop the human potential of the villagers for their own betterment. More recently the Gandhian plan has received a new development in the form of *Antyodaya* (development of the most backward). It is a kind of "preferential option for the poor," where the idea is to seek the progress of the most underdeveloped sections of the population.

The Church in Asia should decline to be drawn into the conflict of Western ideologies and bring the light of the Gospel to interpret and fulfill traditional social values. If Western terms have to be used, "communitarian" based on the biblical *koinonia*, the "common good" developed by neo-Thomists, "socialization" suggested by Pope John XXIII in MM, and "solidarity" highly favored by the present Pope, and such others, could be adapted.

4. Private Property and Universal Destination of Material Goods

The social teaching since RN has vigorously defended the right to private property. CA calls it "fundamental for the autonomy and development of a person" (n. 3). However, Leo XIII and succeeding Popes have taught that the right to the possession of material goods is not absolute.

Vatican II has laid special emphasis on the universal destination of earthly goods: "God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people ... Whatever the forms of ownership may be as adapted to the legitimate institutions of people according to the diverse and changeable circumstances, attention must always be paid to the universal purpose for which created goods are meant" (GS, n. 69). Hence, the right to private property is not absolute. "In using them, therefore, man should regard his lawful possessions not merely as his own but also as common property in the sense that they should accrue to the benefit of not only himself but of others" (ibid.). Private property has a communal purpose.

In spite of such manifest declarations, Asian Christians often have been fed on the bourgeois idea of the absolute nature of private property. Now with the crisis of Communism, there is a danger that this false concept be reinforced.

It should be noted that if the earth and all that it contains is destined for every human being and people, there is need for redistribution of property whether on the local or global level. If the white race has cornered a manifestly disproportionate share of land and wealth, the balance has to be redressed by massive transfer of resources or by open-

ing up relatively less populated or more prosperous regions to large-scale immigration from poorer countries. It is not a question of generosity, but of strict justice. This point needs greater attention in the social teaching of the Church.

On the other hand, many Asian regimes have tended to unduly limit the right to property by bringing in unnecessary State control or by developing a Welfare State. The maze of State regulations has curbed private initiative and bred a system of corruption. The undertaking of too many public enterprises has caused inefficiency. Welfare measures in the form of massive subsidies have tended to introduce bureaucratization, lethargy, and overdependence, or led to cornering of benefits by those who do not really deserve them.

Hence, the directives of CA in this matter need to be taken to heart (n. 48). The Pope points out that the role of the State in the economic field is subsidiary. It has to create the right conditions for business activity, to intervene when particular monopolies create delays and obstacles to development, or in exceptional circumstances to exercise a substitute function of directly running some enterprises. The sphere of State intervention is not to be excessively enlarged to the detriment of both economic and civil freedom.

There is need for fostering self-reliance and mutual assistance in the spirit of solidarity. The role of intermediate communities should be fostered. Local self-government, for example, in the form of village *panchayats* in South Asia, must be strengthened.

What is said about centralization, bureaucratization and welfare regarding the State applies also to the social activity of the Church. Massive distribution of relief supplies, which predominated in the fifties, has now largely given way to development projects. More recently, the need for proceeding deeper with conscientization and liberation is being gradually realized.

5. Liberation and Revolution

The dialectic between individual sins of injustice and unjust social structures, and between change of heart and change of structures, calls for a balanced resolution. It should be clear that one cannot do without the other.

The Magisterium itself has accepted a sane theology of liberation which respects true human values and fosters human dignity and free-

dom. It has even noted that human liberation is a Gospel imperative which the Church is called to vigorously implement.

Liberation theology does not necessarily imply any adherence to Marxism. For instance, the recent works of Gutierrez show hardly any dependence on its ideology. Marxist analysis is used only inasmuch as it helps in examining a situation. But Marx's overemphasis on the mode of production underlying the cultural and political spheres need not be accepted, but needs rather to be criticized (cf. CA, n.41).

Another objection to liberation theology is that it promotes class struggle. In fact it does no such thing. It only registers the fact of class struggle initiated by dominating and oppressive elements in society and the right of the oppressed to resist. In fact, liberation theology seeks to transcend class struggle by promoting justice, freedom and equality for all.

CA notes that RN, while condemning class struggle, does not intend to condemn every form of social conflict. The Pope in LE had recognized the positive role of conflict when it takes the form of a "struggle for justice" (n.11-15).

The next problem is that of gradual evolution or revolution. Because of the common link between revolution and violence, the Magisterium has generally preferred to speak in terms of development or evolution.

The Magisterium in principle condemns violence as a path to social change. However, the possibility of violence in extreme cases has been accepted in an exceptive clause in PP: "Revolutionary uprisings — except where there is manifest, long-standing tyranny which would do great damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country — engender new injustices, introduce new inequalities and bring new disasters" (n.31). But the path of violence generally results in worse evils. Besides, it is against the Buddhist and Gandhian ethos, not to speak of the example and teaching of Christ.

Therefore, the ideal of non-violence must be energetically pursued. But the oppressive elements, within or outside the country, must be confronted with the threat of violence. Pope Paul, in addressing the managing class in Columbia, asked them not to forget "that certain great crises in history could have taken other directions if needed reforms had averted in good time, with courageous sacrifice, the explosive revolts of desperation." The Pope was warning that the richer classes would have to bear the primary responsibility for any violent reaction if they did not

mend their ways. The message of non-violence should not be allowed to be misused by oppressive elements to dull their conscience and resist any change.

6. Basic Communities and Grassroots Movements

The Apostolic Letter of Pope Paul VI, EN, lauds Basic Christian Communities which first arose in Latin America, provided they engage in constructive action and avoid a spirit of bitter criticism of the Church or fall victim to political ideologies. Among their purposes could be bringing together people "who already happen to be united in the struggle for justice, brotherly aid to the poor, human advancement" (n.58).

Outside the Philippines, such communities may often have to be organized on an interreligious basis, although there is scope for Christian members to be formed in BCCs in order to work together with others for social justice. In countries like India, there is also the phenomenon of grassroots movements in which dedicated Christians are playing a vital role of animation even when they themselves do not belong to the oppressed category.

JW speaks in general of education for justice (n. 49). A fivefold approach could be adopted for this: 1) the people must be awakened from their passive submission to the system of injustice and exploitation; 2) there should be non-formal education, including awareness of their rights and means of defending them; 3) they must be organized for common and determined struggle; 4) they must be ready with the help of dedicated activists to engage in concrete action; 5) there must be coordination of spontaneous activities.

Leadership must ultimately come from the local people themselves. Activists from outside, provided they show genuine and selfless solidarity with the oppressed masses and have made a preferential option for the poor, could help in training local people, from amongst whom leaders would eventually emerge.

The exploiting classes themselves must be made to see that it is not in their genuine and long-term interest to carry on with the oppressive system. They would be in constant danger of being swept away by the aggrieved masses as long as they exploit fellow human beings.

Grassroots activity needs to be supplemented by legal aid for the poor. Many of the problems of the poor arise from insufficient legal protection of their basic rights because of ignorance, timidity and a ponder-

ous legal system which is largely weighted against the poor at least in its functioning. Dedicated lawyers, including those among the clergy and religious, could render legal advice to vindicate their rights and help poor people to settle their disputes without unnecessary and expensive litigation. Ultimately, the legal system, often the remnant of colonial structures, itself needs to be modified to cater to the just rights of the poor.

There is now enough experience and reflection on these vital matters so that we may hope that the next social document will deal extensively about them.

7. Imperialism, Neocolonialism and the Debt Trap

In spite of the historic link of the Church with colonialism, the social teaching of the Church has shown a remarkable awareness of the problems inherited from this phase of human history and the subsequent development of neocolonialism. This aspect has often been downplayed by commentators and strangely ignored even by many liberationists.

Already Pope Pius XI in QA spoke of the “deadly and accursed internationalism of finance, of international imperialism whose country is where profit is” (n. 10). This is all the more remarkable as QA otherwise neglects the situation of poorer countries.

Pope Paul VI repeated the condemnation of unchecked liberal capitalism which leads to the “international imperialism of money” (PP, n. 26).

Pope John XXIII insists that rich countries are obliged in justice and charity to come to the aid of poorer ones. But they “should take care lest in aiding these nations they seek to impose their own way of life upon them” (MM, n. 170); or “endeavor to turn the prevailing political situation to their own advantage, and seek to dominate them. Should such attempts be made, it would clearly be but another form of colonialism, which, although misguided, merely reflects their earlier but outdated dominion.” (cf. nn. 171-172).

Pope Paul also spoke of “the cause to fear that under the cloak of financial aid or technical assistance, there lurk certain manifestations of what has come to be called neo-colonialism in the form of political pressures and economic suzerainty aimed at maintaining or acquiring complete dominance” (PP, n. 52). He further referred to developing countries running the “risk of being overwhelmed by debts whose repayment swallows up the greater part of their gains” (PP, n. 54).

The rich nations today make much of "free trade" and the "sanctity" of international laws and treaties regarding trade. But the Pope points out that the advantages of free trade are minimized due to the gross inequalities of economic power (cf. n. 58). "What was true of the just wage for the individual is also true of international contracts: an economy of exchange can no longer be based solely on the law of free competition, a law which in its turn too often creates an economic dictatorship. Freedom of trade is fair only if it is subject to the demands of social justice" (n. 59).

SRS denounces the mechanisms which are used by the more developed countries to favor their own economies and which result in suffocating those of the less developed countries (n. 16).

It also speaks of the crucial issue of international debt. The instrument chosen to make a contribution to development has turned into a counter-productive mechanism. The means intended for the development of peoples has turned into a brake upon development instead, and indeed in some cases has aggravated underdevelopment (n. 19).

The document also speaks of the wars by proxy conducted by powerful nations in poor countries to further their own interest (n. 20). "Investments and aid for development are often diverted from their proper purpose and used to sustain conflicts, apart from and in opposition to the interests of the countries which ought to benefit from them (n. 21).

The document specifically mentions "the field of social communications which, being run by centers mostly in the Northern hemisphere, do not always give priorities to the problems of such countries or respect their cultural make-up. They frequently impose a distorted vision of life and of man, and thus fail to respond to the demands of true development" (n. 22). This matter is likely to be aggravated by the recent development of satellite television.

CA recognizes that in ex-colonial countries: "Decisive sectors of the economy remain de facto in the hands of large foreign companies which are unwilling to commit themselves to the long-term development of the host country. Political life itself is controlled by foreign powers" (n. 20).

The encyclical decries the mentality in which the poor— as individuals and as peoples — are considered a burden, as irksome intruders trying to consume what others have produced. The poor ask for the right

to share in enjoying material goods and make good use of their capacity to work, thus creating a world that is more just and prosperous for all" (n. 28).

8. Family and Demography

The social documents are concerned that modernization and industrialization should not disrupt family life. Several of them deal particularly with the demographic problem.

GS remarks that governments "have rights and duties with regard to social and family-life legislation, or with regard to information concerning the condition and needs of the country" (n. 87). But it condemns the mentality of those who maintain that population increase must be radically curbed by every means possible and by imposing solutions contrary to the moral law or violating the right of parents to make responsible decisions in this matter.

PP grants that there are added difficulties to the problems of development "where the size of the population grows more rapidly than the quantity of available resources to such a degree that things seem to have reached an impasse." (n. 37).

SRS, while recognizing the demographic problem, notes: "It is alarming to see governments in many countries launching systematic campaigns against birth, contrary not only to the cultural and religious identity of the countries themselves, but contrary also to the nature of true development." It also remarks that at times "these campaigns are the result of pressure and financing coming from abroad, and in some cases they are made the condition for the granting of financial and economic aid. It is the poorest populations which suffer such mistreatment, and this sometimes leads to a tendency towards a form of racism, or the promotion of certain equally racist forms of eugenics" (n. 26).

CA repeats the denunciation by SRS of the systematic anti-child bearing campaigns: "These policies are extending their field of action by the use of new techniques, to the point of poisoning the lives of millions of defenceless human beings, as if in a form of 'chemical warfare'" (n. 39).

The need for responsible parenthood becomes evident in these recent documents. However, a positive approach to family planning by using moral means could have been stressed. It is largely for lack of this emphasis and vigorous action in this line that the evil of contraception is spreading. The Church's stand against contraception would also have become more credible.

9. Evangelization and Development

From the time of RN, the Church has considered the defence of human rights as belonging to her mission. Vatican II has clarified the intrinsic relationship between temporal duties and spiritual salvation (GS, n. 43).

PP has affirmed the right and the duty of the Church to bring her specific contribution to the true and integral development of the human person and society. (n. 1).

OA has emphasized the perennial social relevance of the Gospel: "Its inspiration, enriched by the living experience of Christian tradition over the centuries, remains ever new for converting men and for advancing the life of society." (n. 4).

However, the link between evangelization and work for justice has been most emphatically affirmed in the document JW of the Second Synod of Bishops, 1971: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation" (n. 6).

In the context of the temptation to reduce the mission of the Church "to the dimensions of a simply temporal project," the Apostolic Exhortation EN of Pope Paul VI brings out particularly the links between evangelization and liberation on the anthropological, theological and evangelical levels (n. 31). This is illustrated concretely in the treatment of Basic Christian Communities (n. 58).

CA affirms that "to teach and to spread her social doctrine pertains to the Church's evangelizing mission and is an essential part of the Christian message, since the doctrine points out the direct consequences of that message in the life of society and situates daily work and struggles for justice in the context of bearing witness to Christ the Savior" (n. 5).

If these statements are carefully studied, the unseemly polemic between "evangelizers" and "social activists" in many Asian countries could be resolved.

10. Religious Freedom and Fundamentalism

Pope John Paul II draws special attention to the right to religious freedom which was violated in Communist countries. He points out that "the denial of God deprives the person of his foundation, and consequently leads to a reorganization of the social order without reference to the person's dignity and responsibility" (CA, n. 13). He goes on to explain more deeply how this implies "a denial of the supreme insight concerning man's true greatness, his transcendence in respect to earthly realities, the contradiction in his heart between the desire for the fullness of what is good and his own inability to attain it, and, above all, the need for salvation which results from this situation." This is a warning to Asian countries not to fall into the trap of materialism and atheism, whether it is of the Western or Marxist type.

The Christian vision of the human person as image of God can lead to self-transcendence and a relationship of communion and solidarity with others (cf. n. 41). Here again we see the link between evangelization and authentic human development. Christian anthropology "is really a chapter of theology, and for this reason, the Church's social doctrine, by its concern for man and by its interest in him and in the way he conducts himself in the world, belongs to the field ... of theology and particularly moral theology" (n. 55).

While stressing the value of religion for social welfare, the Pope decries the "emergence of new forms of religious fundamentalism, which covertly or even openly, deny to citizens of faiths other than that of the majority the full exercise of their civil and religious rights" (n. 29).

The Pope again condemns fanaticism and fundamentalism among those "who, in the name of an ideology which purports to be scientific or religious, claim the right to impose on others their own concept of what is true and good. Christian faith is not of this kind. Since it is not an ideology, the Christian faith does not presume to imprison changing socio-political realities in a rigid schema, and it recognizes that human life is realized in history in conditions that are diverse and imperfect" (n. 46). The danger arising from the link between Christian fundamentalist sects and the military-industrial complex that is now seeking to impose its total hegemony on poor countries needs to be recognized. They often tend to support local fundamentalists who oppose any change in the socio-economic structure that may upset national and international monopoly capitalism. Some Catholic fundamentalists, unfortunately, tend to work in the same direction.

11. Conclusions

1) The social documents of the Church, taken together, provide an organic vision of human society and a solid base for the reconstruction of society and the defence of human rights.

2) Being responses to particular situations, the documents need to be understood in context, and their teaching applied to new situations and problems, especially in Asian countries.

3) It is regrettable that until PP in 1967, the preoccupations of the Third World peoples, comprising the far-greater portion of the human population, were neglected. Since that date, the problems of developing countries have received more attention. However, again the urgency of the problem of the poor is not sufficiently highlighted in CA, although it is understandable that attention is diverted to the collapse of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe.

4) The social documents on the whole are too much based on Western social thought, beginning with that of Aristotle. More use could have been made of Asian and other non-European insights, not to speak of the biblical and patristic heritage of moral and social radicalism concerning the accumulation of wealth and use of private property.

5) A better acquaintance with the official social teaching of the Church should help in bridging the gulf between the opposing mentality of conservatives and radicals that is too often found among Third World Christian thinkers. It could also be a spur to action, to tackle the urgent situation of the poor masses in Asian countries.

6) It may come as a surprise to most people, both in the developed and developing countries, to note the strong stricture against every form of imperialism and neo-colonialism in many documents. As the insidious workings of neo-colonialism are likely to be accentuated in the coming years, this dimension of the social teaching of the Church needs to be highlighted.

7) Asian Christians should seek to be liberated from Western categories which are ill-suited to analyze the social situation in their countries. Thereby, they would not be caught up in the polemics such as between capitalism and socialism. In evaluating socialism, its precise nature in a given country or movement needs to be taken into account.

8) So far experts from developing countries have not been directly

engaged in formulating Church documents. Even the many bishops present at Vatican II from these regions do not seem to have had a significant impact in the drafting of the crucial document GS. It is to be hoped that this lacuna will be filled in the next document by the contribution, not only of scholars, but also of activists from Third World countries.

9) Just as parishes and dioceses the world over are being invited to contribute to the preparation of the Bishops' Synods, out of which papal apostolic exhortations emerge, a similar procedure could be adopted in preparing papal encyclicals on social matters. Such involvement of the faithful would ensure better reception and implementation than is now verified in most cases.

10) The next document, like PP, should be mainly concerned with the situation, aspirations, rights and problems of the poor, especially in developing countries. It should be much more forthright in denouncing the exploitation of the poor through racism, the debt trap, cultural domination, violation of the sovereignty of weaker countries, and the gross inequity in the distribution of land resources.

VI. Workshops on Pastoral Imperatives: Recommendations to the Bishops' Conferences and FABC Offices

Group 1

Office of Education and Students' Chaplaincy

(Also Seminary Formation, Catechetics, Liturgy,
Culture, and Science and Technology)

1. Formation (Recommendation to all)

a. To help make the Church's social teachings an integral part of formation for priests, religious and lay people. Over and above the academic content, there should be opportunities for practical experiences, such as exposure-immersion.

b. This would require the translation of the Church's social teachings into the vernaculars. It would also involve the evaluation of the curriculum so as to integrate the dimension of social concern, integral development and social justice in all our educational institutions.

c. For this, it is necessary to work closely with the bishops, priests and religious in this work of social awareness, holistic development, human rights, social justice and ecological concerns. In this connection,

we must show the relationship between liturgy, spirituality and social issues.

d. We will have to join with people of other faiths in working for religious freedom and for the promotion of universally accepted human values.

e. Also, there is need to document and disseminate information regarding the initiatives concerning social questions.

F. Finally, there is need to make our teachings credible by our personal lifestyle as well as by our institutional witness.

2. Culture (to all Bishops' Conferences and the FABC Offices)

To appreciate and promote the positive values of local cultures for social transformation. For this, it is necessary to commission studies and identify skills to help us appreciate traditional cultural values that will bring about harmony with and concern for others and respect and reverence for creation.

3. Share Resources (to all Bishops' Conferences and FABC Offices)

To share human and material resources in our apostolate.

Group 2

The Office of Social Communications

1. General Recommendations

a. Clarify the areas of responsibility of the FABC-OSC so that there is a better understanding of its role and function.

b. Foster much closer relationships/links between FABC-Office of Social Communications and the national offices of the respective episcopal conferences;

c. To help the national offices of the episcopal conferences it is recommended that, in cooperation with the bishops, a communications component be integrated into the various pastoral programs of the respective member dioceses.

d. Request the FABC Secretariate to expedite the release of official FABC documents to its members. The FABC Office of Social Communi-

cations (OSC) is willing to assist the FABC Secretariat in the distribution of these documents, if necessary.

e. Establish a type of clearinghouse within the FABC-OSC to receive information on printed and/or audio-visual materials related to FABC documents and priority issues, such as the Church's social documents.

i) Notice of this information — with or without appropriate recommendation — can then be forwarded periodically to the appropriate Office of Social Communications in the member episcopal conferences.

ii) This is not intended to make the FABC-OSC a "distribution center" but only an agency of communicating information on the availability of appropriate and useful materials. Those interested in copies of the recommended materials would then take the initiative of ordering what they need from the source.

f. There is a crying need for translation services and guidelines on contextualization so that information on the Church's social documents can be more effectively used in the grassroots communities.

It was noted that this is primarily the responsibility of the individual members of the hierarchy. At present the FABC-OSC cannot do more than supply the information. What happens within the individual dioceses and episcopal conferences is the responsibility of the local Church leadership.

g. Staff members and/or technicians of Radio Veritas Asia be invited on special occasions, such as this colloquium, to prepare news releases, interviews, follow-up stories, etc., for broadcast throughout Asia.

Radio Veritas Asia should be encouraged to undertake a type of "before-during-after" reporting approach or coverage to FABC-man-dated conferences, colloquia and workshops, such as this.

2. A Recommendation about Radio Veritas Asia

Regarding Radio Veritas Asia, it is noted that the content, style and theological focus of the various programs are under the control of the respective national episcopal conferences. It is recommended that guidelines be prepared by the national conferences for the preparation of the programs going out in their names.

Group 3

The Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

1. General Operations

This FABC Office is to be operated in such a way that it plays the role of animation, inspiration and coordination. All dialogue activities under way could be pooled in a news bulletin. Links should be had with other groups. This Office could make efforts to create awareness among the laity of the importance of having relationships with various religious groups. That the Office could help to animate diocesan and national seminars/symposiums through expertise or any other help.

2. At the National Level

a. Coordination, collaboration and communication with other commissions. This cannot operate in isolation. To have common projects for all religious people and dialogue at the national level.

b. To have a interreligious office where all religions could meet.

3. At the Diocesan Level

Interfaith dialogues about such topics as the human person, family life, refugees, ecology and religious values, and virtues like fasting, death. Lenten education programs could be had in common.

a. To be humble without any note of triumphalism

b. The Spiritual dimension always to be considered very important

c. Dialogues to be rooted in the origins, history and traditions of the people more than about the individual faiths themselves.

Group 4

The Office of the Laity

1. Preliminary Remarks

a. We have heard a tremendous call among the laity to be heard, to be allowed in, to be respected.

b. We are aware of a new ecclesiology: the Church as the people of God, with the different charisms of the religious, clergy and the laity; and yet this is somehow not yet reflected in reality. Hence, there is great frustration and pain. The laity, perhaps, have a more realistic perception

of the mission of the Church, since they are "living in the world." Analogies used include that of the laity seen not just as passengers of a ship but are crew members. They are the "yeast in the dough."

2. Practical Actions

a. Formation at all levels by bishops, clergy, religious to the grass-roots. The laity especially have to see the role of the Church in social transformation. Homilies during Mass can be better prepared and include elements of the social doctrine of the Church to help in the formation of the laity. Formation programs can be done with these groups, separately or jointly, and ideally at the diocesan level.

We need to make use of historical events, e.g., the 100 years of *Rerum Novarum*, to help in the formation of lay people, e.g., through billboards the size of movie advertisements.

b. The Church's social doctrine should have a more central place in formation programs. We should make the social teachings available, readable, and in digestible form, and core groups of trainees who will present these materials. Materials, along with such group of trainees, should be developed.

c. Opportunities for regular dialogue between bishops, clergy, religious and the laity should be established at the national level. A council of the laity and bishops' conferences can jointly undertake these dialogues.

d. There is a need to review the parish council and try to make them less elitist and more representative of people. There is a need to clarify its role to emphasize the spiritual formation of the parish council members.

e. In Asia, there is a need to make the family, with particular stress on the young, a focus central to the strategy of communicating the social doctrine of the Church to the laity.

f. The FABC being in its 20th year, perhaps it is time to evaluate its operations and see if activities are in keeping or in touch with the changing realities of Asia. We suggest a more integrated and coordinated approach among the six FABC Offices. We recommend that a labor desk be created in the FABC, to work with their corresponding national offices.

Group 5

The Office for Human Development

1. General Recommendation

A joint planning meeting among the executive secretaries of the six FABC offices be convened to discuss the recommendations of this colloquium with the purpose of drawing up a work plan to implement such recommendations. It is suggested that the FABC Secretariat takes responsibility of coordinating the activities of the six offices in this regard.

2. Recommendations for the Office of Human Development

a. That the promotion of the integrity of God's creation/care for environment be recognized as part of the mandate of OHD.

b. That a full-time Executive Secretary for OHD be appointed soon.

c. That OHD establish mechanisms to implement the recommendations of this colloquium by drawing up a work plan, with a time frame. The following elements should be considered:

i) Information Dissemination

a. Dissemination of the colloquium statement and recommendations to the national social development agencies, justice and peace commissions and their instrumentalities, down to the local levels.

b. Dissemination of updates/programs on the process of implementation.

ii) Coordination/Facilitation

a. Regional Level: Organize, coordinate and facilitate seminars on the social doctrine of the Church for clergy and laity.

b. National Level: Assist national organizations to organize seminars for clergy and laity. Provide technical support to national organizations in terms of helping such seminars with resource speakers, etc.

3. Recommendations for Other FABC Offices

a. Office of Laity

i) Establish a desk to look into labor issues/situations of workers.

ii) Establish a desk to look into the situation of peasants.

b. Office of Social Communications

i) Identify centers for translation work.

ii) Disseminate information on this colloquium and the social doctrine of the Church.

4. A Recommendation

The time frame for the work plan to be drawn up shall conclude with the Joint Planning Meeting of the FABC Offices in June 1993. The implementation of the work plan can thus be evaluated at that meeting.

Group 6

The Office of Evangelization

1. The colloquium recognizes the need for the dissemination of the social doctrine not only among the clergy, religious and laity but also in a similar form to the people of Asia. This is a recommendation to the national and regional conferences of Asia.

2. It is also recommended that the work of evangelization should include lines of concrete action plan with definite emphasis on social transformation of the society.

The teaching of the social doctrine in seminaries, schools and other educational institutions. Youth also should be given systematic information about the social doctrine and action.

3. It is recommended to the Office of Evangelization organize a colloquium on evangelization, with the understanding of social doctrine and action as constitutive elements of evangelization and to draw up strategies for evangelization.

4. All the Asian countries should stand fearlessly for human rights in all their aspects.

a. Adopt the Bandung resolution to celebrate Human Rights Sunday.

b. The national and regional conferences should officially and openly receive and promote the UN declarations on human rights, religious freedom, etc.

5. Set up a network for information exchange on human rights' violations, easily available to all countries.

6. The witness value of Christian unity must be stressed and truly tried. Internal unity is an essential value.

7. Dialogue with other religious groups, and close collaboration with NGOs in the process of evangelization and social transformation, must be accepted as a top priority.

VII. Walking Humbly, Acting Justly, Loving Tenderly in Asia

A Statement of the Colloquium on the Social Doctrine of the Church in the Context of Asia

Introduction

We came from different places and from diverse cultures.* But we came heeding the same call, impelled by the same Spirit of Jesus. We came to participate in the Asian Colloquium on the Social Doctrine of the Church mandated by the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) and organized by its Office of Human Development.

It was our desire to understand more fully in the light of Asia the good news of Jesus to the poor (cf. Lk. 4:18), availing ourselves of the rich heritage of the social teachings of the Church. Our labor was guided by the desire to serve, following the footsteps of Jesus, our Asian brothers and sisters with whom we journey towards the third millennium.

We shared with one another our common experiences of struggle but also of hopes in our commitment to justice and peace. We sought to strengthen one another, so that we may with joy "serve the Asian peoples in the quest for God and for a better human life" (FABC V, Bandung, Indonesia).

* One hundred and eight participants from 12 Asian and 5 non-Asian countries took part in the colloquium.

Convictions

Inspired by the God who hears the cry of his peoples (cf. Ex.3:7), and who has sent his Son anointed by the Spirit "to bring the Good News to the poor" (Lk. 4:18),

We Recognize that:

1. The Church is immersed in a continent of great and varied religio-cultural traditions and is only one — a very small minority at that — of the many religiocultural forces assisting Asia in its struggle for a full life. Asia is where the Church also suffers suspicions, subtle discrimination and lack of freedom in the face of increasing statism and religious fundamentalism. We recognized with compassion the difficulties that our sister churches in several Asian countries are presently suffering.

2. Asia is a continent of massive poverty and exploitation, with the levers of power and wealth in the hands of social elites, both within and without, and where the dominant economic system continues to inflict great suffering on the powerless and voiceless poor.

3. Tribal and ethnic minorities, women and children, workers, peasants and fisherfolks especially bear the brunt of poverty and exploitation, as is evident in agrarian bondage, the tragic effects of tourism, migrant and overseas labor often working under inhuman conditions.

4. The negative values of cultures, joined to negative forces of modernity, have inhibited authentic human development. Their positive dimensions and resources have been ignored by the dominant development models.

5. The degradation of the Asian ecology, both human and natural, goes on unabated in the name of development and is moving Asian societies towards a slow and imminent destruction if the process is not reversed.

6. Seeds of authentic development are being sown in all parts of Asia. We discern the seeds in the growing social consciousness of poor communities, in the emergence of NGOs and people's organizations, and in the awareness of various faiths and groups to collaborate in the struggle for justice and peace.

We Believe that:

1. The whole purpose of the Church's social ministration is to witness by deeds and words with the power of the Holy Spirit, to the Father's love and the abundance of life given to us in Jesus (cf. Jn. 10:10). It is Christ who is the source, center and summit of our social ministry. It is his love (*agape*) for humanity and for the poor that inspires and requires us to fulfill and surpass the demands of justice.

2. The situation of dehumanizing poverty and suffering in Asia demands that we underline in our teaching and through our lives as disciples of the Lord his own love of preference for the poor. Persevering in this love, the Church in Asia will become truly a Church of the Poor.

3. Our efforts to promote life in all its forms — human and natural — and to uphold the dignity of every human person, especially the most lowly, are inseparable from a genuine witness to Christ and his message. The social teachings of the Church which draw inspiration from the Gospel serve indispensably today in our commitment to fulfill the call of the same Gospel. We have the right and duty to proclaim and put into practice the social teachings of the Church even at the risk of suffering consequences.

4. The Church's social teachings have to interplay dynamically with the cultures of Asia, and be reread from within these cultures, even as our social teachings can also illumine the realities of Asia.

5. In the context of Asia, interreligious dialogue and collaboration for authentic and total human development is a key to social transformation and harmony.

6. The universal purpose of created goods, material, intellectual and spiritual, has priority over the relative right to private property, which has been understood in a very individualistic and absolutist sense in our present-day societies.

7. A global effort is necessary to resolve Asian problems. Hence, the necessity of solidarity among the poor nations, as well as the solidarity of the richer nations with them.

8. By reason of their specific call in the Church the lay faithful have the leading role in its mission to be a leaven of social transformation.

In the light of these convictions,

We Denounce:

1. The economic system, which through its primacy of money and market, constitutes a violent aggression on the rights of the Asian poor to live with human dignity as sons and daughters of God;

2. The political systems and powers, which for vested interests compromise the life and the freedom of the Asian poor to grow into full human persons;

3. The consumerist and materialist culture that gives primacy to anti-Gospel values and looks at persons and the environment as objects of consumption or as mere commodities, thus depersonalizing people and destroying human life and life-support systems;

4. The violation of human rights not only of individuals but also of communities in the name of law and development, of religion and race.

We See the Need:

1. To keep questioning the model of development that pervades the world and has been imposed on our Asian societies, with its damaging effects on our values, traditions and ways of life;

2. To see the unity of human beings with the whole of created reality, the presence in it of God, and the responsibility of human beings to respect, revere and care for the earth;

3. To be in touch with our cultural heritage to discover therein values that are truly human and can serve as basis for alternative models of authentic development;

4. To adhere to Gospel values as the final norm of judging all development models.

We Are Encouraged:

1. By the stirrings of the Holy Spirit manifested in the actions of individuals, groups and movements, that foster genuine human development, work for justice and promote peace and the integrity of creation;

2. By the growing social consciousness of our youth, who long for

more than food for themselves and aspire to participate in the building of a better Asian world.

Commitments

We have listened to the voice of the crucified Lord, resounding in the groanings of our victimized brothers and sisters of Asia. With the joy and hope given to us in his resurrection,

We Commit Ourselves:

1. To be journeying Churches moving towards the dawn of God's Kingdom, with its abundance of life, love, justice and peace;

2. To proclaim and work for the genuine and integral salvation of the whole person and of all persons;

3. To put into practice the social teachings of the Church in our personal dealings and in our institutions.

4. To weave into our catechesis and pastoral work the social teachings of the Church;

5. To make, in all humility, these teachings our specific Gospel-contribution to other religious and cultural groups and ideologies in building a more human community, even as we continue to learn and reap with gratitude what God has sown among them;

6. To assist in the formation of the lay faithful to assume a leading role in promoting justice and peace through creative initiatives, especially in the field of education, politics, business, communications and culture;

7. To become a new way of being Church, as in basic ecclesial or human communities, immersed in the lives of the poor and struggling with them in accordance with the Gospel, thus empowering the *anawim* of Asia to become active servant-leaders of the Kingdom of God.

Appeals

1. Expressing our collective gratitude for the series of documents on the social doctrine of the Church, particularly *Centesimus Annus*, we nevertheless appeal to the Holy See that in the preparation of these documents the relevant Asian realities be considered more. In this way

the social doctrine of the Church could be acknowledged and accepted as meaningful among Asian Christians and peoples of other faiths.

2. We appeal to our sister Churches in highly-developed countries to bring pressure upon their governments and other decision-making institutions to desist from economic policies that violate the dignity and basic rights of the Asian poor and perpetuate their deprived condition. In a special way, we ask the episcopal conferences of these countries to exert their moral authority in this regard. We ask the bishops in our own countries to do the same in relation to the powers that be.

3. It is becoming increasingly clear that education is a powerful means of bringing about social change. The Church in Asia has a huge potential in the form of large numbers of schools and colleges. We appeal to educators that deep social consciousness and truly human values be inculcated in the students at every level. They should be trained in solidarity, cooperation, care for the earth, respect for human dignity, generosity and dedication. While maintaining excellence, this should not mean catering only to the elite, but raising the standard of the disadvantaged classes. The same values should be inculcated in our out-of-school youth. Technical education and respect for work should be especially fostered. Adult education, non-formal education, including conscientization of the people, leading to a humanizing process is an urgent need to promote their dignity and rights.

4. We earnestly appeal to those in charge of formation of the laity, priests, seminarians and religious to make the social teachings of the Church an essential part of their educational and training programs. It is not so much a question of instruction in abstract principles as initiating them to discover the relevance of the Gospel to the concrete problems of life.

5. We urge our Christian communities as a matter of duty to strive for the improvement of working conditions and defend the peasants, fisher-folk and migrant workers from every form of exploitation. Church institutions should be the first in giving an example of just treatment of their workers.

6. We appeal also to all governments to respect the human rights and promote the dignity of every human being and group, and to respond to our people's aspirations for equality and participation in public life.

Conclusion

We conclude this statement with the confident prayer that the same Holy Spirit who guided us through these days will continue to give discernment to our minds, love to our hearts and courage to our deeds.

In a renewed proclamation of the Good News, it is the witness of deeds that matters most to our peoples of Asia, whom we serve and with whom we journey towards the Kingdom, which deep in our hearts we all aspire to. May God's Kingdom come! May we reveal its presence in the midst of our peoples!

May Mary, the first disciple of the Lord, who sang the great deeds of God in raising up the lowly (cf. Lk 1:48-53) accompany us in our journey of service to the peoples of Asia.

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