

Sixth Plenary Assembly: Background Paper

**JOURNEYING TOGETHER IN FAITH
WITH MIGRANT WORKERS IN ASIA**

- I. For A More Abundant Life: Migrant Workers in Asia, by Graziano Battistella, c.s.
- II. Appendix 1: Excerpts from the Instruction *De Pastoralis Migratorum Cura*:
- III. Appendix 2: The Final Statement of the Symposium on Filipino Migrant Workers in Asia

**I. FOR A MORE ABUNDANT LIFE:
MIGRANT WORKERS IN ASIA**

by

GRAZIANO BATTISTELLA, c.s.

The editorial in the Christmas issue of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* utilized a title apt to the season: "Room at the Inn," and borrowed a Filipino slogan to speak of migrant labor as the "unsung hero of Asia's development." With a tremendous labor shortage, especially of skilled labor, looming ahead, the editorial invokes "more creative ways to make it easier for business to bring in the people they need — with legal arrangements that preserve their dignity and prevent them from being forced underground."

Behind the compassionate facade, what is reflected is the tremendous transformation that parts of Asia have undergone in the past decades. From a continent largely grouped in the developing world, Asia, particularly East Asia, is currently the fastest developing region in the world. Nations which previously had to send workers abroad because of high unemployment have reached the point of suffering scarcity of labor. Migration flows traditionally directed toward North America and Europe have found new outlets in Asian economies.

This background paper has been prepared for the Open Forum sessions of the Sixth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), convening at Manila, Philippines, January 10-19, 1995. The theme of the Plenary Assembly is: "Christian Discipleship in Asia Today: Service to Life."

To invoke a facilitated and more protected circulation of labor, certainly beneficial to the workers, does not reveal all the facets of a complex scenario. If migration occurs, it is because of imbalances, mostly of an economic nature, among nations. Such differences used to exist between East and West, and now are within Asian regions. Migration alone does not take a country out of misery, and employers in receiving countries benefit much more than workers from the contribution of migrants. After all, migrant labor is sought after because it is cheap and easily disposable. Capital and labor are partners in development, but such partnership should be extended to the countries where migration originates, by increasing economic cooperation and not simply draining skilled labor.

The following reflections intend to present some aspects of the issue of migration in Asia and the implications they pose to the Church. After all, with approximately 125 million migrants in the world, migration has been viewed as the potential crisis of our age, and it has already entered the agenda of international relations concerns. After examining some facts in terms of flows and stocks of migrants in Asian countries, some major issues will be highlighted, to consider then the approach of the Church in Asia and practical recommendations for pastoral action. The focus will remain mostly on labor migration in Asia, leaving aside the traditional permanent migration to North America and Australia, or migration to Europe. While involving a large number of Asian migrants every year, close to half a million, such flow presents different characteristics and pastoral issues. Also, the issue of refugees will not be analyzed. While the differences between migrants and refugees are less clear in the complex of causes which originate human mobility, the approach to the care of refugees requires distinct initiatives.

Facts

The traditional geographic subdivisions of Asia are useful categories for examining migration flows. West Asia, or the Middle East, has been the major region of immigration for the past twenty years, particularly the Arab peninsula. Foreign workers are estimated to be 4.6 million in Saudi Arabia and 1.6 million in the United Arab Emirates. Neighboring Arab countries have been the major region of origin, but the Gulf War has caused a reshuffle in the composition of the foreign work force, with Jordanians, Palestinians and Yemenis losing acceptance, while economic sanctions have crippled Iraq's economy and the attractiveness of its migrant labor. The current recession has spurred a movement toward more utilization of the national work force in the private sector, which is overwhelmingly staffed by foreign workers, while nationals have been traditionally employed in government positions. But the lack of qualifications and the high cost of the national workforce will hinder the success of this policy and migrant

workers will remain in demand. While the occupational characteristics of foreign labor have changed considerably from the initial construction boom, and are more diversified in the maintenance and service sectors, wages have decreased and working conditions have not improved. Particularly worrisome is the lack of freedom of worship in some countries.

South Asia has increased its participation in migration. From the original involvement of India and Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have also initiated overseas labor programs. India, whose migrant force comes mostly from Kerala and Punjab, has deregulated its migration policy and it is difficult to estimate the annual outflow of workers, (approximately 150,000 in 1991 according to the official figures of the government). Pakistan has returned to an annual outflow of approximately 150,000 migrants, after the decline in the mid-1980s, and maintains over 600,000 workers abroad, almost all of them in the Middle East. Bangladesh's outflow has doubled since 1990 and it deploys approximately 200,000 workers abroad every year, while Sri Lanka's annual deployment has jumped recently over 100,000, after some stabilization at 60,000.

Southeast Asia is a complex region, where development is proceeding at an encouraging pace and participation in migration is accordingly at different stages. Next to Singapore, with over 200,000 migrants (16 per cent of the work force) and Brunei, Malaysia and Thailand have become countries of immigration. Malaysia constitutes a particular case because of the large number of undocumented migrants (perhaps 1 million), mostly from Indonesia, but also from the Philippines. Like Thailand, Malaysia is still deploying workers abroad, particularly in Taiwan and Japan. It is a typical phase of the migration transition, where a country is both importer and exporter of workforce. Indonesia and the Philippines, instead, are countries of emigration. The Philippines, in particular, with approximately 600,000 migrants deployed every year, is the largest exporter of labor in the world. Approximately 140,000 are seafarers, making the Philippines the top country of origin for seafarers. While the Indochinese peninsula is undergoing a difficult transition toward normalization, development in countries like Vietnam is presenting the possibility to enter the international labor market, using a different scheme than was previous used with the Soviet Union.

East Asia has become the most recent area of attraction for migrant labor. Japan hosts approximately 100,000 workers from Asia, 150,000 of Japanese origin from Latin America, 40,000 trainees and 300,000 irregular migrants. South Korea has also entered the trainee scheme, but has already accumulated a large number of irregular migrants, employed particularly in small industries. Hong Kong hosts approximately 130,000 domestic workers, mostly from the Philippines, but also workers in construction projects like

the new airport. Taiwan has approved an immigration law which allows for the entry of unskilled labor. Approximately 45,000 Filipinos work in Taiwan in small factories or as domestic workers, but Thais are even more numerous. The restriction of the work permit to only one year, renewable at most for another year, is forcing many migrants to leave their employers and become irregularly employed. China, foreseen to be in the year 2010 the second largest economy in the world, is undergoing profound changes involving a floating population of 150 million. Its participation in international migration remains small, but it involves an undetermined number of migrants smuggled to other countries, particularly the United States.

Though it is difficult to estimate, the stock of migrants from selected Asian countries can be considered to be approximately 4.5 million, of whom perhaps two million are from the Philippines and one million from India.

Characteristics and Issues

Labor migration in Asia has developed specific characteristics which distinguish it from labor movements of the past or in other regions. It is delimited by working contracts of short duration (two years or less). The renewal of contract, when allowed, usually requires the return to the country of origin. Migration is administered by complex government bureaucracies and a recruitment industry, whose search for profit leads to increased migration and irregular practices. The recruitment industry is also responsible for the high costs of migration, which put workers in debt before departure and force them to become irregular overstayers. The high cost of migration functions also as a selective mechanism, excluding the poorest from entering the migratory process and participating in its benefits.

Short-term contracts exclude any possibility of family reunification, even when contracts are renewed and residence abroad extends for a few years. Migration, therefore, has an impact on the family life of the migrant, both for spouse relations as well as parental relations. The pressure to migrate, inflated by the recruitment industry, the apparent success of previous migrants, and the lack of opportunities in the local economy, encourage increasing sectors of the population to participate in it. The demand for domestic services has originated the participation of large numbers of women in migration. They are particularly numerous in Hong Kong, Japan, and Singapore.

The increased participation of women in migration, an expression of the traditional division of labor extended to the international market, has also emphasized the intensity of the exploitation of migrants. The lack of labor-law protection connected with domestic services and the murky

atmosphere of the entertainment industry present conditions where women are easily subject to violence.

The unwillingness of receiving countries to adopt appropriate migration policies to absorb the workers in demand by the industry, the high level of unemployment in countries of origin whose economic development cannot absorb the number of new entrants into the labor force, the search for better opportunities, encouraged by a migration mentality, and the unscrupulous practices of recruiters have all contributed to the creation of flows of irregular migrants in all Asian countries. Undocumented migrants are mostly victims of exploitative employers and become the occasion for anti-migrant mentalities in receiving countries. Restrictive policies have proven ineffective to curb this phenomenon, which demands a global approach to stifle a phenomenon which has turned into big business for the underworld. "Trafficking in Humans: Big Business in Europe" headlined the *International Herald Tribune* recently. But trafficking is by no means limited to Europe and is also prospering in Asia.

Some problematic aspects of the migratory process originate from recruitment. Because of the effectiveness of private recruitment in deploying workers abroad, and of expanding opportunities for overseas labor, most governments of countries of origin have regulated the recruiting industry. However, they have been unable to control fees charged to migrants and to eliminate the involvement of unlicensed agencies in the recruiting process. As a consequence, migrants are victimized either through fake contracts and promises of non-existing jobs, or through exorbitant fees, which require recourse to undocumented migration.

Seafarers constitute a specific category of migrant workers, regulated by complex legislation and at the same time easily disposable. The search for profit, emphasized by the quest for unregulated conditions, amounts to a pressure on seafarers to accept ever-lower standards of working conditions and benefits. Cultural and ethnic conflicts, easily emphasized by long periods of work in the small confinement of a ship, end too often in tragedy, and redress of compensation is difficult to obtain.

At the job site, working and living conditions are mostly poor. Migrant labor is sought mostly by small industries that cannot upgrade the technological process of production and must compete by limiting the cost of labor. The attractiveness of salaries which are higher than what is available in countries of origin has a price paid by migrants usually through exploitative living and working conditions. The prevalent approach of policy-makers speaks of the necessity of labor markets to be flexible to sustain international competition. However, the terminology hides an erosion of human and labor rights to increase the profits of ownership and manage-

ment.

Some Asian governments claim a distinct and unique approach to human rights. Chiding the traditional presentation of human rights as an expression of the individualistic and conflictual mentality of Western societies, they emphasize community before the individual, and stress dialogue instead of confrontation as a more original Asian approach. While aspects of this approach can certainly contribute to enriching the understanding and protection of human rights, they are sometimes used as a political tool to limit access to popular control. Human rights constitute a unicum and should not be partitioned for political advantage.

Because of the increasing relevance and complexity of issues originated by international migration, it appears ever more urgent to abandon a unilateral approach and embrace a regional and international approach. Migrants are not commodities, but people, whose life and conditions governments are committed to protect. Moreover, incidents because of misunderstandings and mistreatment of migrants tend to become matters of friction among societies. Migration is ever more relevant for international relations and for the peace process among societies. For these reasons, and more specifically because of the relevance of migration for the life and the dialogue of Churches in Asia, it is important for the Church to deepen its understanding and take the necessary initiatives to ensure the protection of the dignity of migrants, their preparation and their integration in the local Church as active witnesses to the Gospel.

The Church and Migration

A reflection on migration from the perspective of the Church in Asia must be inserted into the wider context of the reflection on being Church in Asia, its understanding of the social issues and of its mission. From the previous assemblies of FABC, the meetings of the bishops' institutes, and the theological colloquia, a complex approach has emerged, which speaks of integral evangelization and integral liberation, which requires denouncing the violations of human rights and building solidarity for the defense of human dignity. The preferential option for the poor provides the specific perspective for a process of development from which the poor are not excluded. This requires changes both at the structural as well as the personal levels, changes to be achieved through struggle but not violence. The process requires giving preference to micro-level initiatives and the acquiring of a social conscience at all levels. Growth in faith will provide courage and strength for a prophetic stance not rooted so much in confrontation, but in dialogue. Integral liberation is sustained and leads to a profound spirituality, which draws from the rich tradition of Asian contemplation and aims to become a spirituality of harmony.

Within this context, migration appears as a complex reality, an expression of the injustice of rich nations against developing nations, but also of the myopia and greed of rulers within the nation against the poor; an expression of the drive toward material possessions, but also of the search for a higher quality of life; an occasion for violence and abuse, but also for cultural enrichment and brotherhood; an occasion for loss of faith, but also for evangelization. Because of its complexity, it is important to develop an integral theological approach, avoiding misconceptions and partialities.

- Migration is generated by the form of development resulting from the capitalist mode of production, where capital tends to concentrate in areas and sectors of high profitability, forcing workers to relocate first from the rural to the industrial areas and, if absorption of workforce is insufficient, to other economies abroad. The Church has often spoken against the evils of capitalism and most of the migratory experience, in jobs which are dirty, dangerous and demeaning, confirms the violence that the capitalist economy imposes on people. However, the lack of alternatives does not allow migrants any other choice but to participate in the system, and long-term solutions to migration point toward the necessity to provide creative corrections, or alternatives, to the system, rather than just to condemn it. While economic development in East Asia has not been, and is not, without problems, it has, however, extinguished the necessity for those countries to send migrants abroad.

- The Church has made repeatedly the preferential option for the poor, but migrants do not appear among the poor. The remittances they send home allow their families better living conditions and opportunities for education of children. The society of origin considers them lucky and the neighbors envy the appliances and electronics they can afford. The Church of origin appears to reflect this mentality, in part, and migrants are not considered a pastoral issue.

- The limited duration of contracts makes the integration of migrants in the country of employment almost impossible. The receiving Church also appears to recognize this fact and, since the migrants will not remain, they might not be given particular attention. The underlining assumption is that migrants are a concern of the Church of origin.

- In addition, difficulties of language render it practically impossible for the receiving Church to assume the pastoral care of migrants. Therefore, they are left to the care of foreign missionaries who can speak the language. However, usually these missionaries have other tasks, and migrants only become a temporary concern.

• At the same time, migrants are problematic. Not only do they ask for help from the local Church in their legal or social needs, but sometimes their presence becomes overwhelming, and they upset the local communities. In addition, because of their quest for earnings, they accept occupations of dubious repute and compromise their moral standards, becoming counterwitnesses to the Gospel. Victims of greedy recruiters and unscrupulous employers, they venture into irregular migration and are considered willing participants in their own victimization. Migrants, therefore, are blamed for the disruption and bad image they bring to Christian communities.

Utilizing the theme for this assembly, the point of departure for a brief theological reflection must be the words of Jesus: "I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10). Migrants are persons who experience the lack of prospects in life, and so search for alternatives, for a more abundant life. It is a search that is mostly not voluntarily undertaken, but imposed on them by lack of alternatives in their own country. It is a search generally not for personal gain, but for the benefit of the family. The search becomes an exodus toward what is presented as a promised land; however, their journey is not necessarily a happy one. Sometimes they are just sold by unscrupulous recruiters and brokers; often in the land of employment they fall victims to greedy employers, who provide undignified working conditions and tend to transform them into slaves. Sometimes the experience is successful, and they send for their relatives to join them. But no country in Asia allows for the family reunification of unskilled workers.

They are among the new poor of our society. Poor because in large numbers they remain victims of the necessity to improve their situation and accept living and working conditions which are subhuman. Poor because they suffer long separation from family and loved ones, and cannot contribute the loving and caring presence which sustains and motivates human living. Poor because migration is not necessarily rewarding, and for some who succeed, many remain marginalized or are forced back into migration as through a revolving door. Poor because sometimes they neglect their moral and spiritual life, or are forced into environments where sufficient support to their faith is not available.

As poor, they also carry a message about the organization of our society and our economies, oriented toward a flawed development, which is strictly based on having more rather than being more, and which provides an inefficient and unjust way to redistribute the wealth that "originates from no other source than from the labor of workers" (*Rerum Novarum*, 51). In the face of the much-touted Asian economic miracle, the development of forms of migration, where human dignity is easily ignored, pro-

claims that the growth of wealth is not true development, because it is not liberating for everyone.

The Good News of the Lord instead is liberating. It is the news that Jesus has identified himself with them when he said, "Blessed are the poor" (Mt 5:3), but also when he said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35). It is the news that through their quest for economic improvement, they are seeking for a better quality of living which economic welfare can only imperfectly give; but Christ can, because he is the life. It is the news that no land on earth is the promised land; but the Kingdom is already in our midst. In the Kingdom there are no barriers because "there is no longer Jew of Greek, male or female" (Gal 3:28). The struggle through foreign territories is an image of our journey for a homeland, because right now every land is a foreign land.

The word of God liberates when it shows the migrants the danger of serving mammon, of placing all their hopes in more material possessions and forgetting personal dignity, the danger of losing solidarity with brethren for personal gain. The Church is an instrument, a sacrament of this liberation. Migrants, welcomed into the Receiving Church, experience the universal love of God and bring the richness and diversity of its expressions, so that a new way of being Church is constantly achieved. Through forming a community united by the same faith, they live the mission of revealing to all the love of God for the world.

The difference between migration as a human experience, with difficulties but possibilities for growth, and migration as a demeaning experience, with dramatic consequences and loss of dignity, lies in its causes and conditions. The pastoral care of migrants requires the Church to address first of all the causes of migration, and advocate the promotion of sound, equitable and humane conditions in relation to international migration. At the same time, it requires the provision of conditions for being Church also during the migration process, with possibilities to nourish faith and proclaim that Jesus is Lord. It requires formation of migrants before their journey, and support systems for families to cope during migration. It requires appreciation of the possibilities for evangelization that migrants offer, and for empowering them to contribute to the mission, but also an effort to evangelize the migrants and make them responsible for the witnessing which derives from their baptism. It is an occasion for experiencing the universal dimension of the Church lived in the local context, and for practicing dialogue among cultures and beliefs. It requires a prophetic denunciation of the shortcomings and sinfulness in the development process, which originates migration, and the affirmation of the possibility of a new society where borders do not separate and do not discriminate. Because of the complex nature of migration, the pastoral care of migrants in Asia

must be an integral evangelization and must contribute to preparing the conditions for "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1).

Pastoral Recommendations

Within this context, migration has not received much specific attention in the FABC documents. The index of the volume *For All Peoples of Asia* has only one citation from BIMA 1 in 1988 on the importance of migrants for evangelization. However, migration has not been ignored by the bishops, and specifically some bishops' conferences and individual bishops have spoken explicitly on it.*

Institutional guidelines for the pastoral care of migrants were issued 25 years ago by the Congregation of Bishops in the Instruction *De Pastoralis Migratorum Cura*. Recommendations in that instruction are still relevant and bishops should familiarize themselves with them. However, the Instruction is being revised, since many things have changed in 25 years, and Asian bishops should contribute their suggestions to such revision.

At the Level of FABC

Establish a Migration Desk. The first need is to raise the awareness of the Churches on the issue of international migration, facilitate the circulation of information, exchange initiatives and methodologies, coordinate efforts, facilitate the preparation of pastoral kits, organize the preparation of pastoral personnel, prepare statements and provide representation at the regional level. Migration in fact cannot be adequately dealt with in a unilateral or even bilateral way, but it requires a regional approach. This proposal was already formulated at the First Consultative Meeting for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees in Asia, held in Manila in 1992, and reiterated at the Symposium on Filipino Migrant Workers in Asia, held in Hong Kong in 1993, but it has not been implemented yet.

* The Conference of Bishops in the Philippines released a statement in 1988 on the occasion of Migration Sunday; the Chinese Bishops' Conference in Taiwan wrote a letter in 1989 on the question of foreign workers; the Episcopal Commission on Social Activities of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan issued a message in 1993; and the Commission for Justice and Peace of the Bishops' Conference in Korea released a message in the same year. The symposium organized by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People in Manila in 1992 has increased the attention of all conferences; and it was followed by a symposium on the care of migrant Filipinos in Asia, held in Hong Kong in 1993.

At the Level of Bishops' Conferences

1. A Pastoral Letter or Statement on Migration. International migration is characterized by the policies of receiving countries, who determine the type of migrants they will receive, and establish the legal and social framework for their stay. Therefore, migration has different characteristics and poses different challenges to the Church in the various nations. A pastoral statement by those conferences which have not done it, or which did it sometime ago, presenting the understanding and approach of the Church to the issue, with analysis of causes and denunciation of injustices, will set the agenda and expand the involvement of Christians in this issue.

2. A Bishops' Commission on the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. Some conferences already have such an institution, albeit with a different name, or perhaps as part of a larger commission; others do not. However, all signs indicate that migration will increase and migrants will remain longer than expected. The bishops' commission has served well in other Churches with longer experience of migration and should be replicated where it is not present.

3. Advocacy. The commitment of the Church to the promotion and defense of human dignity requires a clear stance on human rights, and the Church should establish a dialogue with civic and social institutions to ensure that policies and practices do not violate the dignity of migrants. For this reason, immigration laws and policies in each country should be carefully studied so that a positive contribution can be made. Such dialogue cannot have the same form in all countries; however, the awareness of the minority status in which the Church usually stands should not excuse it from speaking for those who do not have a voice. Particular attention must be dedicated to the issue of undocumented migration and to the trafficking in migrant women. Specific recommendations should be made to ensure the adherence of governments to international instruments, such as the ILO Conventions on migrant workers, and the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

4. Cooperation among Churches. The pastoral care of migrants is the primary responsibility of the Receiving Church, often not sufficiently equipped for a ministry which requires knowledge of a different language and culture. Cooperation between the Church of Origin and the Receiving Church is fundamental and should include clear guidelines for the exchange of pastoral personnel (lay, religious and clergy), and temporary missions organized in cooperation.

5. The Preparation of Pastoral Workers. Training sessions should be

made available for personnel involved in the pastoral care of migrants. Such training should provide a general understanding of the migratory phenomenon, a theological approach, and immersion/exposure in the environment and culture of the country of origin. To help in the formation process, at various levels, a manual on the pastoral care of migrants and refugees in Asia should be prepared.

At the Level of Dioceses

1. **Being Church with Migrants.** A diocesan policy should be expressed to become Church with the migrants and to make them part of the community of disciples, companions on the journey toward the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:2). Such community gives witness to the unity and universality of the Church and implements Jesus' prayer that they may all be one (Jn 17:21). Such a policy will require an evangelization of both the migrants and the local Christians to build community.

2. **Human Promotion.** The needs of migrants require intervention to provide shelter, legal representation, medical assistance, etc. The Church can orient its social institutions to care also for the migrants; most of all, it should facilitate their self-organizing, empowering them to respond to their own needs. Particular attention should be given to migrant associations and to NGOs, making them partners in the promotion and defense of the dignity of migrants.

3. **Respect and Appreciation of Cultural Diversity.** Cultures provide a variety of expression of the same faith. The cultural diversity that migrants bring should be appreciated and migrants should be given the opportunity, as much as possible, to express their faith in their own culture and language, with respect for their traditions, without creating division in the community. For this reason, the local clergy should make an effort to learn how to communicate effectively the Gospel to the migrants. When this is not possible, missionaries should be provided of the same language and culture, in cooperation with the Church of Origin. Cultural cooperation can also be established for the preparation of catechetical and liturgical material.

4. **Diocesan Office for Human Mobility.** When it is possible and required, a diocesan office for the pastoral care of migrants can be established for the coordination of this activity; or a diocesan representative can be appointed to work in coordination with the relevant office of the bishops' conference.

5. **Migration Day.** An annual migration day should be celebrated as an occasion for prayer with migrant workers, awareness of their struggles

and sensitization of the local community on mutual acceptance and cooperation.

6. Basic Christian Communities. Migrants are often scattered and the time allowed to them for their Christian gathering is very limited. For this reason, small Christian communities should be encouraged, where migrants can be gathered by the word of God in love and prayer. Lay missionaries can be very effective in this ministry.

7. Formation of Laity and Clergy. Attention to the migration issue should be part of the curriculum in seminaries and in formation courses for lay missionaries. Such responsibility belongs to both the receiving Church and the Church of origin, which must acquire the sensitivity of not abandoning the members of its community when abroad. Personnel specifically involved with the care of migrants should participate in a formation program organized by the bishops' conference.

8. Apostleship of the Sea in the Ports. An office should be established in all major ports where human and Christian support can be offered to seafarers, and assistance provided for the many victims who do not have a way to present their grievances to authorities. Also, opportunities should be provided for formation for Christian life on board, where seafarers only have themselves to lead them in listening to the word of God and in prayer.

9. Support Groups for Families. The formation of groups at the parish level should be encouraged, so families with migrants abroad can discuss mutual concerns and draw support.

10. Contacts with Migrants. Migrants should be encouraged to inform the community of origin when departing, and contacts should be maintained. Also, instruments for personal prayer, such as radio cassettes, can be provided, particularly in countries where it is not possible to gather for worship.

Useful moments for understanding, assessing and planning pastoral activities are conferences and symposia. After the First Consultative Meeting of 1992, the Pontifical Council is planning to organize another gathering, perhaps in cooperation with FABC. It might be good to present suggestions concerning place, topics and speakers, either during this assembly or directly to the Pontifical Council. Likewise, it appears that there will be an international conference on migration, organized by the United Nations, in 1997 and it will be held in Manila. The Church should facilitate local organizations for reflection on the issues, as well as for participation of its NGOs in that forum.

Table 1: Overseas Contract Workers from Selected Asian Countries: 1976-1993 (.000)

Country	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Bangladesh	6.1	15.7	22.8	24.5	30.6	55.8	62.8	59.2	56.8
India	4.2	22.9	69.0	171.8	236.2	276.0	239.5	225.0	206.0
Pakistan	41.7	140.5	130.5	125.5	129.8	168.4	142.9	128.2	100.4
Sri Lanka	1.2	12.5	17.7	25.9	28.6	57.4	22.5	18.1	15.7
Indonesia	1.9	2.9	8.2	10.4	16.2	17.9	21.1	29.0	37.9
Rep. of Korea	47.7	69.6	102.0	121.0	146.4	175.1	196.9	187.8	152.7
Philippines	47.8	70.4	88.2	137.3	214.6	266.2	314.3	434.2	351.0
Thailand	1.3	3.9	14.7	10.6	21.5	26.7	108.5	68.5	75.0
Country	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Bangladesh	77.7	68.7	74.0	68.1	101.7	103.8	147.1	188.1	244.5
India	163.0	113.6	125.4	169.9	126.8	143.6	117.5	n.a.	n.a.
Pakistan	88.5	62.6	69.6	84.8	95.8	113.7	142.8	191.5	154.5
Sri Lanka	12.4	15.8	12.4	15.8	24.7	42.6	65.0	55.6	129.0
Indonesia	56.7	65.5	59.4	64.0	84.7	86.2	124.7	n.a.	n.a.
Rep. of Korea	120.2	95.3	86.3	83.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Philippines	372.8	378.2	449.3	471.0	458.6	446.1	615	686.4	689.2
Thailand	69.7	85.7	85.5	118.6	125.3	63.0	63.8	82.0	n.a.

Source: ILO Offices, several countries.

Table 2: Overseas Contract Workers from Selected Countries to Receiving Countries: 1993

	Bangladesh	Pakistan	Philippines	Sri Lanka	Thailand	Total
Saudi Arabia	106,387	97,947	230,996	51,413	5,035	491,778
Kuwait	26,407	18,652	11,256	30,362	1,859	88,536
Qatar	2,441	1,162	8,202	3,114	751	15,670
UAE	15,810	27,264	30,045	19,901	1,504	94,524
Bahrain	5,396	1,977	6,461	5,684	750	20,268
Oman	15,866	6,456	5,315	5,520		33,157
Libya	1,800		7,176		4,597	13,573
Singapore	1,739		11,568	2,065	14,171	29,543
Malaysia	67,938		12,409		11,358	92,116
Brunei			10,960		14,750	25,713
Hongkong		16	62,583		5,182	67,781
Japan			43,542		5,588	49,130
Taiwan			23,025		66,891	89,916
Others	724	641	79,872	11,017	5,514	97,768
Total	244,508	154,529	543,410	129,076	137,950	1,209,473

Source: ILO Offices, several countries.

Table 3: Remittances of Overseas Contract Workers to Selected Countries (US\$ M)

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Bangladesh	23	81	110	171	339	382	531	670	501
India	403	609	868	1,397	1,867	1,739	1,927	1,957	1,985
Indonesia	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	33	48	45	53
Pakistan	577	1,156	1,397	1,744	2,215	2,224	2,885	2,737	2,445
Philippines	111	313	290	364	421	545	810	944	658
Sri Lanka	11	18	31	46	117	195	289	293	300
Thailand	24	45	104	187	365	475	618	846	894
Korea	1,273	584	769	1,158	1,292	1,673	1,938	1,661	1,489
Bangladesh	502	752	748	750	757	781	769	902	1,009
India	1,757	1,978	2,199	1,764	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Indonesia	58	39	26	22	170	204	218	n.a.	n.a.
Pakistan	2,595	2,278	2,012	1,897	1,942	1,848	1,467	1,088	1,161
Philippines	687	680	791	856	793	1,181	1,500	1,769	2,229
Sri Lanka	291	326	345	315	330	362	394	n.a.	639
Thailand	878	798	863	926.5	943	969	983	n.a.	n.a.
Korea	1,241	1,077	1,021	1,006	994	630	560	446	n.a.

Source: ILO Offices, several countries.

APPENDIX 1: FROM THE INSTRUCTION *DE PASTORALI MIGRATORUM CURA*

Norms for the National Conferences of Bishops

Episcopal conferences, especially national ones, should pay energetic attention to the more pressing problems confronting the aforementioned groups (namely people who migrate, exiles and refugees, etc.) Through common agreement and united efforts, such conferences should look to and promote the spiritual care of these people by means of suitable methods and institutions. They should first bear in mind the special rules already laid down by the Apostolic See. These can suitably be adapted to the circumstances of time, place and persons.

The episcopal conferences are asked that, bearing in mind the great number of migrants and travelers today, they assign to a priest delegated for this purpose or to a special commission established for this purpose everything pertaining to the study and direction of the spiritual care of these persons.

Since pastoral needs increasingly require that some pastoral undertakings be directed and carried forward as joint projects, it is fitting that certain offices be created for the service of all or many dioceses of a determined region or nation. These offices can even be filled by bishops.

It likewise pertains to the episcopal conference to found and promote projects providing a brotherly welcome and due pastoral care for those who immigrate from mission lands for the sake of studying or working. For through them, faraway peoples become neighbors in a certain sense. An excellent opportunity is offered to communities which have long been Christian to converse with nations which have not yet heard the Gospel, and to show them the genuine face of Christ through their own offices of love and assistance.

Cooperation with missionary bishops is necessary in order that immigrants from mission countries may be properly received and assisted by fitting pastoral care from bishops in established Christian countries.

22 sec.:1 In the nations affected by migrating people in greater numbers, let the conferences of bishops constitute their own episcopal commission for migration. This commission will have a secretary, who will normally also be the national director and may in addition be chosen as a member of the Superior Council for Migration.

22 sec.:2 It is very fitting that priests and religious of both sexes, as

well as lay people who are expert in matters of immigration, be members of this commission.

22 sec.:3 In other nations, where the number of migrating people is smaller, the conferences of bishops should at least designate an episcopal promoter who will look to their spiritual care.

23. In order to implement the dispositions of the Apostolic See and the decrees of the Sacred Council, let the national episcopal conferences, themselves or through a national director or some other organ, take the following responsibilities:

23 sec.:1 They are to study the principal questions of migration, noting especially the circumstances of peoples and places, and undertake appropriate pastoral projects, both to prepare the minds of the migrating people to adapt themselves to their new way of life and to see that they are properly received, whether in individual regions of their own homeland, or in other nations to which they go. Let them devote great efforts also to the good of those groups of men who are not Christians and who often seem destitute of help for body and soul.

23 sec.:2 They are to choose priests, train them for this particular ministry, and assign them to the conferences of bishops of other nations involved — or to the organs of those conferences — so that they may be received by them, according to article 36, sec.2, as chaplains or missionaries for immigrants.

23 sec.:3 They are to set up, if possible, an educational institution for priests who are to be assigned to immigrant people; or at least they should choose some institutions, which will be assisted by any existing seminaries specializing in the formation for the priesthood of candidates of certain languages.

In such institutions let the priests, both before they set out for foreign nations and when they are already there, attend appropriate classes for a stated time. Besides, if the matter indicates, let them strive to acquaint themselves with new methods of the apostolate and inform themselves about economic and social conditions and civil culture.

23 sec.:4 They should encourage both men and women religious, and likewise lay people, to participate in these projects, and to utilize them so that through an ordered pastoral approach they may bring notable spiritual and social assistance to this cause.

23 sec.:5 In consultation with the Sacred Congregation for Bishops,

they are to promote periodic conventions on a national level, or even on the continental level. These conventions are to strive for apt and efficient coordination of the pastoral care of immigrants, unifying it until it can be accommodated to the particular circumstances of each people.

23 sec.:6 They are to promote suitable dialogue with international associations, or those in individual countries, and with government organs and organizations, the better to foster the rights of people who migrate, even in social matters, and to insure their education — especially professional qualifications that are so important in the present era.

23 sec.:7 They are to send a general summary of their activity to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops each year, adding also information — if it is available — worthwhile statistical studies, so that difficulties, their suggestions, and also their desires, can be more fully known and more easily responded to.

24 sec.:1 Migrations of every type, as also the incessant journeying about the modern world of certain groups — such as seamen, flight crews and wandering peoples — not only offer new pastoral difficulties, but raise new problems pertaining to the spiritual life, psychology, finances and organization. This is especially the case with exiles, refugees, and emigrants from regions that are overpopulated and still on the way of development.

24 sec.:2 In order to summon up help in solving these questions to the greatest degree possible, it is very fitting that the conferences of bishops and local ordinaries establish a yearly “Immigrant Day.”

24 sec.:3 The observance of this day will aim particularly towards this, that the sons of the people of God — according to their abilities — consider the divine plan of eternal salvation, know fully their own role, and fulfill their duties in fostering what needs to be done for the immigrants. The observance aims towards this as well, that all the faithful may pour out their prayer to God, imploring from on high vocations for this work. Finally, it seeks this, that the zealous apostolate of priests may be strengthened and the Christian faith of the immigrants remain secure and show lively growth.

24 sec.:4 Psychological difficulties in character and mentality call for common work and effort by the Christian people so that all prejudiced opinions and segregation based on differences of nation, race or creed may be overcome by concerted effort, founding more open and better relations, and true, brotherly meeting of minds and among peoples.

24 sec.:5 Since numerous and provident projects of the chaplains, miss-

ionaries, social workers, and institutions which help migrants, bring new and weighty difficulties for episcopal conferences and individual ordinaries of the place — namely in the financial area and in organization — the “Immigrant Day” also aims that the faithful carefully consider the role which obliges them to supply resources for relieving the needs of their brothers who migrate. Conferences of bishops can use the faculty of celebrating this day in order to excite the zeal of the faithful over these affairs more and more, and to stimulate them to donate liberally for the necessary works.

24 sec.:6 “Immigrant Day” should be celebrated in a time and way which the local circumstances and demands of civil society indicate.

Norms for Ordinaries of the Place

Special concern should be shown for those among the faithful who, on account of their way or condition of life, cannot sufficiently make use of the common and ordinary pastoral services of parish priests or are quite cut off from them. Among this group are very many migrants, exiles and refugees, seamen, airplane personnel, gypsies, and others of this kind. Suitable pastoral methods should also be developed to sustain the spiritual life of those who journey to other lands for a time for the sake of recreation.

Also, in similar circumstances, provision should be made for the faithful of different language groups, either through priests or parishes of the same language, or through an episcopal vicar well-versed in the language, and, if need be, endowed with episcopal dignity; or, in some other more appropriate way.

Episcopal vicars, in their determined part of the diocese or their given type of business or in regard to the faithful of a certain rite or personal group as stipulated in their nomination by the diocesan bishop, enjoy the ordinary vicarious power which the common law attributes to a vicar general.

Therefore, as to different forms and structures which, proven by long experience, serve to provide spiritual assistance to the people who migrate, let ordinaries of the place bear in mind the following:

A) The ordinaries of the place of departure

25. If it seems necessary or useful, let a special office for emigrants be established and rightly organized in the diocesan curia. Its purpose will be to treat emigrant people’s questions and affairs and to carry on other projects for them, both before and after their departure.

26. The ordinaries should admonish their pastors of the grave

duty which holds them to pass on to all their faithful such religious training that, should it be necessary, they may more easily meet the difficulties and dangers of departing, and be able to initiate new relations with other men, whether they settle in another place in their own homeland or move to a foreign nation where the inhabitants profess a different religion or several religions. Thus the emigrants, if they ever return home, temporarily or perpetually, may take it for granted that their pastor will always be to them as a father.

27. Let the ordinaries of the place see that diocesan and religious priests who are suitable and equal to this difficult ministry are sought out and recognized; and let them willingly assign these priests to episcopal conferences who ask for them.

28. Let every ordinary set up contacts with the national episcopal conference or with its organs, so that he may obtain help for his diocese — and he himself in turn may give it to other dioceses — in carrying out those things which have been established by the same bishops' body for the pastoral care of departing emigrants.

B) The ordinaries of the places to which immigrants come

29. If it seems necessary, let there be a particular office for immigrants constituted at the episcopal curia in the dioceses to which immigration takes place. A vicar episcopal or other suitable priest should be placed in charge of this office.

30 sec.:1 All the faithful, both clergy and laity, including men or women religious, should be properly admonished to receive immigrant people benevolently and to strive zealously to assist them in the pressing needs which they encounter from the start.

30 sec.:2 Let them benignly and willingly assist other Christians who do not enjoy full communion with the Catholic Church and who lack ministers of their Church or community; nor are they to deny assistance to non-Christian people if they come. They are to observe the norms on intercommunion which have been published in the Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and in the Ecumenical Directory *Ad Totam Ecclesiam*.

30 sec.:3 The spiritual care of all the faithful, and thus of the immigrant people, falls most especially on the shoulders of the pastors of the parishes within which they live. These shall one day give an account to God regarding the fulfillment of their duty. Let them bear this heavy burden in association and union with the chaplain or missionary, if there is

one present.

31 sec.:1 In consultation with the national episcopal conference, or with its organs in charge of immigrant work, let priests be sought who are of the same language or country as the immigrants.

31 sec.:2 Yet, if particular circumstances indicate, such as an insufficient number of priests, let the ordinaries use the work of other priests who are versed in the language of the immigrants. Let them strive with the forces available that their new sons succeed in overcoming their crises and any dangers to the practice of the Christian life.

31 sec.:3 If it is necessary to provide for the spiritual care of immigrants whose liturgical rite is different, let the decrees concerning these people be followed and the rights of their own hierarchy be preserved.

31 sec.:4 Likewise, if it is necessary, let spiritual assistance — in consultation with their own leaders or ministers — be undertaken for those Christians who do not have full communion with the Catholic Church, according to legitimate prescriptions of the Congregations of the Apostolic See.

32. In accord with the norms of the Second Vatican Council the ordinaries of the place are not to refuse to admit the use of the immigrants' own language in the Sacred Liturgy, no matter what country they come from.

33. In the pastoral care of immigrants, certain structures and methods are proven by experience and use, though needing accommodation to the circumstances of place, customs, and needs of the faithful:

33 sec.:1 Where there are great numbers of immigrants of the same language, living either stably or in continuous movement, the erection of a personal parish can be advisable. It is to be appropriately set up by the ordinary of the place.

33 sec.:2 The bishop might also set up a mission with the care of souls, especially in those places where the migrating people have not yet taken up a stable residence. It must have a properly circumscribed territory. Such a mission will be to those particular groups which stay in the place, no matter how long or what the cause.

33 sec.:3 According to needs, a mission with the care of souls within the bounds of one parish, or even of several parishes, can also be attached to some territorial parish, especially if that parish is operated by the members of the same religious congregation who carry out the spiritual care of

the immigrants.

33 sec.:4 When neither a personal parish nor a mission with the care of souls — independent or attached to a parish — seems opportune, then let the spiritual care of migrants be provided by a chaplain or missionary of the same language, with a determined territory in which to exercise his ministry.

33 sec.:5 Where there is a large enough number of immigrants, this chaplain or missionary can be constituted as an assistant pastor of one or more parishes, to provide for their spiritual care.

33 sec.:6 Finally, let priests be chosen for the modern international organizations, lest their members of different languages lack spiritual care. These priests should know the members' languages and carry out a ministry to them.

34 sec.:1 Some church or chapel, a public or semi-public oratory, should, if possible, be given to each chaplain or missionary for immigrant persons, so that there he may perform his sacred ministry.

34 sec.:2 If this cannot be done, let the ordinary of the place issue norms so that the chaplain or missionary for immigrants can minister in another church, even a parish one, freely and cumulatively with the services there.

34 sec.:3 It also seems opportune to provide houses to which the immigrants have access as their own, so that there they may cultivate the goods and values of their own culture, enjoy merited quiet and relaxation, and find healthy support.

APPENDIX 2: THE FINAL STATEMENT OF THE SYMPOSIUM ON FILIPINO MIGRANT WORKERS IN ASIA

11th-18th September 1993, Hong Kong

JOURNEYING TOGETHER IN FAITH WITH THE FILIPINO MIGRANT WORKERS IN ASIA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. International migration has reached unprecedented dimensions in today's global economy. It is a growing phenomenon within Asia, where by the Philippines is one of the major countries of origin for these migrants in Asia. They are temporary workers, with either fixed-term contracts or are undocumented workers, the majority of whom are women. As delegates of the episcopal conferences and commissions of the Church in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines, we gathered in Hong Kong to share our experiences with each other and with the Filipino migrants.
2. A deeper understanding of the reality of migration and the impact on the lives of our people prompted us to discern in the light of the Gospel and the Social Teaching of the Church, the challenges for the Church in Asia. Our renewed commitment to be in solidarity with the cries of our less-privileged brothers and sisters has brought us together to discover new ways of being at their service. Our recognition of the need to put on the "mind and heart of Jesus" continuously challenges us to become guardians of justice, development and freedom. We, therefore, as leaders seek to ensure that we can work together for a more human life for individuals, families and for society as a whole.
3. In our search and journey together with the migrant workers, we see the need to "serve the Asian peoples in the quest for God and for a better human life" (FABC V, Bandung, Indonesia). This calls for a commitment on our part to the perspective of the Gospel and the Social Doctrine of the Church, articulated in the Final Statement of the Colloquium on the Social Doctrine of the Church in the Context of Asia (January 1992, Thailand), thus:

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, or 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 of it in 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.
4. We, as Church, in our efforts to be totally immersed in the struggles and lives of our people, need to become more aware of the underlying values behind the different models of socio-economic development. Our reflection on the Gospel and the Social Teaching of the Church has challenged us to take a closer look at both the "sorrows and fears" and the "joys and hopes." It is fairly obvious that besides the economic benefits for the people, there are other religious and cultural implications which will have to be taken into consideration in order to have a more holistic understanding of migration of people. Migration has both positive and negative effects on the country of origin as well on the receiving country. We realize that we need to bring more humanizing dimensions to the human person, to restore dignity to the value of family and marriage. This calls for a more "God-centered" perspective of the issues related to migration.

II. OVERVIEW OF REALITY OF MIGRATION AND MIGRANT WORKERS' MIGRATION FROM THE PHILIPPINES TO OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES

5. Since the establishment of the Philippines Labor Program in 1974, as a consequence of the economic crisis determined by international events, millions of Filipinos have sought jobs abroad. The majority worked in the Middle East, as construction or maintenance workers. West Asia remains the region of employment for over 60 percent of Filipino migrants occupied mostly in the maintenance sector, the health industry and domestic services. In recent years, however, an increasing number of Filipinos are working in countries of East and Southeast Asia, particularly as domestic workers in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, factory workers in South Korea and Taiwan, and performers in the entertainment industry of Japan. There are also thousands of undocumented workers in all these countries.
6. The explosion of Filipino "forced" migration results from a world economic system, which through the primacy of money and market, constitutes a violent aggression on the rights of the Filipino poor to live with human dignity, as sons and daughters of God in their own countries. Some of the countries in East Asia have rapidly reached industrialization and full employment, and are now experiencing labor shortages in some sectors of the economy. In the Philippines the economic stagnation and the high level of population growth have contributed to unemployment and underemployment. The wage differential with East Asian societies constitutes an irresistible magnet for workers seeking better employment or a way out of a hopeless future.
7. The demand for workers, particularly in the small industries of Asian countries, is not reflected in the migration policies, which remain mostly closed to unskilled labor. At the same time, a large recruiting industry has flourished in the Philippines, as well as in the receiving countries, contributing to inflate the dreams of overseas work. The services provided by recruiters and brokers have increased migration costs to the point that for many workers migration begins with a debt. The possibilities in Asian economies, the restrictive migration policies, the illegal practices of unscrupulous recruiters and the migration mentality in the Philippines collude to generate irregular migration.
8. The receiving countries benefit most from the productivity of migrant workers. However, the restriction of workers to limited contracts, explained as necessary for economic reasons but based on cultural grounds, reduces the worker to an economic factor. The benefits of migration for the Philippines remain questionable. While it helped the economy remain afloat, it did not initiate sustainable development. The assess-

ment of the long-term impact on the values and culture of the Filipino society requires additional probing. However, the adoption of a consumerist mentality, the emphasis on individualistic values and the weakening of the family foundations express the reciprocal influence of migration and culture in the Filipino society. In addition, the loss of educated and skilled citizens to other economies has deprived the Philippines of qualified participants in the development process.

9. The hard work and sacrifices of Filipino overseas-workers have enabled them to bring improvements to the quality of life of their family and a better education for the children. At the same time, however, the migratory experience of the Filipinos in Asia remains marred by hardship generated by abuses and irregularities. Working contracts are breached or substituted with less favorable ones upon arrival; wages are retained or unpaid; working time protracts longer than reasonable hours; the rate of accidents is high; and participation in unions is discouraged or forbidden. Misunderstandings created by different cultures and traditions contribute to a negative portrayal of Filipinos in the media; they are easily made the scapegoats of problems in the local society and the targets for anti-crime raids.
10. The situation of Filipino women in migration is even more vulnerable. Employed in large numbers in the domestic and entertainment sectors, they are frequently submitted to humiliation, harassment and sexual abuse. Subject to pregnancy controls and barred from marrying citizens of some countries, they suffer serious offenses to their human rights.
11. Filipino seafarers and fish workers, who constitute the single largest national group in the sector, are in particular the target of illegal recruitment and face physical and verbal abuse on board. Compensation for disabilities is seldom available to them, and in some cases labor disputes result in loss of life.
12. Often motivated by the needs of the family, migration has serious impact on the family of the Filipino migrant. Family reunification is not available in Asia. The spouse left behind, especially when it is the father, is often unable to take on the formation and the educational responsibilities towards their children. This is sometimes deferred to the extended family and often results in new problems. The anomaly created by migration is particularly significant because in many cases the mother is the absent parent. Sometimes, migration constitutes the occasion for the woman to achieve liberation from impositions of social traditions and to acquire a new awareness of her identity. Other times, migration becomes an occasion for marital infidelity and formation of irregular families. Unrecognized children of migrants are the

- innocent victims of loneliness and infidelity.
13. Returning migrants experience difficulties in their reintegration process. Employment possibilities are not any better than when they migrated, and savings are not sufficient for new enterprises. While some Filipinos demonstrated an entrepreneurial spirit, for others the benefits of migration were shortly outlived, sometimes forcing the worker to return to a job overseas, indicating that migration should be planned to ensure lasting sustenance, rather than immediate improvements.
 14. We also noticed the many signs of hope, that serve to reassure us that the Lord is still fully alive among his People.
 1. Migration is part of the historical experience and a reality of the Church and can be seen as a sign of development and growth of the Church today.
 2. As a movement of people, it suggests the universality of the Church itself, where nationhood and national boundaries become arbitrary. There has to be the growing consciousness that the world belongs to everyone and the right to migrate belongs to all.
 3. Migration is also a sign of growing interdependence among nations, and can be the basis for a new world order, based on the principles of justice and equality. This can only be the result of a greater respect for the human person, and the rights of nations.
 15. Other concerns that emerged as a result of a more sensitive listening to the "cries of anguish" of the many thousands of migrant workers, especially the Filipino migrant workers, scattered all over Asia, include the following:
 1. The migrant workers and human labor cannot be reduced to mere marketable commodities. Economic reasons cannot become the sole and only reason for the promotion of contract migration.
 2. We need to acknowledge the fact that certain aspects of contract migration which are criminal and evil should be eliminated. Without the recognition that certain inherent injustices exist in the recruitment processes and contract formulation, the workers themselves will continue to suffer personally, at the level of the family and of the society as a whole.
 3. We recognize that the right to have a job in one's own country (of origin) is a basic right, and comes before the right to migrate.

4. The increasing number of women migrant workers has far-reaching implications and effects on family life. As more women in the host country are allowed to join the work force, the homemakers' role and childrearing responsibilities are left to women migrant workers. The women migrant workers, in turn, relinquish their own roles and responsibilities in their own countries. The effects on the family, especially on the children raised under such circumstances, are only now beginning to surface in the increasing incidence of broken marriages, juvenile delinquency, marital infidelity, to name but a few.

16. In summary we can say that:

1. It is the right of every person and each country to make choices in deciding to migrate, in order to improve one's quality of life.
2. That migration should not result in the loss of human dignity, subjecting people to inhuman working and living conditions.
3. Migration should not be forced, and that respect for human dignity and human rights must be given serious attention. Family life and marriages should be considered sacred and not made secondary to economic and political agenda.
4. There is a great need to create more awareness of the extent to which migration, especially in the Philippines, has to be more critically understood and appropriate policies drawn up by all in the Church.
5. We are confronted by a deepening dependency on forced migration to solve the problems of an ever-more stagnating economy. We urge the both Church of Origin and the Receiving Church to study and to tackle in a prophetic way the root-causes of migration. These include issues related to poverty, international debt, lack of development, corruption and unjust economic structures within the country of origin and in its relations with its neighbors.

III. PASTORAL VISION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCH IN ASIA

17. In our attempts to formulate a vision for the Church in Asia with reference to the reality of the lives of overseas' contract workers and the implications for themselves and their families, it seems central that we identify the emerging consciousness of the vision, as articulated by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.

We recall again the words of Pope Paul VI spoken in Manila. Asia, he said, is a continent, the past history of whose people manifests "the sense of spiritual values dominating the thoughts of their sages and the lives of their vast multitudes." Manifest, too, have been the discipline of ascetics, a deep and innate religious sense, filial piety and attachment to the family, the primacy of the spirit, an unrelenting search for God, and hunger for the supernatural.

And yet the present troubled moment of history of our peoples, already referred to with some anxiety by our First Plenary Assembly, threaten precisely those meanings and values which form our spiritual heritage. The modern world, despite its undeniably great achievements, brings about the gradual disintegration of our traditional societies and the effects on people's lives which follow on it. The loss of a sense of belonging in community, depersonalized relationships, disorientation and loneliness — these have become part of the lives of so many of our people. With its accompanying secularization, too, with its worship of technology, narrow materialism and secularism, its fever for consumerism, its ideological pluralism — realized in diverse ways in different societies — our age quite swiftly erodes religious values and often suffocates the aspirations of the human spirit, especially among the young. The generations growing up in our time tend to lose the sense of God, the sense of his presence in the world, or his providence over their lives. Believers of all religions, including Christians, are not immune from these influences. They, too, are tempted to give up prayer and things of the spirit (Nos. 7-8, FABC Second Plenary Assembly, 1978).

The Role of the Receiving Church

18. It is this understanding of the reality of migrant workers in Asia and the impact on their lives that prompts us to be committed to be at their service. We see the urgent need to become a welcoming and caring Receiving Church. Migrants should be able to relate, participate and integrate themselves with the local Church in their various activities, and at the same time be able to share their faith and cultural heritage with the local Church and people.
19. We see the need to accompany the migrant as a human person, following the example of Christ himself. This journeying of the Church together with the migrant worker is the sign of solidarity within the universal Church and a sharing in the common evangelizing mission

entrusted to all the followers of Christ. Growing in faith as a local Church made up of people of different nationalities is the new sign of unity, so that we can truly witness to the call of Jesus, "Father, may they all be one, as you and I are one." This shared missionary thrust is thus truly a journeying of peoples.

20. The Receiving Church, besides promoting unity, has also to recognize the need for a diversity of expressions. It is a spirit of mutual acceptance that will serve as the starting point for greater mutual enrichment, through a process of inculturation.
21. It is essential that the Receiving Church, with greater compassion and solidarity, discern continuously the numerous needs of the migrant workers. This can be realized only through a new consciousness that the foreign migrant workers are not "strangers in their land" but full members of the local Church.
22. With the increasing situations of dehumanization among migrant workers, it is time for the Church to formulate more creative initiatives to respond to their plight. This calls for a constant journeying during this painful and difficult time in their lives. The sacramental and spiritual services of the Receiving Church will be a source of great strength in overcoming their numerous trials and difficulties. It is also necessary that the special needs of migrants become the concern of the total Church and that appropriate services and programs for their integral human development be set up.
23. The protection of the rights of these migrant workers has also to be the responsibility of the local community, and can be the catalyst for the protection of and promotion of their dignity. It is also the responsibility of the Receiving Church to work closely with the local government to make available services to the migrants, who are a very important part of the labor force and contribute to the economy and society.
24. The migrant is thus another link between the Receiving Church and the Church of Origin. An ongoing sharing of experiences will lead to mutual enrichment.
25. It is also necessary to invite migrants to strengthen the faith of their fellow migrants through their proclamation and witness of life in the living out of the Gospel and its values. The gathering of small communities of migrant workers can be a place for deepening their faith, through prayer, worship, and the word of God. Their fellowship and mutual care in times of difficulty, is one of the stages in becoming a

“New Way of Being Church.”

The Role of the Church of Origin

26. In its letter “The Church on the Move,” the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People says: “A similar inclination leads her today to leaven the reality of immigration with the Gospel and, if possible, to make it a means for fulfilling her mission.”
27. If the migrant worker is to become truly evangelizing, it is crucial that one be first evangelized through proper faith formation, through worship and the participation in the sacraments. This has to be strengthened in the Church of Origin.
28. Integral evangelization requires that we become witnesses in our lives to the values and norms of the Gospel, based on our baptismal consecration. We have many examples of Christian witnessing done by our Filipino migrants. On the other hand, without the proper integral faith formation, especially when migrants are motivated solely by economic reasons, they very often become counter-witnesses to the Gospel in the countries to which they are sent. This is a serious source of concern expressed by many from the receiving countries. In the context of Asian countries, where the majority of the population are non-Christians, the Church has to be aware of this very grave concern. The ability of the Receiving Church to be pastorally concerned is limited when the majority of the migrant workers do not even attend Church services or are unwilling to be in touch with the local Church. This attitude has very often resulted in involvement in undesirable activities, including involvement in drugs and vice. There is the need to inculcate the consciousness that it is the urgent responsibility of the Church of Origin that integral evangelization is possible only when the migrants themselves have been evangelized. Missionaries cannot preach the Gospel without the proper internalization of the faith.
29. It is thus the responsibility of the Church of Origin, not only to prepare the migrants but also to ensure that proper legislation has been set up to protect the dignity and rights of all. Both the Church or Origin and the Receiving Church need to make a clear statement about policy matters, so that the migrant workers, the government officials and all concerned will be guided by the moral dictates of the Gospel and their activities based on the social teaching of the Church about labor. This will ensure that justice is given to all. Injustices and inhuman policies towards the migrant workers will have to be denounced by the Church. We should be able to reach out to civic officials to make these officials aware of the needs and aspirations of the work-

workers. We need to take an active role in the protection of the migrant workers' rights and be "defenders of the oppressed" (the migrant workers), and must be ready to face the consequences to achieve our goals.

Other Pastoral Concerns

30. There is also the need for greater ongoing dialogue between the Church of Origin and Receiving Church. The many cries of anguish of the pastoral workers, who are daily confronted with very serious problems related to marital infidelity and children born out of wedlock, are concerns that need to be urgently brought to the attention of the Church of Origin. The preparation of pastoral workers who can be at the greater service of the migrant workers is needed, to be done in collaboration with the Receiving Church.
31. Pastoral care cannot be restricted only to the administration of the sacraments, but also attempts have to be made to understand the causes behind the numerous dehumanizing concerns related to migration and migrant workers. Pastoral care begins with Christ, and the pastors and pastoral workers are cooperators. It is essential that we have a deeper understanding and greater involvement in the lives of people other than our own.
32. There is a very urgent need to take seriously the implications of migration on marriage and family life. The social, spiritual and moral implications need urgent assessment by all. Husbands separated from wives, and children from parents, are direct consequences of contract labor migration, with growing signs of breakdown of both marriages and families. The most important basic unit in the Philippines both for the Church and society, namely the family, is being endangered by contract migration. This has to become a pastoral priority for all in the Church.

IV. CONCLUSION

33. In the light of the above challenges posed by migration and its impact on the workers, the Symposium has recommended that a series of programs and plans of action be implemented by the FABC Office of Human Development, the national episcopal commissions and those agencies at the diocesan and parish levels.
34. We, the participants from both the Church of Origin and the Receiving Churches, see the need to work more closely with each other in creating a greater awareness, so that we can be at the service of the migrant workers. The above reflections that we have made will serve

as our basic orientation in the formulation of new initiatives, bearing in mind the uniqueness and diversity of each of our countries.

35. It is our firm belief that this journey of faith, through the process of dialogue and discernment that the participants have experienced, calls for a commitment on our part. This is best expressed in the words of the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC, No. 9.1:

At the center of this new way of being Church is the action of the Spirit of Jesus guiding and directing individual believers as well as the whole community to live a life that is Spirit-filled — that is, to live an authentic spirituality. It is nothing more and nothing less than a following of Jesus-in-mission, an authentic discipleship in the context of Asia.

This for us means pastoral care of migrants and for us to be co-workers with them, in order to bring more humanizing dimensions to every facet of life today, so that all can live with dignity as persons, experience freedom as a community, and work together for the common good of the whole of humanity. This calls for a prophetic discipleship and integral evangelization in the context of Asia today. Our pastoral program of action has to reflect this integral dimension of service, development and justice, and this means integral evangelization.

We know that “he came that we may have life, and have it abundantly” (Jn 10:10), for the whole of humanity, especially for the thousands of migrant workers all over Asia. We pray that our journeying together will be with the fullness of the Spirit of Jesus, and with the example of his loving and compassionate Mother, so that we can bring to realization the Lord’s prayer, “Your kingdom come, your will be done.”

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