FABC Papers

DISCOVERING THE FACE OF JESUS IN ASIA TODAY

A GUIDE TO DOING MISSION IN ASIA

CONTENTS

I.	UNDERSTANDING EVANGELIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF	F
	ASIA TODAY	

1. Our Priority for Evangelization

- 1.1 An Urgent Task
- 1.2 Evangelization and the Mass Media
- 1.3 An Integral Evangelization
- 1.4 Elements of Evangelization
- 1.5 New Paradigm of Evangelization
- 1.6 Local Church and Primacy of Evangelization
- 1.7 Proclamation of Evangelization
- 1.8 Need to be Evangelized Ourselves in the Context of Challenges Today

2. Central Mission of the Church

- 2.1 Proclaiming the Message of Christ
- 2.2 Urgency of Proclaiming the Good News
- 2.3 Primacy of Proclamation
- 2.4 Announcing Jesus Christ
- 2.5 Urgent Task of Making Christ Known
- 2.6 New Courage for the Tasks of the Lord
- 2.7 Following Jesus Today
- 2.8 Proclamation of Jesus: The Centrality of the Family
- 2.9 Key Questions about the Nature of Proclamation in Asia
- 2.10 Mission and Migrants
- 2.11 Migration and Mission
- 2.12 Distinctive Mode of Mission

3. Dialogue and Evangelization

- 3.1 Interreligious Dialogue Integral Part of Evangelization
- 3.2 Interreligious Dialogue A Dialogical Enterprise
- 3.3 Dialogue Demands a Deep Spirituality from All Religiously Committed People
- 3.4 Spirituality of Dialogue is Transformative Spirituality
- 3.5 Dialogue is on the Basis of Our Faith in God
- 3.6 Dialogue as Witnessing to Christ
- 3.7 Dialogue Rooted in Christ
- 3.8 Dialogue Implies Mutual Respect

3.9 Dialogue and Spirit of Christ

3.10 Dialogue - Crucial Challenge to the Church in Asia

3.11 Insights from Hindu Perspectives

- 3.12 Mutual Respect from Our Knowledge of Islam
- 3.13 Dialogue for a New Human Family

3.14 Salvific Values in Other Religions

3.15 Search for Ultimate Source of Diversities

3.16 Contemplation and Compassion

4. Integral Human Development – Human Promotion

4.1 Evangelization Includes Social Justice and Integral Human Development

4.2 Preferential Option for the Poor

- 5. Justice, Peace and Harmony
 - 5.1 Christ, Prince of Peace

5.2 Christ Our Peace

5.3 Solidarity and God's Kingdom

6. Priestly and Prophetic Function

6.1 Liberative Leadership and Praxis of Jesus

6.2 Priestly and Prophetic Mission of the Church

6.3 Ministry of Bishops and Headship of Christ over the Chruch

6.4 Bishops as Shepherds and New Ministries6.5 Key Questions Today

II. BEING EVANGELIZED IN "CHURCH AS COMMUNION"

7. Spirituality, Renewal, Conversion and Prayer

7.1 Signs of Christian Renewal

7.2 Self Renewal in the Light of Christ

7.3 The Way of Prayer as Lived by Jesus

7.4 Core of Christian Prayer

7.5 Spirituality Implies Death and Resurrection

7.6 Asian Church Invited to Continued Conversion

8. Local Church as Community

8.1 Local Church and Building Up of the Body of Christ

8.2 Local Church as Gospel Leaven

8.3 Jesus Christ Constitutes Her Deepest Identity

8.4 Local Church and Mission

8.5 Need for Active Participation of the Whole Church

8.6 Church and the Reign of God

8.7 The Core of Church as Community

9. Formation of Christian Community

9.1 Put Christ Effectively at the Center of Life

9.2 Meaning of Being Deeply Committed to Jesus

9.3 Becoming Truly Convinced and Committed Christians

9.4 Christ-Centered Formation

9.5 Call of Laity to Holiness

III. BEING EVANGELIZERS IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

10. Our Mission of Evangelization

10.1 New Age of Mission

10.2 Jesus' Mission

10.3 Following Jesus in Mission

10.4 Totality of Christian Mission

10.5 Participation in the Common Mission

11. Witnessing to Jesus

11.1 Our Inspiration is from the Praxis of Jesus

11.2 Suffering Servant of Yahweh

11.3 Ecumenism and Oneness in Christ for Unity

11.4 Witnessing to Jesus

12. The Restoration of Harmony in Christ

12.1 God's Reign through the Christ of Harmony

12.2 Jesus Christ, the Source of Harmony

12.3 Universal Harmony is in Jesus Christ

12.4 Harmony in the Reign of God

12.5 Vision of Christ and Harmony

13. The Spirit of Jesus

13.1 The Spirit and Christ are Inseparable

13.2 Discipleship is the Following of Jesus

13.3 Jesus Christ—the Center of our Faith

13.4 Christ—the Source of our Ministry

13.5 Strengthened by the Spirit of Jesus

13.6 The Prayer of Jesus — "May Your Kingdom Come"

13.7 Authentic Encounters with the Holy Spirit

FOREWORD

As we approach the Jubilee Year 2000, it is imperative that the Church in Asia be challenged to earnestly discover anew the face of Jesus. It is the face of Jesus that we see in a new light that will give us the courage to believe and live his Way, his Truth and his Life. In the world of Asia, undergoing radical transformation through the process of globalization, we are being invited in and through our lives to illuminate the path of the Asian people to the realization of a fuller humanity. It is our firm belief that it is only a communion with the Trinity and with each other that will serve as a catalyst to forge a new solidarity with the people of Asia, and indeed with the whole human family. It is our vocation to be an evangelizing Church. It is only the Spirit of Jesus incarnated in our lives who will spread the Good News of Jesus and his Gospel.

It is this reason that prompted us to put together *Discovering the Face of Jesus in Asia Today*. The wealth and wisdom contained herein is truly the work of the Spirit alive and active among the People of God in

Asia. These quotations make reference to Jesus and are all taken from the various Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences documents since 1970. They are meant for our personal prayer—contemplation—reflection, for our Basic Ecclesial Communities and all educators in the faith. We realize that it is only this familiarity with Jesus, "the Word," that will initiate this rootedness in Jesus so that we can bear much fruit in our lives. We believe that a genuine faith, founded on Jesus and experienced in the Spirit as hope, will have to find expression in our lives as love for the Kingdom of the Father. This for us is the meaning of "being evangelized and being evangelizers" as we journey into the Third Millennium with a clearer vision, a firmer commitment to mission. This is possible only in a holistic spirituality that empowers us to live as the followers of Jesus in Asia today.

For easy reference we have divided the document into three parts,

under the headings:

I. Understanding Evangelization in the Context of Asia Today

II. Being Evangelized in the "Church as Communion"

III. Being Evangelizers in the Third Millennium

All the other headings and sub-headings are more for easy reference, and do not appear in the original documents. The urgency of our tasks as we approach the Third Millennium is expressed very clearly by the bishops in the BIRA IV/3 thus:

But it is as servants of the Lord and of humanity that we Christians share the same journey with all the Asian peoples. The Church was not sent to observe but to serve—to serve the Asian peoples in their quest for God and for a better human life; to serve Asia under the leading of the Spirit of Christ and in the manner of Christ himself who did not come to be served but to serve and to lay down his life as a ransom for all (Mk 10:45)—and to discern, in dialogue with Asian peoples and Asian realities, what deeds the Lord wills to be done so that all humankind may be gathered together in harmony as his family. As servant of Yahweh and of humanity, the Church will seek above all faithfulness to God and to the Asian peoples, and will also invite to full participation in the Christian community those who are led to it by the Spirit of God.¹

This service will be done in compassion, the compassion of Jesus himself who, like the Good Samaritan, came to bind the wounds of humanity. It will be a compassion that makes the Church weak and powerless with those who are weak and powerless. But it will be a compassion that will denounce in deeds, if it is not possible to do so in words, the injustices, oppressions, exploitations and inequalities resulting in so much of the suffering that is evident in the Asian situations. Such compassion will see as fellow members of the one human family under the Fatherhood of God all

exploited women and workers, unwelcome refugees, victims of violations of human rights, and in fact, every needy human person. This compassion will see even deeper, and will welcome in each human being—but especially the poor, deprived and oppressed—the very person of Christ, who has united himself to every human being though he/she may be unaware of it (*The Redeemer of Humankind*, 14).

Such a Church will not boast of human power but will serve with the power of the Lord Jesus, who emptied himself and took the form of a servant (Phil 2:7), but who is, for all who believe, the Wisdom and Power of God (1 Cor 1:23-24). This is part of the pilgrimage of the People of God in Asia as

we prepare ourselves for a new Millennium.

This document would not have been possible without the involvement and commitment of so many minds and hearts wishing to share with the People of Asia Jesus and His Gospel.

"....The desire to seek constantly the face of the Lord arises in believers: his mysterious face which is revealed to the eyes of the faith; his human face which we are able to recognize in that of our brothers and sisters, especially the poorest and the neediest" (Pope John Paul II, Turin, May 24, 1998).

Br. Anthony Rogers, FSC Executive Secretary FABC Office of Human Development 10th February, 1998

I. UNDERSTANDING EVANGELIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ASIA TODAY

1. OUR PRIORITY FOR EVANGELIZATION

1.1 An Urgent Task

We have sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit as, during these days, we have reflected on the task of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ in modern day Asia. We have not attempted to construct in this statement a full theology of the proclamation of the Gospel. Instead we have addressed ourselves, to particular tasks which the evangelization of Asia today demands of us.

It is our belief that only in and through Christ and his Gospel, and by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that these quests can come to realization. For Christ alone, we believe, is for every man "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6), "who enlightens every man who comes into the world" (Jn 1:9). We believe that it is in him and in his good news that our peoples will finally find the full meaning we all seek, the liberation we strive after, the

brotherhood and peace, which is the desire of all our hearts.

It is because of this that the preaching of Jesus Christ and his Gospel to our peoples in Asia becomes a task which today assumes an urgency, a necessity and magnitude unmatched in the history of our Faith in this part of the world. It is because of this that we can repeat the Apostle's word, and repeat it joyfully, "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:6), for it is "the love of Christ which presses us" (2 Cor 5:14) to share with our peoples what is most precious in our hearts and in our lives, Jesus Christ and his Gospel, the unsurpassable riches of Christ (cf. Eph 3:8).

Evangelization is the carrying out of the Church's duty of proclaiming by word and witness the Gospel of the Lord. Within this context we have spoken of these tasks which are of particularly crucial importance for most of the local church in Asia, for through them our local churches can most

effectively preach Christ to our peoples.²

1.2 Evangelization and the Mass Media Today

While some are open to the Gospel message, many are unable to see the true countenance of Jesus Christ in the Church. We see an increasing commitment to evangelization by all Christian Churches, and the new missionary movements among traditional Asian religions. We are also faced with the pervasiveness of the mass media which create a challenging new language and mentality in our culture, calling for the inculturation of Christ's message in contemporary society. In these situations, we need to look more deeply into the meaning and method of evangelization today.³

1.3 An Integral Evangelization

In order to evangelize, the Churches need to be authentic in their very existence. This puts before us the reality of the local and individual Churches of South Asia as the concrete realization of the mystery of the Church of Christ in our region. To be truly authentic, the Churches need to have the following characteristics: they must project the image of communion within themselves and among themselves; they must have the legitimate autonomy that will enable them to express their life of faith and worship within their specific human context; they must have the opportunity to share their faith-experience with their fellowmen. Also essential to the authenticity of Churches is that their mission become the corporate responsibility of the People of God in all its various sections, laity, religious and clergy. In our South Asian context this corporate exercise of the mission will naturally take on various forms which, even though they remain incomplete expressions of the Church's evangelizing activity, nevertheless already belong to it

as its integral parts. We refer especially to integral human development and witnessing to justice, as well as to interreligious dialogue.⁴

1.4 Elements of Evangelization

Mission, being a continuation in the Spirit of the mission of Christ, involves a being with people, as was Jesus: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14). Therefore, mission includes: being with the people, responding to their needs, with sensitiveness to the presence of God in cultures and other religious traditions, and witnessing to the values of God's Kingdom through presence, solidarity, sharing and word. Mission will mean a dialogue with Asia's poor, with its local cultures, and with other religious traditions (FABC I).

We evangelize, first of all, from a deep sense of gratitude to God, the Father "who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing" (Eph 1:3), and sent the Spirit into our hearts so that we may share in God's own life. Mission is above all else an overflow of this life from grateful hearts

transformed by the grace of God.

That is why it is so important for us Christians to have a deep faithexperience of the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:39), that love which has been poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Rom 5:5). Without a personal experience of this love received as gift

and mercy, no sense of mission can flourish.

But mission is also a mandate. We evangelize because we are sent into the whole world to make disciples of all nations. The one who sends us is Jesus, who has been sent by the Father, and to whom has been given all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18). He sends us on a mission which is part of the epiphany of God's plan to bring all things together under Christ as head (Eph 1:9-10). We cannot fulfill this mission apart from him (Jn 15:4-5). But he assures us that he will remain with us all days till the end of time (Mt 28:20), and he has sent us his Spirit so that we may be his witness to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

We evangelize also because we believe in the Lord Jesus. We have received the gift of faith. We have become Christians. "The Christian vocation is by its very nature a vocation to the apostolate (Vatican Council II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 2). That is why Pope Paul VI emphatically states: "It is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the Kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn" (Evangelization in the Modern World, 24).

And finally, we evangelize because the Gospel is leaven for liberation and for the transformation of society. Our Asian world needs the values of the Kingdom and of Christ in order to bring about the human development, justice, peace and harmony with God, among peoples and with all creation, that the peoples of Asia long for.⁵

1.5 New Paradigm of Evangelization

The Asian Churches will find themselves in a strange position in the years to come. They will have to wage a two-front war and will find other religions both as allies and as opponents: as allies in their fight against atheistic and antitheistic humanism; as opponents to Christianity's claim for the uniqueness of Christ and his Church's mission. It would be unrealistic to expect mass conversions in the present situation. And yet the Asian Churches will have an opportunity they never had for the last 1600 years. They have now to resume the dialogue with the world religions that was broken off once Christianity became the majority religion in the Old World. Now that Christianity has again become the minority religion both in the former "Christian countries" and in the world at large, to begin this dialogue anew will be the great call of the Lord to the Churches in Asia. We must now start collecting again the "seminal reasons" (logoi spermatikoi) in modern man's old and new religions and integrate them into a new synthesis of the Gospel as it is experienced by today's man. This will lead to a new era of theological reflection, liturgical creativity and new forms of religious life – a new era that will make the Catholic Church for the first time really "Catholic" by introducing into her life the riches of all nations, as the riches of some have been introduced into it in the past. No doubt this will not take place without hesitation and danger, insecurity and uncertainty. But this was always the price the Church had to pray in her greatest hours when a new age was being ushered in. It should not deter us in any way from going ahead.6

1.6 Local Church and Primacy of Evangelization

We in our local churches have been taught to pray with and for each other; to learn from each other's programs and projects, progress and failure; to share common pastoral and theological concerns; be similarly reached by great ecclesial initiatives and movements; to work together at common tasks; lend or give of our material and personnel resources, —in brief, increasingly to become truly sister-churches in the one family of communities of the Gospel which is the Church of Jesus Christ.

Finally, how insufficient for the most part has been our missionary consciousness and responsibility. We have so frequently forgotten that the summons and challenge to make known the person and message of Jesus Christ to those who do not know him is a mandate addressed to even the

youngest Christian community.

We must effectively translate the primacy of evangelization into deeds, in a continent where two billion men and women have not yet consciously come to know Christ and his Gospel in significant ways; and our word and witness, with the progressively better use of the mass media, must be placed generously at the service of this endeavor.⁷

1.7 Proclamation and Evangelization

The ultimate goal of all evangelization is the ushering in and establishment of God's Kingdom, namely God's rule in the hearts and minds of our people. While we are aware and sensitive of the fact that evangelization is a complex reality and has many essential aspects—such as witnessing to the Gospel, working for the values of the Kingdom, struggling along with those who strive for justice and peace, dialogue, sharing, inculturation, mutual enrichment with other Christians and the followers of all religions—we affirm that there can never be true evangelization without the proclamation of Jesus Christ.⁸

1.8 Need to be Evangelized Ourselves in the Context Of Challenges Today

We asked ourselves: What is the Spirit calling us to do now as a response to the signs of the times? In prayer and discussion it once again became evident that, before all else, we need to be evangelized ourselves: we need to become more fully identified with Christ and the Gospel we proclaim. It also became evident that our message should be embodied in committed witness and authentic dialogue, shared with a knowledge and understanding of Asian religious experience and deep aspirations for salvation, on the one hand, and an adequate comprehension of the Asian realities of poverty and injustice, on the other.

Our discussions, prayer, and dialogue increased our awareness of the presence and saving power of God in all our Asian faith-communities. He calls us to witness to Christ. He encourages us to enter into dialogue with the peoples of other religions of Asia. He asks us to face the poverty and growing pluralism of Asian societies, to respect and even enrich our traditional cultures, to contribute toward a more humanized Asian man and woman, to grow more deeply into Asian spiritualities, including the process of self-purification, and to present our local churches as places of contemplation and grace. We concluded that all this cannot be achieved without serious prayerful reflection and action based on discernment of the Word of God. With this, we will be in a good position to collaborate among ourselves and with all peoples in building the Kingdom of God.⁹

2. CENTRAL MISSION OF THE CHURCH

2.1 Proclaiming the Message of Christ

The Church, the sacrament of God's message in the world, continues Christ's work of dialogue. Her duty is always to proclaim the Reign of God, to bring the proclamation of this message into every aspect of human life, and to seek the fulfillment of all things in Christ. The Church is particularly concerned with man's religious experience, the motivating and leavening agent in his culture. This means that the Church must constantly be involved in dialogue with men of other religions (*Nostra Aetate*, 2). The Christian finds himself continually evangelizing and being evangelized by his part-

ners in dialogue (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 13).

Christians believe that God's saving will is at work, in many different ways, in all religions. It has been recognized since the time of the Apostolic Church, and stated clearly again by the Second Vatican Council, that the Spirit of Christ is active outside the bounds of the visible Church. God's saving grace is not limited to members of the Church, but it is offered to every person. His grace may lead some to accept baptism and enter the Church, but it cannot be presumed that this must always be the case. His ways are mysterious and unfathomable, and no one can dictate the direction of his grace.

The purpose of the Church's proclaiming the message of Christ—which is its central mission—is to call man to the values of the Kingdom of God. We find such values also present in Islam. In dialogue, therefore, a Christian hopes that both he and his Muslim brother will turn anew to God's Kingdom, their own faiths richer by their mutual interchange, their mission to the world more fruitful by their shared insights and commitments. 10

2.2 Urgency of Proclaiming the Good News

We are more deeply aware of the urgent duty of proclaiming the Good News to the peoples of Asia, more encouraged in this our primary task by the support we have received from one another, fully convinced of our union with the entire Church, as we carry out the mission entrusted to us by the Lord to make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19) and to bring all men to the saving knowledge of the one true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent (Jn 17:3), incorporating them into the community of believers (Acts 2:14). It is this joy that in brotherly affection we would like to communicate to each one of you.¹¹

The proclamation of Jesus Christ is the center and the primary element of evangelization without which all other elements will lose their cohesion and validity. In the same way, evangelization will gather together the believing community, the Church, through faith and baptism. In the Church all men and women can find grace, reconciliation and new life, and through the Church we share these with others. 12

2.3 Primacy of Proclamation

Toward whom must mission be directed? Though mission is for all, since God "wills all men to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4), it must be directed, first of all, to those who do not yet believe in Jesus. The necessity of first proclamation has lost none of its urgency in Asia, where Christians consti-

tute a very small minority.

It is true that in many places Christ cannot yet be proclaimed openly by words. But he can, and should be, proclaimed through other ways, namely: through the witness of the life of the Christian community and family, and their striving to know and live more fully the faith they profess; through their desire to live in peace and harmony with those who do not share our faith; through the appreciation by Christians of the human and religious values possessed by their non-Christian neighbors; and through these same Christians' willingness to collaborate in those activities which promote the human community.

Our proclamation of Jesus must also be urgently directed towards the workers, the poor and needy, and the oppressed. But here, it is not so much words (no matter how important these are!) but actions which count most. It is our preferential love and service for the workers, the poor and needy, and all the oppressed, our standing with them, listening to them, and our efforts to help them speak out for themselves as they strive for development and for a just society, which will tell them best about the presence of Jesus in their midst.

And now, it is time for us to end our deliberations in prayer. The prayer we raise is prayer of confidence—a prayer of unbounded hope—because it places its trust in the power of the Spirit of Jesus. And we remember the Lord's promise to be with us till the end of time.

Lord Jesus, we bring these reflections and resolves, these imperatives and hopes, before you, knowing that they are yours even before they are ours. Our desire to proclaim your Good News to our brothers and sisters is from you. Our renewed confidence and trust in our Catholic families and in our lay people as bearers of the Gospel is inspired by you. We know you have brought the work of your Church in Asia forward to this moment, and that you will accompany us, through difficulties and fears, and even through persecution and pain, till your Kingdom comes at last into our midst. And so our hope is secure, for it is anchored in your promises.¹³

2.4 Announcing Jesus Christ

God, the Father of all, has called all people to share in his life and love through his son Jesus Christ. The risen Christ and his Spirit are active in the world making this love a present and growing reality, making all things new. This same love urges us on to dialogue with people of other religions, because we have, especially since the Second Vatican Council, an increasing awareness of the positive role of other religions in God's plan of salvation.

The Church as the sacrament of union with God and of the unity of all humankind has the mission to promote in various ways the fulfillment which is God's will and gift for all persons in Christ. Dialogue is an integral part of this mission. As God's pilgrim people, the Church shares the longings and desires of all to come closer to the Father, while as God's eschatological people, it announces Jesus Christ and his Good News to all and calls them to radical conversion and commitment to God in total self-surrender and to belong to the community of Jesus in his Church.¹⁴

2.5 Urgent Task Of Making Christ Known

Inspired by the last two Synods of Bishops and by Pope Paul's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, remembering the mission of the Church to make disciples of all nations, and challenged by the stark reality of millions on our continent who have not yet been evangelized, we welcomed this opportunity to face with a sense of urgency the task of making Christ known, loved and followed by the vast multitude of our brothers and sisters.

Since the valiant efforts of the apostles of the past, to whom we owe so much, have nevertheless left us the legacy of millions still to be introduced to Christ, we sought in faith for new ways of communicating the Good News. 15

2.6 New Courage for the Tasks of the Lord

Our days together have given us renewed vision and new courage, for the tasks the Lord has laid upon our shoulders. They have also renewed in all of us a sense of rededication to the immense challenge of proclaiming the Name and the Good News of Jesus to our brothers and sisters in this part of the world. More than two billions of Asian have perhaps never encountered the Person of Jesus in a knowing and conscious way; more than two billions of Asians have never really heard his message. While this fact fills us with sorrow, it also spurs us on to longing and hope, because we know he will accompany the ways of all those whose footsteps are lovely because they bring the good news of his mercy and love. ¹⁶

2.7 Following Jesus Today

Jesus, in whom we experience the Way, the Truth and the Life, invites us to follow him so that we may have life, life unto fullness. Our journey in the footsteps of Jesus motivates us to join the spiritual pilgrimage of sisters and brothers of Asian religions in pursuit of being one in Divine Life.

We take courage from the Spirit of Jesus at work in the world and in our hearts. We draw strength from the kinship we have experienced with our sisters and brothers of other religions who have touched our lives. We are encouraged by the bonds of fellowship forged among us as we journeyed together these past days.¹⁷

2.8 Proclamation of Jesus and the Centrality of the Family

While the proclamation of Jesus through the life, work and words of the laity is an essential element of the Church's mission, this proclamation itself finds special strength and support in the Christian family. The family is the strength of our Asian society. It is also the basic unit of the Church, the family of Christ's disciples. In fact, the Christian family is a miniature Church, the Church in the home. The missionary grace and vocation of the Church must be realized and fostered in the Christian family, first of all. There is not much likelihood that the local Church will be truly missionary unless a sense of selfless dedication to God, to the cause of the Gospel, and to the good of their fellowmen is implanted in the home. ¹⁸

2.9 Key Questions on the Nature of Proclamation in Asia

Having recognized the universal reality of the Kingdom of God in which Christians and others belong, and which they are called to promote together through interreligious dialogue, we are faced with a double question: Why then does the proclamation of Jesus Christ remain necessary and urgent? Which motivation will spur the Asian local Churches to invite others to become Jesus' disciples in his Church?

The Holy Spirit, in ways known to God, gives to all human persons the opportunity of coming into contact with the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, and thus obtain salvation (cf. GS 22). The Church, as the visible sign and sacrament of the mystery of salvation, is in a unique position to offer them the opportunity of sharing in this mystery in a fully human way. She alone can convey to them the explicit knowledge of Jesus Christ, their Savior and Lord, and invite them to celebrate in joy and thanksgiving the mystery of his passover at her eucharistic table. Only in the life of the Church is found the full visibility of the mystery of salvation. Only there do the children of God come to the full realization of what it means to share in the Sonship of the Son. Thereby, the Church's proclamation meets the deepest longings and aspirations of the human heart for liberation and wholeness of life. There, the seeds of the Word contained in the religious traditions of the world, grow to maturity and come to fulfillment. In this manner the Church shares with others, "the fullness of the benefits and means of salvation" (RM 18) which she has received from her Lord and Master.

Motivation behind the Church's proclamation of Jesus Christ flows indeed from obedience to the mandate received from the Risen Lord. However, a clearer perception of the Church's mission in the context of the Asian reality helps us discover even deeper motivations. Members of other religious traditions already in some way share with us in the mystery of salvation. If the Church is in love with her Lord, she will feel the urge of sharing with them what she alone can offer: the Good News that the human face of God and his gift of salvation is found in Jesus of Nazareth. "Here we are at

the heart of the mystery of love" (DP 83).

The local Churches of Asia will proclaim Jesus Christ to their fellow humans in a dialogical manner (DP 70e; cf. 77). The proclaiming Church encounters people among whom the rays of that Truth, which enlightens everybody coming into the world, are already present. This hidden presence is the starting point for the Church's proclamation. Thus, in announcing the Good News, both the proclaimers and the hearers will grow into the fullness of the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ. 19

2.10 Mission and Migrants

To strive for ourselves and to foster in others a dynamic and theologically based understanding of the Gospel message, a sense of mission, and a personal zeal to share with the people of other faiths the Good News of God's Kingdom in Jesus Christ as our specific contribution to the peoples of Asia, in response to their providential yearnings and aspirations.

Use the mobility and migration of the faithful as an opportunity to spread the Gospel of Christ. We should inspire, educate, and organize our

migrants to be witnesses of Christ wherever they may go.20

2.11 Migration and Mission

A deeper understanding of the reality of the migrants 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, ensure that we can work together for a more human life for individuals, families and for society as a whole.

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 a new sign of unity, so that we can truly witness to the call of Jesus. "Father, may they be one, so that you and I are one." This shared missionary thrust is thus truly a journeying of peoples.

Pastoral care cannot be restricted only to the administration of the sacraments, but in ensuring that attempts have to 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 as cooperators. It is essential that we have a deeper under-

standing and greater involvement in the lives of people other than our own.21

2.12 Distinctive Mode of Mission

Mission may find its greatest urgency in Asia; it also finds in our continent a distinctive mode. We affirm, together with others, that "the proclamation of Jesus Christ is the center and primary element of evangelization" (Statement of the FABC All-Asia Conference on Evangelization, Suwon, South Korea, August 24-31, 1988). But the proclamation of Jesus Christ in Asia means, first of all, the witness of Christians and of Christian communities to the values of the Kingdom of God, a proclamation through Christlike deeds. For Christians in Asia, to proclaim Christ means above all to live like him, in the midst of our neighbors of other faiths and persuasions, and to do his deeds by the power of his grace. Proclamation through dialogue and deeds—this is the first call to the Church in Asia.

But we shall not be timid when God opens the door for us to proclaim explicitly the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior and the answer to the fundamental questions of human existence. We shall proclaim the Gospel in the manner of the Lord Jesus, who expressed his mission in these terms:

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set the liberty to those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk 4:18-19).²²

3. DIALOGUE AND EVANGELIZATION

3.1 Interreligious Dialogue - Integral Part of Evangelization

Interreligious dialogue is another integral part of evangelization, which in the situation of our Churches needs to be become a primary concern. We live in the midst of millions of people belonging to the great religious traditions born in our sub-continent, to whom the name of Jesus their Savior has not been proclaimed. Among them large numbers are also found who, while being attracted by the person of Jesus and his message, are unable to recognize him in his Church, and are for various reasons prevented from explicit belonging to the faith-community of the Church. In this context we believe that interreligious dialogue is a true expression of the Church's evangelizing action in which the mystery of Jesus Christ is operative, calling us all to conversion to him who is the fullness of truth and salvation. We would wish to see interreligious dialogue become a reality at the grassroots level of our Churches, through greater openness and reaching out of all their members towards their brothers and sisters of other religious traditions. Interreligious dialogue should not be limited to mutual sharing of religious experiences. We must also learn to address ourselves together and out of our respective religious convictions to the furtherance of human values and concerns. While the Church is the visible sign of the presence of Jesus Christ and his Spirit in the world, we believe that the same mystery is also present beyond the boundaries of the Church community and that our non-Christian brethren in ways unknown to us also relate to the mystery of the Church.²³

3.2 Interreligious Dialogues – A Dialogical Enterprise

We feel the urgency for dialogue because of the promptings of the Spirit of Christ, moving us in love to open ourselves to Buddhists in new ways, respecting them so that we may help one another to grow together to the fullness of our total reality. Many Buddhists, too, because of their deeply-rooted, all-embracing compassionate benevolence, wish to enter into dialogue with us and so grow together.

But, as there is no salvation except by the saving grace of God, all salvation attained by men is the fruit of the gift of Christ. This we believe to be particularly true of the Great Religions of Asia that led countless people to God throughout the ages. Fully respectful of this mystery of mercy, we, who are of the Church, are mindful of our election as the sacramental manifestation of this salvific will of God, and see our relationship to other religions and religionists in the light of this mystery.

Any dialogical enterprise requires certain basic attitudes, as exempli-

fied in Christ:

 a spirit of humility, openness, receptivity, and especially a love for Buddhists, and for what God wishes to tell us through them.

 a witnessing to the saving grace of Christ, not so much by the proclaimed word but through love in the Christian community, so that its universal validity is seen and felt as such.

— a placing of priority on fellowship with Buddhists, so that we are led

spontaneously and naturally to deeper religious dialogue.²⁴

3.3 Dialogue Demands a Deep Spirituality from All Religiously Committed People

In the deep-rooted and escalating crises of today, all religions are called to defend man against consumerism and hedonism, and to lead the Asian people to their integral development. For us Christians, such a commitment flows from our faith in Jesus Christ who identified himself through his incarnation with every person and with every aspect of human life. This is precisely why, for the community of the Church, as Pope John Paul II has stated, "man is the way" (*Redemptor Hominis*, 14). Since man is always situated in a determined context, professing a particular religion or ideology which conditions and colors his world view and interpretation of society, it is imperative that we Christians enter into dialogue with peoples of other faiths.

Such a joint commitment to man and society on the part of the religions will become easier and more forceful if they meet and encounter at the level of their faith commitments. Imposing the truth of one's religion, without caring to understand the faith of the other from his or her standpoint, and the way he or she would like to be understood, constitutes a great obstacle to dialogue between religiously committed people. Dialogue does not call for giving up one's commitment, bracketing it or entering into easy compromise. On the contrary, for a deeper and fruitful dialogue, it is even necessary that each partner be firmly committed to his or her faith. For example, as Christians, we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (Jn 14:6) and confess that he is truly the Son of God and that he is the one who illumines all (Jn 1:9). In him God's plan for all things and all peoples is fulfilled: "to bring all things in the heavens and on earth into one under Christ's headship" (Eph 1:10).

While firmly adhering to our commitment to Christ, it is indispensable for dialogue that we enter into the religious universe of our dialogue partner and see his or her sincere and unflinching faith-commitment. More than that, we should appreciate the commitment of the other. We have no right to judge the commitment of the other, since faith is the expression of the encounter of the infinitely open human spirit with the unfathomable mystery of God. This is why listening attentively with our heart to the personal commitment of faith and witness of the other partner can not only facilitate dialogue, but also enrich us and make us grow in our faith, and help us to re-

interpret it.

To risk being wounded in the act of loving, to seek to understand in a climate of misunderstanding—these are no light burdens to bear. Dialogue demands a deep spirituality which enables man, as did Jesus Christ, to hang on to his faith in God's love, even when everything seems to fall apart. Dialogue, finally, demands a total Christ-like self-emptying so that, led by the Spirit, we may be more effective instruments in building up God's

Kingdom.

The staggering millions of Asia clamor for the grain of rice as they yearn to savor the joy of peace. This struggle and yearning are today taking place in spite of painful conflicts, violence and oppression. We feel small and weak before the complexity of the situation. But the irresistible force of life penetrating through the crevices of the seemingly impregnable situation kindles our hope anew. It is in this concrete situation that the Triune God calls us Asians to be present to each other in self-giving, love and dialogue, in the sharing of our faith and concerns. Only when in Christ we die as a grain of rice to our small worlds of religious isolation, shall we see the bright light of a new day and give life to the world.²⁵

3.4 Spirituality of Dialogue Is Transformative Spirituality

Primary among these insights is the realization that the religions of

Asia have a crucial role to play in God's great enterprise to bring peace, communion and a more humane way of life to all peoples in Asia, indeed to the whole human family. Following from this insight is the inescapable truth that God's Spirit is at work in all religious traditions, moving the faithful believers of each tradition to a greater commitment to truth and more authentic communion within and beyond their own tradition. Finally, we have come to the compelling conviction that for us Christians our way to participation in God's enterprise is Jesus, who died in order to find and give life: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains but a single grain; but, if it dies, it brings forth a rich harvest" (Jn 12:24)

Christian spirituality is at heart a spirituality of dialogue. It is life in that Spirit which is the bond of the relationship between God and human-kind, a relationship established through the Word of God. Thus, Christian spirituality is a response in the Spirit to the call of God which comes to us through the Word. It is a spirituality of dialogue in which the whole of humanity is moving towards the Ultimate. This dialogue begins in the very moment of creation (Gen 1:1-3), and has its enfleshed and decisive expression in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh (Jn 1:1-3,14). It thus lays the foundation for unity between God and humankind. And so, Christian spirituality is both incarnational and trinitarian.

Spirituality of dialogue is transformative spirituality. Transforming our life, conforming it more and more to the Image of Christ, it realizes gradually the transformation of the society, giving birth to the new human-

ity in Christ.26

3.5 Dialogue Is on the Basis of Our Faith in God

The urgent need to seek new relationships with neighbors of other religious traditions brought together representatives of the member churches of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and of the member conferences of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) to consider the theme, "Living and Working together with Sisters and Brothers of Other Faiths in Asia." All were conscious of the significance of this historical event, giving thanks to God for his gift in Jesus Christ who brought them together.

We enter such relationships of dialogue on the basis of our faith in God through Jesus Christ, conscious that the Holy Spirit is guiding us towards an enrichment of human life and a deeper appreciation of truth. This faith gives us our identity as Christians and empowers us to share with the neighbors

our faith and vision, our words and silence.27

3.6 Dialogue as Witnessing to Christ

From our experience of dialogue emerged the conviction that dialogue was the key we sought—not dialogue in the superficial sense in which it is

often understood, but as a witnessing to Christ in word and deed, by reaching out to people in the concrete reality of their daily lives, in their particular cultural context, their own religious traditions, their socio-economic conditions.

Religious dialogue is not just a substitute for or a mere preliminary to the proclamation of Christ, but should be the ideal form of evangelization, where in humility and mutual support we seek together with our brothers and sisters that fullness of Christ which is God's plan for the whole of creation, in its entirely and its great and wonderful diversity.

In the context of dialogue we tried to penetrate the meaning of the uniqueness of Christ—in our own inner experience, in our contact with others, in the very plan of God to bring all things to fulfillment in Christ as head; we realized that there is still much to be discovered, and much that is already discovered but not sufficiently integrated in our lives and in our missionary effort—our actual presentation of Christ does not correspond to what we have learnt about the divine economy of salvation. There is also much in the Church that must change—in ways of thinking and in structures to make room for Christ to expand to the full dimensions envisaged by St. Paul. We feel that the Christian experience, in contact with the age-old religious experience of Asia, has much to contribute to the growth and the transformation in outlook and appearance of the Universal Church.²⁸

3.7 Dialogue Rooted in Christ

The foundation of such a commitment to dialogue is not merely anthropological but primarily theological. In Christ, God has entered into a dialogue with human beings, offering them salvation. It is in faithfulness to this divine initiative that the Church should be committed to a dialogue of salvation with all women and men (DP 38). Moreover, this dialogue is founded on the fact that Christ, the new Adam, is at work through his Spirit in all human persons to bring about a new humanity (DP 15).²⁹

3.8 Dialogue Implies Mutual Respect

It is often asked why Christians should approach Muslims. Because they are our neighbors! In all people there is an urge to share with others what they treasure most and to receive good things from them, through the dialogue of daily life. Our mission as disciples of Jesus is to witness to our Christian faith and values. Without interpersonal and intergroup contacts we cannot share mutually the riches God has gifted to each individual and group.

Christian reflection reveals that the source and support of our lived faith is the God who has come to us in Jesus Christ and whom Jesus manifests as the Father who is love, mercy, salvation and the ultimate meaning of human life and destiny. The Risen Lord, who lives and works through the

Holy Spirit in history, continues to reveal the love of his Father and to establish his rule on earth. The Church is the community of those who in Jesus Christ have found God and committed themselves to him. Through

this commitment we proclaim the total liberation of all people.

In the mysterious and providential plan of God Islam possesses a salvific and liberating purpose. Human aspirations, the quest for meaning in life, and even human weakness and the forces of evil, are to be found in the histories of all religions from their beginnings until today. Yet as the Second Vatican Council has affirmed, the Spirit of God is also active outside the visible Church. Our belief in the universal salvific will of God leads us to affirm the initiative of God active in other living faiths. Thus the genuine beliefs and practices of Muslims form the vehicles of God's favor to them and constitute the basis of their human communion and action. The dynamic impact of the character of Muhammad and of the Quran on Muslims throughout their history is something which a Christian cannot overlook. The Church believes that salvation is a gift from God offered to all in Jesus Christ. Therefore, through contact with people of other faiths we become more aware of the fullness of Christ's salvific work. As a man Jesus grew in wisdom and grace through his contacts with his own people and others.

Many previous statements of the FABC based on those of the Second Vatican Council and subsequent pronouncements of the universal Church, have addressed the relationship between dialogue and evangelization. Here we reaffirm that dialogue and evangelization are by no means incompatible, but at the same time dialogue must never be made a strategy to elicit conversions. Bearing witness to our faith in Christ, by life, deed and word, is what we mean by evangelization or proclamation, and this should inspire and direct all our individual and communitarian activities, including our rela-

tions with people of other faiths or of no faith at all.

It would be an error to view Muslim behavior and say, "A true Christian would not have acted like this; Jesus taught us to live in a better way than this." Muslim realities must not be compared with Christian ideals, or vice versa. We are all sinful, and must humbly confess how far short of our calling our actual behavior falls.

Christians find their strength in being "of one mind and heart," united in the presence of the living Christ. Those who are only "nominally" or "culturally" so may not be able to withstand external pressures which chal-

lenge their faith.

Christians living among Muslims have a responsibility to challenge their neighbors by living the Gospel teachings. Christ's command to universal love, when truly lived, shows Muslims and peoples of other faiths that God's love is not limited by communal or national bonds. When we strive to imitate Jesus who "went about doing good," we are in effect meeting the Quranic challenge to compete with one another in good deeds.

Dialogue is an encounter with others which demands an attitude of humility, acceptance, honesty and respect. When values and attitudes of Christ direct and transform our behavior, this is already a form of "silent proclamation" of the Gospel. Subsequently, in those moments of true sharing among people of different faiths, each speaks of those things which are deepest and most meaningful; for us Christians this means proclaiming the reasons for the hope we have, and him who is the model of our love. When this is done in sincerity and respect, Muslims are not offended by this witness. As people who hold their own faith as a treasure to be disclosed and an invitation (*da'wah*) to others, they may be expecting such announcement from their Christian friend.³⁰

3.9 Dialogue and Spirit of Christ

The Church is called by the Spirit of Christ to enter into dialogue with the followers of other Asian faiths and movements. This indeed is the imperative which the Second Vatican Council gave to the Church. As the Holy Father points out in his encyclical, "On The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World":

The Second Vatican Council, centered primarily on the theme of the Church, reminds us of the Holy Spirit's activity also "outside the visible body of the Church." The Council speaks precisely of "all peoples of goodwill in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all, and since the ultimate vocation of man in fact is one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery" (GS 22, 53).³¹

3.10 Dialogue - Crucial Challenge to the Church in Asia

Dialogue is a crucial challenge to the churches in Asia in their growing commitment to the building of the Kingdom. This challenge is fraught with risks arising out of confusing socio-political tensions, besides other causes. However, with the confidence that the Spirit is with us and helps us in our weakness (Rom 8:26), we commit ourselves to this task of dialogue in order to unite the whole universe in Christ so that God may be all in all (1 Cor 15:28).³²

3.11 Insights from Hindu Perspectives

The Vedanic reflection on the *atman* (self) affirming the presence of *Brahman* (Absolute) in every person is a charter for the freedom and worth of every individual, which is further strengthened by reform movements from Buddha to Gandhi. But it has not succeeded in freeing people from rigid social stratifications. If the liberating Spirit of Christ helps the Church in realizing in itself the values of freedom and fellowship, it can serve in Asia as a catalyst in promoting a radical humanism that finds a basis in the

fatherhood and transcendent lordship of God.

The Hindu traditions of life and growth, especially in a joint-family, stress the ideal of interdependence and solidarity. This can lead to conformism, introversion and a lack of openness and concern for the inter-community. Popular religious culture, however, especially the *Epics*, seems to hold a different, more positive ideal. Christ's new command to love the other even unto death, while promoting an urge to radical transformation of society in the context of oppression, is capable of combining and fostering together the values of the dignity of the human person, interdependence and solidarity, and active concern for building up of the new human society.³³

3.12 Mutual Respect from out of Knowledge of Islam

Many Christians feel they know very little about Islam, and thus find it difficult to understand the practices and ideals of Muslims. Christian parents, catechists and educators should teach their children about God's love for Muslims and about the many good and holy values in the Islamic religion. Basic knowledge about the beliefs and practices of Muslims, taken from reliable and objective sources, should form a part of Catholic catechetical training. Education about Islam should give an unbiased presentation of the religion of Muslims, while at the same time avoiding any tendencies towards indifferentism. While firm in their commitment to Christ, Christians must respect the beliefs and practices of Muslims.³⁴

3.13 Dialogue for a New Human Family

We wish to facilitate a further dialogue with the great religions about the meaning of faith and service in daily life. All mankind is rooted in the Christ-event. This anthropology is operative even in those who do not know Christ. Our main point of contact is the search for a new humanity and a new human family.³⁵

3.14 Salvific Values in Other Religions

We are glad that the Vatican II affirmed the presence of salvific values in other religions. We are grateful for the timely insights and the individual, as well community, action of those calling for liberation from human misery and oppression. We also affirm that the primary task of the Church is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, calling to personal faith in him, inviting to membership in the Church those whom God has chosen, and celebrating salvation through Christ in our belonging to his Church. Every other task of the Church flows from and its related to this proclamation and is acceptance in faith. The Gospel fulfills all hopes, a Gospel which Asia and the whole world direly need.³⁶

3.15 Search for Ultimate Source of Diversities

In the Christian spiritual heritage there has also been a search for the ultimate source of diversities which shape cosmic reality and human society. Jesus Christ experienced the Divine as Father, the ultimate source of Life and Love, that poured itself out through as the Spirit. Hence, the Christian sages contemplated the Divine as Trinity: Father—Son—Spirit in eternal communion. The interpersonal polarity between the Father and Son and the transpersonal union in the Spirit are perceived as the ultimate foundation for interpersonal encounter and union among human persons created in the image of God. "I" become fully myself only through the "thou," through the ecstacis of love.³⁷

3.16 Contemplation and Compassion

Evangelization is communicating our experience of the Divine in Christ. Jesus' deep intimacy with the Father and the resultant commitment in compassion for the poor would readily evoke a positive response in the Asian sensitivity to the Divine. Hence, credible evangelization demands from us Christians in Asia a life of authentic contemplation and genuine compassion.

Articulation of our Christ experience in the process of the common pilgrimage would take forms—words and symbols—which resonate with the Asian psyche. Hence, we should avoid all sorts of exclusivistic claims and cultural superiority, both of which would betray the message of the Divine kenosis. Only an ego-emptying, and consequently powerless, Christian community has the credibility to proclaim the folly of the message of the Cross. Such a process of evangelization fosters a culture of dialogue in Asia. Insofar as "breadth and the length, the height and the depth," of the mystery of God's love revealed in Christ continue to be a mystery for us, we have to journey with others in quest for the light and truth of the Divine.³⁸

4. INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT - HUMAN PROMOTION

4.1 Evangelization Includes Social Justice and Integral Human Development

We have been asking ourselves these days how we may respond to the cries of our people, especially the poor and oppressed. Evangelization includes social justice. The Synod document, *Justice in the World*, says: "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, that is, of the mission of the Church for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation." We know that Christ has a special love for the poor and wishes to be identified and

served in the naked, hungry, thirsty, and imprisoned. The Church, therefore, as a witness to Christ, must make a wholehearted commitment to the poor,

and is impelled to opt in favor of them.

We need to strive for a new society, so that all men may reach full human development. Our work has to be for the development of the whole man and every man. This wholeness of man includes not only the individual personal fulfillment, but the growth and blossoming of the whole human reality on earth. Hence, our involvement cannot exclude what used to be called secular and profane. In all these spheres God and his Christ are active in the Spirit, expecting our partnership and collaboration in the shaping and reshaping of human history and human destiny.

We hereby commit ourselves to this urgent task of ushering in a new society of justice and peace, and we hope to carry forward the work of

Christ himself under the lead of the befriending Spirit.39

4.2 Preferential Option for the Poor

Preferential—not exclusive—option for the poor is an imperative in Southeast Asia, where so much poverty exists. We Christians accept it as a great opportunity, privilege and vocation to carry out Jesus' commitment to the vast number of the poor. Our work with and for the poor must concretely reduce the poverty of the people and make their lives truly human. Our preferential option will demand a change in attitudes and structures and a deeper faith, of which such options will be a sign. 40

5. JUSTICE, PEACE AND HARMONY

5.1 Christ, Prince of Peace

The biblical concept of peace is the one that is closest to harmony. Shalom on the one hand means "peace" and "friendship"; and on the other hand, it means "welfare," "prosperity," and "happiness." Basically, it de-

notes always wholeness, health and completeness.

Peace is very often coupled with justice and is the effect of justice (Is 31:17). Ps 85:11 (10) says: "Justice and peace will kiss each other." Justice before God and justice among human beings is the only foundation of peace, since it is justice which eliminates sin, the source of all divisions. Christ became our peace by destroying sin, breaking down the dividing wall of hostility (Eph 2:14). The association of peace with justice ties together the nuance of wholeness with the notion of peace as an action. "Do good, seek peace, pursue it," says Ps 34:14. Peace is not seen simply as tranquility but as the work of justice.

Peace is the messianic gift that Christ has achieved for humankind through his redemptive work (Lk 2:14; Jn 14:27; 20:19; Eph 2:14-22; Jn 16:33). Christ is the "Prince of peace" (Is 9:5[6]. He is the bearer of justice

and his kingdom shall be the kingdom of peace, established and sustained by justice (Is 11:1-9).⁴¹

5.2 Christ Our Peace

The cross of Jesus Christ broke down the dividing wall of prejudice and hatred between the Jews and gentiles, and has made them into one people in place of two. In this way Christ has become our peace. He has further abolished the law of Moses that alienated the gentiles from the Jews. In Christ is the New Man, the New Adam, in whom all races come together (Eph 2:11-22). In Eph 1:10 Paul speaks of God's plan to unite, to recapitulate (anakefalaiosasthai) all things in Christ. Christ subdues the cosmic powers and everyone on earth, and brings them under his rule (Col 1:15-20). Finally, when everything is subjected to Christ, he will hand the Kingdom to the Father (1 Cor 15:20-28).⁴²

5.3 Solidarity and God's Kingdom

Through Christ and in Christ the Kingdom of God has come and is now progressing to its fulfillment. It is a force transforming the world. Necessarily, the Kingdom of God confronts the forces of injustice, violence and oppression. These forces combined form structures of sin, from which we need to be liberated. We uphold the preferential option for the poor, since they are victims of these structures. Hence, solidarity with the poor is a response to the Good News of God's Kingdom. When this solidarity exists, there the power of Christ's Spirit is working. The work of the Spirit appears in the struggle for a better world in all its forms. We see people of all faiths participating in that struggle.⁴³

6. PRIESTLY AND PROPHETIC FUNCTION

6.1 Liberative Leadership and Praxis of Jesus

Every disciple of Jesus and the whole Christian community have also to play a prophetic role, i.e., a liberative leadership in the spirit of the Gospel and the praxis of Jesus. Different groups, such as men, women, youth, etc., need to be formed in this kind of leadership; and it has to be an ongoing process in the parish community through prayer sessions, discussions, seminars, etc. The liturgical life of the parish can be an effective instrument to instill in the people the vision of harmony and develop in them leadership with a true ecumenical spirit.⁴⁴

6.2 Priestly and Prophetic Mission of the Church

The priestly function belongs to the whole People of God. The Asian

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

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

and consequent problems.45

6.3 Ministry of Bishops and Headship of Christ Over the Church

The mystery of the Church becomes fully incarnate in a human situation by the presence and exercise in a local community of the ministry of the bishops. The bishop, as a member of the episcopal college, is the rallying point by which the community is constituted a "particular Church," and the visible sign of communion of that Church with all the other particular churches—a communion presided over by the successor of Peter. The specific charism of unity and spiritual leadership finds its full expression in the local Church in the ministry of the bishop. This is how the bishop signifies and represents in a special manner the Headship of Christ over his Church. 46

6.4 Bishops as Shepherds and New Ministries

The image of the bishops, therefore, is after the model of Jesus himself, that of the Shepherd of his flock, who did not come "to be served but to serve" (Mk 10:45). He exercises his ministry "not as domineering over... the flock" (1 Pt 5:3), but in the spirit of the "suffering servant of Yahweh" (Is 52:53), offering his life for his sheep. His concern is eminently pastoral rather than of an administrative nature; and so his priority of interest is vested in persons (n. 111)

We are aware of the implications and consequences that new ministries are bound to have for the whole life of the Church. We are also con-

scious that further research and study are required in order that our renewal may respond to the needs of our Asian countries in these difficult times. We are equally conscious of the need for wider consultation and for the education of the entire Christian community, if we are to make Christ present effectively in the world today. In this regard we recommend that similar colloquia be conducted in each of our Asian countries, especially where this has not been done so far. A suitable follow-up on previous meetings is equally important (n. 132).⁴⁷

6.5 Key Questions Today

The main questions are the following: How do we understand the centrality and decisiveness of Jesus Christ in the context of religious pluralism? What is the role of the Church if the Kingdom of God is present and operative beyond her boundaries? What does the mission of the Church consist in, if salvation in Jesus Christ is available to members of other religious traditions in the concrete circumstances of their lives? If interreligious dialogue is by itself an expression of the Church's evangelizing mission, why does announcing Jesus Christ and inviting people to become his disciples in the Church remain urgent? If people can be saved through Jesus Christ outside the Church, what motivation remains for proclaiming the Good News? Why, in the last analysis, must the Asian local Churches be poor and inculturated?⁴⁸

II. BEING EVANGELIZED IN "CHURCH AS COMMUNION"

7. Spirituality, Renewal, Conversion and Prayer

7.1 Signs of Christian Renewal

There is today an undeniable thirst and hunger for prayer and contemplation. We see this around us, but especially among the laity, especially among the young. Surely this is a sign of the presence and action of the Spirit. There is the longing to hear and reflect on the Word of God, especially with others in a community of prayer. There is a eucharistic assembly increasingly celebrated and experienced as truly the heart of the Christian's pilgrimage through life. There is the desire in many also for greater simplicity of life and even the experience of poverty as a following of Jesus, and as solidarity with the suffering and powerless poor. There is the increased commitment to tasks and struggles for justice and human rights. There is, in some countries, the rapid multiplication of "grassroots ecclesial communities," so often alive with the freshness and enthusiasm of early Christian times. In these communities an experience of genuine Christian fellowship and love is often found as well as the emergence of diverse charism and ministries. These are the new missionary initiatives among the former "mis-

sion churches." Among priests and religious, and - most encouraging of all - among the laity. 49

7.2 Self-Renewal in the Light of Christ

We know that the first task must be the renewal of ourselves in the light of Christ. We must begin always with a return to the Gospel. This renewal must be rooted in prayer and in the vivifying of "that profound religious sense which characterizes the spirit of the Asian world" (cf. Pope Paul VI, Message to the Asian Bishops' Meeting, 28 November 1970). In our development efforts we must continue to treasure the resources of the spirit found among our peoples. We realize too that we must deepen in ourselves the spirit of servanthood taught to us by him who lived in our midst "as one who serves," and who came "to give his life for the redemption of all."

Before Christ and our brothers we commit ourselves with all earnestness "to whatever concerns the dignity of man." For "it is far from true that because of him we are diverted from the duties and tasks of his earth. On the contrary, faith, hope and the love of Christ compel us to serve our brothers, knowing that as he laid down his life for us, we too ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (Message to Humanity of the Council Fathers, Vatican

II, 20 October 1962).

Gathered together, then, in Christ's presence, we turn to the other Christian churches and communities in Asia, seeking to collaborate with them in our efforts for the development of our peoples, for freedom, justice and peace. It is our earnest hope that these common endeavors may themselves increasingly draw us together into the unity which is God's will for us.

In the power of the Risen Christ, then, we lay the foundation of our hope. And we have confidence that if people of good will and sincere purpose will labor together, we can build this new society. Only we must have the humility to depend on God and on his will that his sons shall come to the fullness of the stature of Christ Jesus our Lord.⁵⁰

7.3 The Way of Prayer as Lived by Jesus

The unfolding of harmony in its various stages from within oneself through neighbor and nature to God is also the way of prayer as lived by Jesus. In his early life, he was constantly opening himself through the world around him to his Father. Our Christian prayer has to be rediscovered in that model.⁵¹

7.4 Core of Christian Prayer

Christian prayer is our conscious personal communion with God our Father, in Christ Jesus. It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit working in our hearts (cf. Rom 5:5), enabling us to turn to God and with confidence to call him

Father (cf. Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6). This prayer, we know, is always a free gift of God.

We pray in the name of Jesus (cf. Jn 16:24, 26). We pray to Jesus (cf. 2 Cor 12:8; Eph 5:19; 1 Cor 16:22; Rev 22:20), the one mediator between the Father and ourselves (cf. 1 Tim 2:5). We pray with Jesus, the beloved Son ever turned lovingly to the Father (Mt 11:25; Jn 17). In a very true sense, then, Christian prayer means "allowing Jesus to pray in us, allowing Jesus to be one with the will of the Father in our own hearts."

Christian prayer is prayer within the community of those who have accepted the Gospel, of those who seek to live their lives in communion with Christ, and who in fellowship work to second Christ's saving work

within history. It is an ecclesial prayer.

Christian prayer is prayer centered around the Eucharist, source and summit of a worship that is uniquely sacramental. (Second Vatican Council Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 10.). For in the Eucharist, the prayer of Jesus assumes its fullest expression and embodiment: the presence of Jesus in his dying and rising again for the life of the world. In renewing his self-gift to the Father and his self-gift to us, he makes it possible for our own living and

dving to be taken up into the mystery of his redeeming deed.

Christian prayer is a prayer of self-gift to the brethren. It creates the freedom and joy of loving commitment to others. "This is how we know what love is: Christ gave his life for us. We, too, then ought to give our lives for our brethren" (1 John 3:16). It enables us to find Christ in our brothers and sisters, especially in the suffering and the afflicted, in the poor and the powerless, in "the least of these." In them all we are enabled to see him and serve him. And thus this prayer sends us into the world and into history, that we may help to transform them according to the designs of the heart of the Father.

(Prayer and Human Development.) Christian prayer is necessary if we are to bring the spirit and power of the Gospel and the Christ-life into the effort to achieve genuine human liberation and development. This involves the shaping of human persons to the likeness of Jesus. It means bringing them, in all the material and spiritual dimensions of their lives, to their full

stature as the children of God they are called to become.

In keeping with the economy of the Incarnation, which is the law of the Church's life and mission, the prayer-life of our local Churches should "take over the riches of our nations, which have been given to Christ as inheritance" (Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, 22; cf. also AG, 11; *Lumen Gentium*, 13-17, and FABC I, 9-12, 20-21). Important above all, in our present context, are those ways of prayer which have been developed by the native genius of our peoples and have played a vital and honored role in shaping the traditions of our lands.⁵²

7.5 Spirituality Implies Death and Resurrection

Such openness demands a kenosis modeled after that of Jesus. Christian spirituality is a spirituality of kenosis—of powerlessness, of continual purification from self-centeredness, of growing more and more in openness to our partners in dialogue. Kenosis implies death and resurrection, that dying to self which brings fulness of life (Phil 2:6-11). Hence, it is communitarian; it is centered on the eucharist, where together we experience death and resurrection in Christ.⁵³

7.6 Asian Church Invited to Continued Conversion

In responding to the situation in which she lives, the Asian Church is invited to a serious discernment about her presence and place in society. The Church is called to partake in the paschal mystery, and die to herself in order to be raised up with the Lord. The Church is in need of continual conversion and needs to "pass over" with Christ to the poor, to Asian cultures and to other religions.⁵⁴

8. Local Church As Community

8.1 Local Church and Building Up of the Body of Christ

To preach the Gospel in Asia today, we must make the message and life of Christ truly incarnate in the minds and lives of our peoples. The primary focus of our task of evangelization then, at this time in our history, is the building up of a truly local Church.

For the local Church is the realization and the enfleshment of the Body

of Christ in a given people, a given place and time.

Finally, this dialogue will teach us what our faith in Christ leads us to receive from these religious traditions, and what must be purified in them,

healed and made whole, in the light of God's Word.

On our part we can offer what we believe the Church alone has the duty and joy to offer to them and to all men: oneness with the Father in Jesus his Son, the ways to grace Christ gives us in his Gospel and his sacraments, and in the fellowship of the community which seeks to live in him; an understanding too of the value of the human person and of the social dimensions of human salvation—a salvation which assumes and gives meaning to human freedom, earthly realities, and the course of this world's history.

Indigenization renders the local Church truly present within the life and cultures of our peoples. Through it, all their human reality is assumed into the life of the Body of Christ, so that all of it may be purified and healed,

perfected and fulfilled.

Finally, through the "preaching of the good news to the poor" (Lk

4:18), Christ's renewing life and the power of his paschal mystery are inserted into our people's search for human development, for justice, brother-

hood and peace.

And we wish to remember as well the legions of missionaries, priests, brothers and sisters (and lay missionaries as well) who came to our countries from other lands, to bring Christ and his Church to our peoples, and to give their lives in the service of the Lord. We and our local Churches owe so much to them, and they have indelibly inscribed their spirit in our hearts.

To our brothers and sisters in the "Church of silence" we extend our thoughts and the embrace of our hearts. In their steadfast faith and suffering, we see also a witnessing to Christ and a proclaiming of the Gospel; such fidelity and constancy we honor. In our prayers and in the eucharistic renewal of the Lord's sacrifice we have sought during these days to be one

with them in fraternal solidarity.

Christ of the peoples of Asia, humbly we beg you to make use of us to reveal yourself more and more to them. You have been present already in their histories and traditions. In hidden ways you have led them, because for them too, you are the Way. In ways unknown to us you have enlightened them in their worship, their beliefs, their philosophies, since for them, too, you are the Truth. In diverse manners you have already made yourself present in their lives, for you are their Life. From the beginning you have called our peoples, and from your Cross you have drawn them to yourself.⁵⁵

8.2 Local Church as Gospel Leaven

Each local Church is determined by her human context, and lives in a dialectical relationship with the human society into which she is inserted as the Gospel leaven. Since each local Church should embody into the context the task entrusted to her by the servant Lord, she has to discover time and again what ministries and what ministerial structures she requires in order to fulfill her mission to offer to a human society the salvation brought about by Jesus Christ, and to enable the members of that society to become what God intends them to be. Each local Church, in order to be viable, needs to become fully responsible and must have the legitimate autonomy which her natural and harmonious growth demands.

Since Christ's mission is universal, all local Churches are called to live in communion with each other. This bond of unity, visibly expressed in the College of Bishops, presided over by the Bishop of Rome, implies that the search of each Church for ministries adapted to her needs is subject to verification and testing by the other Churches. In this bond of union lies the guarantee of the true apostolicity and catholicity of each local Church. The same bond will ensure that she will never depart from the basic ministerial

structure given to the Church by her Founder.56

8.3 Jesus Christ Constitutes Her Deepest Identity

We tried to articulate in our Asian context the renewed vision which after Vatican II the Church has of herself as the People of God and the Sacrament of salvation. Jesus, the Savior of the world, is at the center of our faith and in him the Church's raison d'etre. The Church is essentially communion; she is called to be the visible sign and instrument of communion between God and men and of men among themselves. This is the grace and the task for which, and by which, she exists; to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ constitutes her deepest identity. A sincere effort to spell out the implications of this vision led us to the realization that our Churches need to be continuously converted to the Gospel and constantly to rethink the various ways and forms in which they are to fulfill their mission.⁵⁷

8.4 Local Church and Mission

We have, under the leading of God's grace, realized first of all that the grace and task of evangelization must be seen more and more as committed to the entire Christian community, and in a special way to the Christian families which make up that community. If each local Church is and must be missionary, then here in East Asia, above all, the laity, the fathers and mothers, sons and daughters of every Christian family, must themselves be bearers of Christ's mission to those around them—and even to other lands. This is a truth which we at BIMA III wish to clearly emphasize, because in it lies the indispensable key to our seconding of God's work of evangelization in this part of the world, where the harvest indeed is great, and the laborers so pitifully few.⁵⁸

8.5 Need for Active Participation of the Whole Church

The more we re-awaken to the religious and cultural issues and socioeconomic problems of our people, the more pressing it is for all of us clergy and laity—to become what our founder Jesus Christ intended us to be, namely, a community that searches for God's Kingdom in the "joy and hope, griefs and anguish" of this world (GS, 1). Much of our efforts and services have been unproductive in the past because of a lack of active participation of the whole Church. Therefore, we need to develop urgently a sense of common mission and coresponsibility.⁵⁹

8.6 Church and the Reign of God

The encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (RM) explains the reason for this unique and irreplaceable role of the Church in relation to the Reign of God, at whose service she is placed: "It is true that the Church is not an end unto

herself, since she is ordered towards the Kingdom of God of which she is the seed, sign and instrument. Yet, while remaining distinct from Christ and the Kingdom, the Church is indissolubly united to both. Christ endowed the Church, his Body, with the fullness of the benefits and means of salvation. The Holy Spirit dwells in her with his gifts and charisms, sanctifies, guides and constantly renews her (LG 4). The result is a unique and special relationship which, while not excluding the action of Christ and the Spirit outside of the Church's visible boundaries, confers upon her a specific and necessary role." (RM 18).

Thus it is seen that, if the Church is the sacrament of the Kingdom, the reason is that she is the sacrament of Jesus Christ himself who is the mystery of salvation, to whom she is called to bear witness and whom she is called to announce. To be at the service of the Kingdom means for the Church to announce Jesus Christ. For this task she is endowed with special gifts and charisms and guided by the Spirit. Due to such endowments the Reign of God is sacramentally present in the Church in a special manner, "she is the seed, sign and instrument" of the Reign of God to which she is ordained

(RM 18).

For this to happen, the Churches would no longer be largely dependent upon their institutions wherever they are hindering their prophetic function. Often enough the Church is afraid to take a stand in defence of the poor because of a vested interest in her institutions. Like David, the Church cannot move, she is weighed down with the armour of Saul. We have to assume the consequences of the prophetic function of the Church, imitating Jesus himself. We need to create not powerful but flexible service structures. Thus, we would free ourselves from the chains of money and power, and experience evangelical freedom. We would become a self-reliant Church

with a simple lifestyle.

Nevertheless, the Church as a pilgrim in history belongs to the order of signs, and as such, needs to be conformed to Jesus and his Reign, lest the quality of her witness be impaired and her signifying power obscured. This is why the Church must reproduce in herself the model of her master who became poor that we might become rich. The "self-emptying" of the Son of God in Jesus Christ is the decisive theological reason why the Church must be a poor Church; his identification with the figure of the "Servant of God" is the reason why she, in turn, must be a servant. The preferential option for the poor, which the Asian context demands from all local Churches, is in deep harmony with the nature of the Church herself as the sacrament of Jesus Christ, who, for us, became poor and made himself a servant. In order to be an effective sign and to bear a convincing witness, the pilgrim Church, not only in her members, but "in so far as she is an institution of men on earth," is constantly in need of renewal and reform (cf. UR 6; DP 36).

The same conformity of the Church to her master is the decisive theological foundation for the inculturation of local Churches. The Son of God became man in Jesus in a particular place, at a particular time of history, two thousand years ago in Palestine. Jesus was a Jew, deeply inserted in the culture of his people. The revelation he conveyed of the mystery of God, as well as the way in which he accomplished his messianic and saving mission, are steeped in the religious tradition of Israel, even while they fulfill it in an unforeseen manner. The mystery of the incarnation and the paschal mystery are at once the foundation and the model for the deep insertion of local Churches in the surrounding cultures, in all aspects of their life, celebration, witness and mission. ⁶⁰

8.7 The Core of Church as Community

The very substance of the Christ event was the revelation of the communion in the Godhead (Father-Son-Spirit) and of Gods' enabling human-kind to share in this communion. Hence, the Church as the community of those who have experienced Christ and have appropriated the life manifested in Jesus Christ is the community of those who are restored into communion and fellowship (*koinonia*) among themselves, which is a communion and fellowship with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit (1 Jn 1:1-3).

This communion and fellowship is expressed in a unity of life and the plurality of harmonious relationships of the believers in the Father and the Son, on the one hand, and among themselves, on the other (Jn 15:9-10; 17-21). It is in this loving one another and living in harmony that the Church will be recognized as the community of the disciples of Jesus (Jn 13:34-35). This unity and harmony of the disciples of Jesus makes the Church the sign and instrument for the world for its restoration to the harmony of human-

kind.

Christian life is characterized by an earnest hope for peace and commitment to bring about peace (Mt 5:9). The Church is called to transcend distinction of race, caste and sex (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11) and become the locus, sign and instrument on earth of peace among the peoples. As the Body of Christ enlivened by the Spirit of God, the Church is called to be the Sacrament of peace and harmony of the whole humankind. The Church can fulfill its mission as sacrament of peace and harmony only insofar as it is committed to establish justice, by listening to the Word of God who alone gives peace, and being open to the Spirit of God who is constantly at work weaving among human beings one solid bond (Eph 4:3).

The Church as the community of those who are restored to communion and harmony cannot be indifferent to the destiny of the whole of creation, since the Mediator of this communion is Jesus Christ, the Word (1 Jn 1:1-3), through whom all things are made (Jn 1:3), and whom God made the Head of the Church and the Lord of Universe (Col 14-18). In his salvific plan God destined humans to be molded into the image of the Son, so that Christ will become the eldest born among many brethren (Rom 8:29). Already in the beginning God put the human person as the icon (eikon) at the

center of his creation and as his steward.

This creation was later disfigured by sin. Hence, the Church, as the communion of the children of God, is the community of restored humanity, the icon (eikon) of God. Therefore, the Church has to be at the service of the restoration of the whole creation in its original harmony. The descriptions of eschatological salvation in terms of a new Heaven and a New Earth (Rev 221:1), of the creation waiting with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God (Rom 8:19), and obtaining the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Rom 8:21), indicate this cosmic dimension of the restoration of harmony in Jesus Christ. Hence, the Church is the community of those who, transformed by the Holy Spirit, are children of God, living in harmony with God and with one another, and are authentic servants of God for the restoration of the whole of creation to its original harmony.⁶¹

9. FORMATION OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

9.1 Put Christ Effectively at the Center of Life

So that the whole Christian community may truly and joyfully fulfill its mission, every Christian must be helped in his striving to appreciate his faith and to put Christ effectively at the center of his life. This requires a continuing education in the faith, an on-going catechesis expressed in words and symbols drawn from the Scriptures and the culture of our people. This requires too that Christian be helped to encounter God and experience His love in contemplation and prayer.

Often, however, more than a change of attitude is needed for effective mission. A change of present structures and a better coordination among existing ecclesial bodies are called for to make the Church an effective sign

of Christ among the people.62

9.2 Meaning of Being Deeply Committed to Jesus

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

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

The Christian family is rightly referred to as the "domestic Church,"

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

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

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

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

The forgiving Christ is also the healing Christ who reached out to the poor and marginalized to bring them the healing power of God. God's people, especially the laity in health services, must likewise reach out to farmers and workers, the landless and slum dwellers, so that through them the healing touch of God may be felt. This is why the resources of the Church in health services must be channeled to outreach programs that are community-based and community-oriented.

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

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

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

We have seen the complexities of challenges that the People of God face in Asia. We have reflected theologically on the vocation and mission of the laity and some pastoral concerns that flow this theological vision. At our assembly the laity have asked us in many ways and different forms the age-old question of the rich young man in Scripture: "Teacher, what good things must I do to possess eternal life?" (Mt 19:16). While the words of Jesus were simple enough, his real demand required a radical following by the rich young man.⁶³

9.3 Becoming Truly Convinced and Committed Christians

In the light of what has been said, we, the delegates to BILA III-

bishops, priests, religious and lay people - commit ourselves:

To provide ways and means for the laity to develop their spiritual life and their moral and human values in order to become truly convinced and committed Christians, mature in faith and love for Christ, and solidly based on the word of God as found in Sacred Scriptures, mindful that "anyone becomes an empty preacher of the word of God to others, not being a hearer of the word in his own heart" (DV, 25).

To intensify grassroots evangelization in order to bring Christ and his Gospel, especially to the poor and the young in Southeast Asia.⁶⁴

9.4 Christ-Centered Formation

The formation program should be clearly Christ-centered, enabling the candidate to develop a deep personal relationship with Christ, which will lead him to an ever-growing commitment to him through study, personal prayer and contemplation. This Christ-centeredness will give him a Christian vision of life and the ability to live Christian values. This will equip the lay minister to practice a true Christian discernment in the situation in which he or she may find himself or herself.

The specific function of the presbyter in the Christian community is that of a unifying spiritual leadership. This is how the presbyter signifies and represents in a special manner the Headship of Jesus Christ over his Church, sharing thereby in the ministry of the bishop. This function of the presbyter expresses itself in his proclamation of the Word, his presidency of the liturgical celebrations, especially the Eucharist, and in his pastoral care and concern. In these various tasks he is at the service of the community, building it up into a Christian fellowship, and providing it with spiritual guidance as he participates in the bishop's commitment to his flock.⁶⁵

9.5 Call of Laity to Holiness

The call of the laity to holiness and, consequently, to the apostolate of the Church, does not spring from the shortage of priests, nor from the mandate of the hierarchy. It is a demand of their Christian identity, in virtue of the Christian's full incorporation into Christ and in the Holy Eucharist. 66

III. BEING EVANGELIZERS IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

10. OUR MISSION OF EVANGELIZATION

10.1 New Age of Mission

First, the realization in practice that "mission" is no longer, and can no longer be, a one-way movement from the "older Churches" to the "younger Churches," from the Churches of the old Christendom to the Churches in the colonial lands. Now—as Vatican II already affirmed with all clarity and force—every local Church is and cannot be but missionary. Every local Church is "sent" by Christ and the Father to bring the Gospel to its surrounding milieu, and to bear it also into all the world. For every local Church this is a primary task. Hence, we are moving beyond both the vocabulary and the idea of "sending Churches" and "receiving Churches," for as living communities of the one Church of Jesus Christ, every local Church is responsible for its mission, and coresponsible for the mission of all its sister-Churches. Every local Church, according to its possibilities, must share whatever its gifts are, for the needs of other Churches, for mission throughout mankind, for the life of the world.

Once again, what is the newness of this "new age of mission"? We believe that the Spirit of the Lord calls each people and each culture to its own fresh and creative response to the Gospel. Each local Church has its own vocation in the one history of salvation, in the one Church of Christ. In each local Church each people's history, each people's culture, meanings and values, each people's traditions are taken up, not diminished, nor destroyed, but celebrated and renewed, purified if need be, and fulfilled (as the Second Vatican Council teaches) in the life of the Spirit.

In many Christian communities in our midst something of this "original vocation to the Gospel" so often emerges. We may discern how, in the Spirit, they become manifestations of the joyousness, freedom and purity that the grace of Christ brings to full flowering within the heart of every people, race and nation. This actualization of the unique vocations of peoples within the Catholic unity we cannot but rejoice in.

We are small in number and influence in the world of Asia, and throughout the world. We have seen how inadequate we are for the mission to which Christ sends us anew today. The meager material—even the human—resources we have, tempt us to hesitation and fear. And yet we do not lose heart nor hope, because we have known in our own lives that when we are weakest, and must rely wholly on the power of the Spirit, there the greatest strength is given to us. For the power of the Lord is made manifest in human weakness, and we know, as Paul did, that it is when we are weak that we are strong, with the power and strength of the Lord.⁶⁷

10.2 Jesus' Mission

Jesus' mission was to share the Good News of God's dream for the world. He spoke of the dream through the image of God's Reign and described it in parables, parables often of life and growth or of reconciliation. We may describe the dream as one of people and communities fully alive. That fullness of life is ultimately communion of life among individuals, among communities and with God.⁶⁸

10.3 Following Jesus in Mission

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-inmission, an authentic discipleship in the context of Asia.⁶⁹

10.4 Totality of Christian Mission

Local Churches, servant and inculturated, are the subject of the evangelizing mission. This mission, as the Secretariat for Non-Christians explained in a document of 1984, "is a single but complex and articulated reality," of which, while not claiming to be exhaustive, is mentioned the principle elements" as follows: (1) simple presence and living witness; (2) "concrete commitment to the service of humankind and all forms of activity for social development and for the struggle against poverty and the structures which produce it"; 3) liturgical life and that of prayer and contemplation; 4) "dialogue in which Christians meet the followers of other religious traditions in order to walk together towards truth and to work together in

projects of common concern"; 5) "finally," there is proclamation and catechesis in which Jesus Christ is announced as savior," and people are invited to become his disciples in the Church. "The totality of the Christian mission embraces all these elements" (*Dialogue and Mission*, 13).⁷⁰

10.5 Participation in the Common Mission

By this term (the Church's universal spirituality) we understand that the Christian mission is incumbent on the entire Christian community of each local or particular Church in its own situation and human environment. Just as the whole Church is missionary, so it is ministerial in its entirety, for all its members participate in the common mission, though in various ways. All Christians are called to serve as Christ did. The Church is a communion of service in which, even though there are a variety of functions, services and ministries, all persons are equal, coresponsible and interdependent. It is within this context and against this background that the various distinctive ministries of the Church find their raison de'etre and their specific character.⁷¹

11. WITNESSING TO JESUS

11.1 Our Inspiration Is from the Praxis of Jesus

This common spiritual pilgrimage demands that we take inspiration from the praxis of Jesus, especially his table-fellowship with publicans and sinners, wherein we discover the primal form of the Church of Christ. Before Christianity got established as a structured religion, it was a spiritual movement: Jesus' journey with the poor towards the Kingdom of God. In close dialogue with the poor and the religious cultures of Asia, the Church would be able to rediscover its pristine dynamism which demands a radical emptying (*kenosis*) in its thought patterns, ritual forms and community structures. This age of journeying with sisters and brothers of Asian religions is a privileged moment (*kairos*) for the Church to return to its original call.⁷²

11.2. Suffering Servant of Yahweh

Throughout our earnest searching we were haunted by the image of the poor Church, which is conformed to the pattern of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh and can effectively bring the living Christ to Asia; but many painful questions remained unanswered in this area.⁷³

11.2 Ecumenism and Oneness in Christ for Unity

Encouraged by our deep longing to express our oneness in Christ, we,

the members of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), gathered to deepen our understanding of each other, to share our insights as to what it means to be followers of Christ in the present Asian society and to seek ways toward a full communion and partnership in mission. We experienced the presence of Christ in our conversation and our journeying together, as we felt "our hearts burning within us," when we shared in worship, told our stories, offered our understandings, and listened to our concerns and difficulties in building good ecumenical relationships. We are eager to invite all churches to join this pilgrimage toward a closer fellowship, mutual respect, and common action in love and solidarity with the peoples of Asia.

There are visions and understandings of ecumenism which continue to challenge and inspire us. We are reminded that our ecumenical endeavor is not merely a matter of activities and programs; it is a way of being Church. Unity is ours through Christ our Lord. In our worship, life and witness we seek to make visible the unity we have; we strive to remove those obstacles that stand in the way of manifesting and celebrating the unity that is ours in

Christ. Thus, the unity of the Church is both a gift and a goal.

In our journey towards that visible unity in Christ, we have encountered many obstacles engendered by the long history of mutual indifference, alienation and hostility. The sad condition of separation has built walls of prejudices and biases that block the avenues of mutual understanding.⁷⁴

11.3 Witnessing to Jesus

Yet we are aware of our human limitations and the limitations our role as bishops of the Church implies. But like Peter in the Acts, we want to impart what we have; the good news of Jesus Christ bringing us to freedom.

Christ calls us to become evangelized and evangelizing communities. We bishops recognize our need to be evangelized ourselves because of our sinfulness. Our conversion is a condition for credibility of witness. We must ask ourselves: Do we consciously or unconsciously share in the reinforcing of patterns of injustice?⁷⁵

12. RESTORATION OF HARMONY IN CHRIST

12.1 God's Reign through the Christ of Harmony

The history of God's salvific work of restoring harmony in Christ begins at the very moment when disharmony was introduced into the world of God's creation (Gen 3:14-15). The flood which was the sign of disharmony with its devastating consequences was itself a purifying process. Through it God wanted to restore the primeval harmony of his creation: "As long as the earth lasts, sowing and reaping, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall cease no more" (Gen 8:22). Furthermore, God

established his covenant with Noah and his descendants, and "also with every living creature... birds, cattle and every wild beast" (Gen 9:9-10). The covenant with Noah, with the rainbow as its emblem, indicates God's inten-

tion to restore harmony to the whole of creation.

Restoration of harmony in Christ was to be prepared and fulfilled through the history of a people of God. God's covenant with Abraham—the sign of which was circumcision—though embracing only his descendants (Gen 17:1-14), was in view of blessing all the families of the earth (Gen 12:3). The Exodus event and God's covenant with Moses, with the accompanying obligation of fidelity to the Lord (Ex 19:5; 24:7-8), though confined to Israel, was a preparation and paradigm for the liberation of the whole of humankind from sin and its restoration to harmony. Though God's covenant with David, with the promise to establish his kingdom forever (2 Sam 7:8-16), had immediate reference to one nation, it was a promise of the kingdom of peace and harmony for all the nations.

The prophets denounced the violation of the stipulations of the covenant and constantly called the people to fidelity to the covenant relationship. The prophetic movement in Israel reached its climax in the announcement of the New Covenant, as expressed in Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Jer 31:31-34; Ez 36:26-28), which was to be established through the Messiah, the

Wonderful Counselor and Prince of Peace (Is 9:6-7; 11:1-9).

God's work of restoring harmony finds its fulfillment in Christ. The

New Testament presents itself in its different aspects.

At the beginning of his ministry Jesus announced: "The reign of God is at hand" (Mk 1:15; see Mt 4:17; 20:7; Lk 4:43; 10:9); and in a controversy with the scribes and Pharisees he declared: "The reign of God has come upon you" (Mt 12:28; Lk 8:20). This reign is not only God's rule as the Creator (Ps 93; 104; Mt 5:54; 1:25; Lk 10:21), getting creatures to interact harmoniously even in a world spoiled by sin, and orchestrating the cultures and religions of the human race so that they would move towards harmony in spite of divisive and corruptive elements. It is even more than God's governance as Savior of Israel (Ex 15:18; Ps 47; Is 51:52). It is the salvation that God brought to the whole human race and the cosmos by sending his Son into the world. For "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not die, but may have eternal life" (Jn 3:16), with which perfect harmony is concomitant.

The historical coming of Jesus Christ born of a woman (Gal 4:4; Jn 1:1-14) is, for the New Testament, the salvific event that fulfilled the Old Testament expectation of God's reign, ushering in a better harmony among people and in the cosmos. Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament expectation of the coming reign of God by being the person of harmony through whose

ministry God saves the whole human race and the entire cosmos.

The reign of God has come upon us through the Christ of harmony. Through his ministry of preaching the Good News, as well as by his calling for repentance, through his exorcisms of Satan and his healing of the sick

and his pardoning of sins, through his parables that conveyed his wisdom to those whose hearts had already been touched by it, but took away understanding from those who had never learned to listen and obey (see Mt 13:12-13; Mk 4:11; Lk 8:10), through his prophetic denunciations as well as his personal witness of compassion and love, he exemplified the harmony brought by the reign of God.

The mystery of Jesus, of the reign of God, of harmony, became operative in the life of the whole human race and in the order and workings of the cosmos, especially through the paschal events of his passion, death, resurrection and glorification. By these events Jesus brought judgment upon the world, cast out Satan and drew all human beings to himself (Jn 12:31-32), so that they would walk in harmony towards the eschatological coming and

transcendent destination of God's reign.

The reign of God was already present and operating in the person of Jesus during his earthly ministry and is now even more present, because through his glorification he now exercises the power to encompass all time and space and every nation on earth and share his Holy Spirit with his disciples (see Jn 20:22-23; Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-20), in order to strengthen us to make this mystery of God's reign a reality of human history.

The full and perfect realization of God's reign had to take place at the end of human history, precisely because until that time the salvation and harmony it brings must reach all human beings in one way or another; and the completion of Christ's work will not be realized until he comes again to raise the dead to everlasting life, judge the whole of humankind from beginning to end, and bring his people to their eternal, transcendent home, where they will live as complete human persons with glorified bodies and souls.

From incarnation to resurrection the life of Christ was characterized by suffering and the cross. It is through his self-emptying, becoming obedient unto death on the cross, that he identified himself in love with the whole of humankind, especially with those most rejected, the weakest and the poorest (Phil 2:6-8). Thus, the cross is the glory of the Suffering Servant and the

power for establishing harmony among humankind.

Jesus, whose birth ushers in "peace to men of good will" (Lk 2:24), is also proclaimed as one "destined to be a sign that is rejected" (Lk 2:34), a sign of contradiction. Jesus was confronted by the evil power of disharmony and division in his very mission to bring about peace and harmony in the world. In Jesus God's love, mercy and forgiveness are manifest for the world so that peoples of all nations, Jews and gentiles alike, can be reconciled to God the heavenly Father and to one another, to become communion of harmony and love. Jesus' teachings and works of mercy and forgiveness, in which he has shown special concern for the poor and oppressed, for the sinners and for the gentiles, became on the one hand a sign of controversy and rejection for those who questioned his authority (Lk 20:1-2), and on the other hand brought crowds of people close to him and to the heavenly Father.

Even Jesus' claim as Christ typified by the suffering servant of the cross (Lk 9:18-20; 44-45; 18:31-34) appears at first instance as a sign of contradiction for those who were very close to him, his disciples; yet through the glory of the cross as manifested in the resurrection the disciples were strengthened by Jesus to become a community of fellowship and love.

The Pauline writings present harmony in terms of reconciliation and recapitulation in Christ. Human beings stand in a state of broken relationship and must be reconciled to God. This has been done by God through the death and resurrection of Christ. To express this idea, Paul uses the term *katallaseein*, which means a change from the estrangement to friendship with God.

Reconciliation is God's work of grace. Before the coming of grace human beings were under the sway of sin (Rom 1-3). But God through Christ brought about change. Human beings now have peace with God (Rom 5:1-11), and are freed from sin, death and the law of Moses (Rom 5:12-7:25). In the new state human beings have been empowered by the Spirit of God and have become the children of God (Rom 8). Since they were unable to reconcile themselves with God, God himself brought about the reconciliation of human beings with himself and also among the peoples themselves. This is the great work that God does in favor of the world. When human beings were in sin and estranged from God, God was reconciling the world. This is the Good News, that God has sent Christ into the world to reconcile the world and has entrusted his ministry of reconciliation (*katallage*) to the Church. Through this, people become a new creation (2 Cor 5:16-23).

In the Johannine perspective Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29) and to give humankind life in abundance (Jn 10:10). Sin is death, while life is love, harmony and communion (1 Jn 3:4). The reality of sin and death is manifested in disharmony, resulting in division of humanity into rival groups, always tempted by hatred, contempt, injustice, scorn, exploitation, racism, murder, war, etc. (1 Jn 3:15). Jesus Christ through his glorification (death and resurrection) destroyed the power of sin (Jn 12:31-33); 1 Jn 3:5-8) and gathered into one the children of God who were scattered by sin (Jn 11:51-52).

Pentecost was the culmination of Christ's redemptive work of restoring the harmony of humankind. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit, with the bond of unity and harmony, and they began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Every nation under heaven was present among those who heard the apostle speak in each one's native language (Acts 2:4-6). This was a historic sign that the disharmony of humankind, manifested in the confusion of language at Babel, is now remedied, and that the way to harmony of the whole humanity has been decisively opened.

While cherishing the theological traditions which we have inherited from the past, genuine efforts are being made to reread the Christian Revelation, especially the Gospels, in our Asian religio-cultural and socio-political contexts. Asian theology, which is also at the service of revelation and guided by the Spirit, must be encouraged to rediscover and articulate anew the Church's faith in Jesus Christ as the One sent by the Father to reconcile, restore and recapitulate the whole universe. That is to say, we must evolve a Cosmic Christology of harmony. Only by basing itself on such a Christology will the theology of the Church go beyond its institutional concerns to understand the Church essentially as a centrifugal Church, open to the whole universe and present in and for the universe (Cosmic Ecclesiology). Only with such an ecclesiological vision will our concern for religio-cultural and socio-political realities broaden from an ecclesio-central focus to a truly theocentric focus.

If we can speak at all about the Church's mission of harmony and about a missiology, its target of commitment and action has to be, not an ecclesial target, but that eschatological fulfillment that is coterminous us with final harmony and peace in the world.⁷⁶

12.2 Jesus Christ, the Source of Harmony

The notion of harmony, though not the term itself, is a major theme of Christianity. Like "peace," the term can express the sum total of salvation offered by God through Jesus Christ. Christianity teaches a threefold harmony: harmony with God, among humans, and with the whole universe. Union with a personal God is viewed as the source of all genuine harmony. Lao Tzu's Tao is impersonal. Confucian teaching does not insist on a personal relationship with Tien. Christianity presents a God who is clearly personal even though the concept of God finds a transpersonal understanding in the mystical tradition. A harmonious relationship with this personal God is the basis of all proper relations among humans and with the world.

To prove this immense love for mankind, God gave Jesus Christ to the world so that men and women might become God's children by participating in Jesus' filial relationship with God. This filial relationship is the essence of Christian existence. The Christian's filial relationship with God necessarily implies relationship with others as brothers and sisters. For this reason, the one Christian commandment of love bears a twofold aspect: love of God and love of neighbor. Negation of love is the capital sin in Christian life. In complete surrender to the Father and total dedication to his fellow humans, Christ is the supreme example of this twofold love and the source of harmony between God and humans.

In addition to the Biblical teaching of harmony of God and humans, St. Paul teaches harmony with the whole creation, especially through the ideal of "recapitulation" — putting all things under Christ as head. Unfortunately, due to their anthropocentric emphasis, Christians have for too long neglected the cosmic dimension of the Christian vocation. In our time, contemporary theologians have restored the idea of a cosmic Christ and stressed

12.3 Universal Harmony Is in Jesus Christ

As Christians, we derive our strength and motivation for the pursuit of harmony from our faith in God, the Creator of heaven and earth and all the peoples inhabiting it, from our faith in Christ who reconciles, and the Spirit who unifies us by dwelling in us and among us. The marvelous mystery of unity and communion of the Trinity is a model, as well as a powerful

challenge, in our efforts to create harmony in all areas of life.

It is this grand design of God for universal harmony which we Christians experience in the person, life and teaching of Jesus Christ. His proclamation of the Reign of God embodies God's plan in creation, for it points to the gathering of all peoples and nations into one family as brothers and sisters under the Fatherhood of God. For the attainment of this goal, we need to pass through the process of struggle and conflict against the powers of sin, evil and darkness with which our individual lives and collective existence in all its structured expressions are characterized. By undergoing this paschal experience in the footsteps of Christ, we will be able to taste and savor justice, peace and joy (2 Cor 14:17), the fruits of God's reign, and be truly, in our turn, reconcilers like Christ who "broke down the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end" (Eph 2:15-17; cf. Col 1:20)

It is our unshakeable hope in the unity of the entire mankind, originating from our faith that impels us Christians, to commit ourselves unreservedly to the creation of a harmonious world and society, and indeed to pursue this goal jointly with brothers and sisters of other faiths in Asia. We feel ever more pressingly urged by the Spirit who creates us into a Church—a fellowship or communion in Christ in service of the unity of the entire humankind. While we are being spurred on by faith and hope, we are at the same time painfully aware of the divisions in our Christian communities in Asia on the basis of caste, class, race or language. Carrying these wounds in our body, we wish to heal, in all humility and in a spirit of service, the wounds of a divided world.⁷⁸

12.4 Harmony in the Reign of God

For the Christians, creation itself is seen as the victory of harmony over chaos. The sinfulness and egoism of the humans introduce not only death, but also disharmony into the world, between the humans and nature, between people themselves, and between people and God. God, however, promises to re-establish harmony in the universe through his Son Jesus Christ and through the Spirit. This harmony is seen as the Reign of God or

the reconciliation of all things. Christians are learning an inclusive vision of the Reign of God as wider than the visible Church. In Asia, they have also been collaborating with people of other faiths and ideologies in the promotion of the Reign of God, overcoming the hesitations and fears of the past. They follow the way of Christ in self-sacrificing love and self-emptying service, and look forward to the newness of the creative Spirit, which can call them to prophetic action.⁷⁹

12.5 Vision of Christ and Harmony

But the Son of God who created all things in the beginning (en arche) was incarnate in the person of Jesus to "save the work of his hands" (St. Irenaeus), and to restore human beings in the divine image. He empowers humanity to exercise freedom in a way which serves God's gracious activity for the integration and transfiguration of all reality.

According to patristic tradition this renewing work of Christ in the Spirit dynamically moves creation to its full realization in the *eschaton*, when it shares in the glory of the Creator and Savior, through human beings; a growing communion with God, which is sharing in the Holy Spirit. In virtue of the Spirit, people try to imitate God's saving justice by caring for

their neighbors, all human beings, as well as the material world.

Following up Vatican II's faith that the Holy Spirit is present in the universe (see GS, no. 11), and sustains the dialogue of salvation by working through the signs of the times (see GS, no. 4), FABC documents repeatedly emphasize the enlightening and vivifying action of the Spirit, who in ways only known to God, leads people of other faiths to participation in Christ's

Paschal Mystery (see GS, no. 22).

The First FABC International Theological Colloquium at Pattaya describes Jesus Christ as "breaking down social barriers encrusted in customs and traditions and entrenched in social structures (no. 28);" "the face of Jesus as reconciliation and peace" as having special appeal, calling the Church community to be "the sacrament... of the communion with God and with humanity" brought by Jesus.

Emphatically, FABC VI also pointed to Jesus Christ, "bringer of har-

mony," who restores human communion.

He breaks down barriers set up by greed, pride, discrimination, lopsided social norms, and even religious distortions. Outcasts become sisters and brothers. Sinners are worthy of compassion. The hungry, the thirsty, the prisoners, the naked bear the divine presence. And God is our Father. In the freedom and communion that Jesus offers, a new creation dawns. The human community is reborn. Indeed the time of fulfillment has come. Life in abundance is in our midst. The Kingdom is here (no. 13.2, ref. Lk 17:21). Since the harmony of the universe finds its origin in the one Creator God, and human harmony should flow from the communion of Father and Son in the Spirit, and ought to be continually nourished by the "circumincession" (*perichoresis*) in divine life, merely human endeavors will never achieve the goal of creating a trustworthy and everlasting harmony among humans and between humans and nature. The enlightening and life-giving Spirit, poured out in the hearts of our sisters and brothers in Asia will make them, together with us, cry out "Abba, Father!" (cf Rom 8:15; Gal 4-6), so that they "be in union with us, as we are in union with the father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1:3).

Jesus Christ has enfleshed himself in humanity in order to break down barriers and create harmonious unity, so that in union with him humans may have life and have it to the full (Jn 10:10). It is Christ, through whom and in whom God has reconciled the world to himself, and thus made humans "a new creation" (2 Cor 5: 16-19). It is the power of unifying and life-giving Spirit who incorporates us with him and makes us grow in him, until he will reveal himself as the Cosmic Christ, under whom as head everything in the heavens and on earth will be brought together (Eph 1:10), and who, in his return, when at the end of time everything is subjected to him, will be subject to God his Father, so that God may be all in all (1 Cor 15:28).

Jesus Christ is continuing his Spirit-filled mission of restoring peace and harmony with God and among humans not only in individuals, nor only within the fellowship of his disciples, who through continuing renewal and conversion—by loving one another just as he has loved them—will give proof that they are his disciples (Jn 13:34-35). In virtue of Christ's Spirit of communion in love his disciples are called to be effective signs of union with God and unity of humankind, sacrament in its fullest sense of human harmony. Moreover, in them—stewards (oikonomoi) of God's material world—the attitude of harmony is to become a Christian attitude of respect for Mother Earth, "of whose dust we are made and to whose womb we shall return." It should overflow in active commitment of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.

The community of Christ's disciples, as a tiny minority among the teeming millions of Asia, as a "little flock" (pusillus grex), will never be able to do it alone. They are, with open mind and a humble heart, to recognize in all sisters and brothers, of whatever faith-conviction and culture, fellow wayfarers to God's Reign. It is through a triple dialogue with cultures, with religions and with the poor (FABC I), through a mutually-enriching interchange in its various modes and at various levels, not the least in the dialogue of life with people of other faiths and religious traditions, that Asia Christianity is to strive for human and cosmic harmony in Jesus Christ.

Harmony with our fellow human beings consists in recognizing in others God's image and likeness (Gen 1, 26). This harmony in its supreme form is experienced in Jesus, "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). In

its noblest form it was love of one another as Jesus himself loved his disciples (Jn 13:34-35). This demands an emptying of oneself (*kenosis*) and a wholehearted openness to our neighbors, especially the lowly, as against a

temptation to be egocentric and conceited.

God is the source and summit of all harmony. He is the foundation and the fulfillment of it. Our pilgrimage to God passes through Jesus, our only "way, the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6). With him and under the guidance of the Spirit we are crying in our hearts "Abba, Father" (Gal 4:6), and "Maranatha, come Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:21). Thus, the mystery of the Trinitarian life and love is the pattern of all human community life (GS, 24), leading to final fulfillment.

When sin is understood as the disturbance of the original harmony of creation, and Jesus Christ as the One who was sent to reconcile and reestablish the harmony, attention is drawn to his central message and act, namely, the proclamation of the values of the Reign of God and his Paschal Mystery of life through death. For the values he proclaimed as love, truth, justice and the dignity of the human being, he gave his life, died for them. It was a commitment unto death. In understanding Christ as the sacrament of the new harmony inaugurated by him, we should understand ourselves as his disciples in our situation for these values.

If the conflictual realities of our Asian situation demand a self-giving love, a courageous stance for truth and justice and dignity of the human person, then Asian Christians cannot but be active agents for love, truth, justice and human dignity. Christ as the sacrament of the new harmony can

be realized only by our courageous witness to these values.

The values of the Kingdom—love, mercy, forgiveness, justice, compassion, unity, peace, as proclaimed by Jesus Christ—are the seeds of the new harmony inaugurated by him. And in order to sow the seeds, or rather offer them to others in all humility, devoid of any triumphalism, requires a Church that is harmonious within itself.

The vision of Christ as the sacrament of the new harmony, and of the Church as its servant-sacrament, excludes all forms of conformism to conflictual situations and compromise with values contrary to love, truth, justice and the dignity of human person.⁸⁰

13. Spirit Of Jesus

13.1 The Spirit and Christ Are Inseparable

Asian realities and the impulse of Vatican II urge us to develop a deeper understanding of the Spirit of God. It is the same Spirit, who has been active in the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus and in the Church, who was active amongst all peoples before the Incarnation and is active amongst the nations, religious and peoples of Asia today. Clear signs of this presence of the Spirit amongst the living faiths of Asia are the living

out of the moral code (patience, sincerity, respect, etc.), innate humanness, the common concern to alleviate hunger and poverty, and the intense desire

for world peace with justice.

We affirm that any effort towards an experience of immediate access to the Spirit has to be seen in relation to Jesus Christ, to whom the Spirit bears witness. What is done in the name of the Holy Spirit must be in keeping with the life, teachings and mission of Jesus Christ. Christ promised his disciples to send the Holy Spirit as their Counselor, Intercessor and Advocate. What the Spirit does, and continues to do, is inseparable from what Christ said and did.⁸¹

13.2 Discipleship Is the Following of Jesus

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

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

Intermingling with reality and inseparable from it, discipleship is lived in the community of the Church. Christian spirituality is ecclesial and communitarian. It emerges out of our incorporation into the Body, the People of God, realized and expressed in Baptism and Cofirmation, Communion with Christ moves from an individual sharing in his suffering, death and resurrection to the Paschal Mystery as lived concretely by the community—a community that is struggling against evil, suffering the pains and anguish of a people, dying and reaching out for new life. Rootedness in Christ means communion with him and his apostles.

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

by the simple words "love of neighbor."

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

among us in his act of utter self-gift for the world.

The memory of Jesus brings the disciple to seek the Reign of God (cf. Lumen Gentium, 81) in the world, to be poor, to thirst for justice, to trust completely in the Father as little children do, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven. Seeking the Kingdom that Jesus proclaimed is really to build it in the concrete experiences of the social, political, economic, religious and cultural world of Asia. In Jesus, the Reign of God began; he came that we might have life to the full. The struggle for fullness of life in the world is a seeking of the Kingdom. Discipleship then is not at all a withdrawal from the world, but an immersion into the wellspring of Asian reality so that it might have life. Communion, solidarity, compassion, justice, love are keynotes of a spirituality of discipleship. And since Jesus came to reconcile sinners with the Father, to remove divisions among people—that all may be one—this impulse from the Spirit of Jesus to be reconciled, to be one, is an essential ingredient of the spirituality of the People of God.

Incarnational, Christocentric, biblical, sacramental, ecclesial and communitarian, the spirituality of the People of God is a journey in the Spirit of Jesus into the Kingdom of the Father; it is a journey of discipleship, of love and service, after the pattern of the dying and rising of the Jesus himself. From the above, it is clear that fundamentally there is but one Christian spirituality, namely that which is common to all disciples of Jesus in his Church, whether lay or clerical, priests, bishops or Religious. If a specific lay spirituality can be identified, it is in the sense that lay people are called to live their discipleship of Jesus and share in his mission according to their proper lay state in the Church. Stress must be laid here on the secular character of the lay vocation and mission. While through various charisms and ministries lay people are increasingly called today to share in the Church's inner life, this must not overshadow the specific character of their witness and action in the world. Lay people are sent by Jesus himself to infuse the

Gospel values into earthly realities and human society. The Christian witness and action must penetrate the various dimensions of their life—familial, social, professional and political. Only then will they respond to their vocation and mission according to the Spirit of the Gospel. To give such a response is what lay Christian spirituality is all about (4.8.8). Even more vividly than before, we realize that the path we all have to take as God's people is similar to the Paschal Mystery of Jesus, a journey to live through the cross in courage and hope. The following of Jesus is the following of him "whom they have pierced," the Alpha and Omega (cf. Jn 19:37; Zech 12:10; Rev 1:8) of all journeys undertaken in faith.

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

be afraid" (Jn 6:20).82

13.3 Jesus Christ - The Center of Our Faith

Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, is at the center of our Christian faith. In him, God's age-long self-manifestation through human history has come to a climax. In Jesus, God has personally entered human history and has become a member of the human race. This total identification with us of the Son of God is ordained to sharing with us his Sonship of the Father. Jesus accomplished this mission throughout his earthly life, and singularly through the paschal mystery of his death and resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The paschal mystery in which the Christevent culminates thus ushers in the renewal of creation and marks the decisive step in the establishment by God of his Kingdom on earth. It has cosmic

implications and universal significance.

The Kingdom of God is therefore universally present and at work. Wherever men and women open themselves to the transcendent divine mystery which impinges upon them, and go out of themselves in love and service of fellow humans, there the reign of God is at work. As BIRA IV/1 puts it: "Where God is accepted, where Gospel values are lived, where man is respected... there is the Kingdom." (II/1; FAPA II, 423). In all such cases people respond to God's offer of grace through Christ in the Spirit and enter into the Kingdom through an act of faith. The document, "Dialogue and Proclamation (DP)" explains that, "concretely, it will be in the sincere practice of what is good in their own religious traditions and by following the dictates of their conscience the members of other religions respond positively to God's invitation and receive salvation in Jesus Christ, even while they do not recognize or acknowledge him as their savior". (cf. AG 3, 9, 11; DP 29).

This goes to show that the Reign of God is a universal reality, extending far beyond the boundaries of the Church. It is the reality of salvation in Jesus Christ, in which Christians and others share together. It is the funda-

mental "mystery of unity" which unites us more deeply than differences in religious allegiance are able to keep us apart. Seen in this manner, a "regnocentric" approach to mission theology does not in any way threaten the Christocentric perspective of our faith. On the contrary, "regnocentrism" calls for "Christocentrism," and vice versa, for it is in Jesus Christ and through the Christ-event that God has established his Kingdom upon the earth and in human history (cf. Rm 17-18).

13.4 Christ - the Source of Our Ministry

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 lilfe given to us in Jesus (cf. Jn 10:10). It is Christ who is the source, center and summit of our 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.⁸⁴

13.5 Strengthened by the Spirit of Jesus

The enormity of the task put before us and the poor response which we have given to it should not lead us to discouragement. We are comforted by the thought that in her evangelizing mission the Church is not left to her own resources, but is enlivened and strengthened by the Spirit of Jesus the Evangelizer who in his goodness has chosen us as his instruments. The persuasion of his abiding presence fills us with joy and spurs us on in the fulfillment of our mission. We put our trust in the Lord who sent forth his disciples into the world with the words: "Do not be afraid, little flocks... I am with you always to the close of the age."

13.5 The Prayer of Jesus - "May Your Kingdom Come"

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

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

because of the promise of the Father.

We believe that he is calling us to be instruments of his work of liberation. The spirit of Jesus enables us to discern his call, and we want to listen to his voice today. Our hope based in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus urges us to discover how we can be the instruments of God, the harbingers of the

13.6 Authentic Encounters with the Holy Spirit

Any discernment of the Holy Spirit, furthermore, stands in relation to the Church's memory and interpretation of the reality of Jesus Christ. The Church's accumulated wisdom and insights into Christ even have exerted a formative and normative influence upon the life and mission/ministry of the Christian community. They also have, in some instances, earned the respect and a measure of assent from those beyond the fold of the Church. In fact, they are definitive reference points for testing the authenticity of contemporary encounters with the Holy Spirit.⁸⁷

FOOTNOTES

- Statement of the Third Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs [BIRA IV/3] on the Theology of Dialogue, November 2-7, 1968, Hong Kong.
- Evangelization in Modern Day Asia, Statement and Recommendation of the First Plenary Assembly, April 27, 1974, Taipei, Taiwan.
- 3 Ibid.
- Letter of Participants of the Second Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate, November 30, 1980, Trivandrum, Kerala, India.
- 5 BIRA IV/3, November 2-7, 1986, Hong Kong.
- Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church, Conclusions, March 5, 1977, Hong Kong.
- The Church—A Community of Faith in Asia, Statement and Recommendations of the FABC Third Plenary Assembly (FABC III), October 28, 1982, Sampran, Thailand.
- Evangelization in Asia Today, Letter of Participants of the First Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate [BIMA I], August 24-31, 1988, Suwon, South Korea.
- 9 Ibid
- Statement of the Second Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs (BIRA II), November 20, 1979, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Letter of Participants of the First Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate [BIMA I], July 7, 1978, Baguio City, Philippines.
- 12 BIMA I, August 24 31, 1988, Suwon, South Korea.
- Letter of Participants and Syllabus of "Mission Concerns" of the Third Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate [BIMA III], August 25, 1982, Chingshan, Changhua, Taiwan.
- BIRA III, November 20, 1982, Madras, India.
- BIMA I, July 27, 1978, Baguio City, Philippines.
- BIMA III, August 25, 1982, Chingshan, Changhua, Taiwan.
- 17 "Contemplation and Compassion," Integral Spirituality for Faith Encounters in Asia. Report of Faith Encounters in Social Action (FEISA I), July 6 17, 1994, Pattaya City, Thailand.
- BIMA III, August 25, 1982, Chingshan, Changhua, Taiwan.
- Onclusions of the Theological Consultation, FABC Office of Evangelization, November 10, 1991, Hua Hin, Thailand.
- ²⁰ BIMA I, August 24-31, 1988, Suwon, South Korea.
- Journeying Together in Faith with the Filipino Migrant Workers in Asia. Final Statement of the Symposium on Filipino Migrant "Workers in Asia," September 11-18, 1993, Hong Kong.
- BIRA IV/3, November 2-7, 1986, Hong Kong.
- ²³ Letter of Participants of the Second Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate (BIMA II), November 30, 1980, Trivandrum, Kerala, India.
- 24 Statement and Recommendations of the First Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs

(BIRA I), October 18, 1979, Sampran, Thailand.

- 25 Statement of the Seventh Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs (BIRA IV/7) on the Theology of Dialogue, October 28 - November 3, 1988, Tagaytay City, Philippines.
- Statement of the Final Assembly of the Twelfth Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs (BIRA IV/12) on the Theology of Dialogue, February 21-26, 1991, Hua Hin, Thailand.
- Statement of the Sixth Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs (BIRA IV/6) on the Theology of Dialogue, July 2-10, 1987, Singapore.

BIMA I, July 27, 1978, Baguio City, Philippines.

- Conclusions of the Theological Consultation, November 10, 1991, Hua Hin, Thailand.
- Message and Recommendations of the Participants of the Consultation on Christian Presence Among Muslims in Asia, November 26, 1983, Nav-Sadhana, Varanasi, India.
- Journeying Together Toward the Third Millennium, Statement of the Fifth FABC Plenary Assembly, July 27, 1990, Bandung, Indonesia.
- 32 BIRA III, November 20, 1982, Madras, India.
- 33 Ibid.
- ³⁴ BIRA II, November 20, 1979, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- 35 Final Statement and Recommendations of the Fifth Bishops' Institute for Social Action (BISA V), May 21-June 1, 1979, Baguio City, Philippines.
- 36 BIMA I, August 24-31, 1988, Suwon, Korea.
- Working for Harmony in the Contemporary World: A Hindu-Christian Dialogue, October 24-28, 1995, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, India.
- FEISA I, July 6 7, 1994, Pattaya City, Thailand.
- ³⁹ Final Reflections of the Third Bishops' Institute for Social Action (BISA III), November 3-17, 1975, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Statement of the Third Bishops' Institute for the Lay Apostolate (BILA III), June 23-28, 1986, Singapore.
- 41 Asian Christian Perspectives on Harmony. A Document of the Theological Advisory Commission of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, March 1996.
- 42 Ibid.
- ⁴³ Final Statement of the Tenth Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs (BIRA IV/10) on the Theology of Dialogue, June 24-30, 1988, Sukabumi, Indonesia.
- 44 Asian Christian Perspectives on Harmony, March 1996.
- ⁴⁵ The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World of Asia, Statement of the FABC Fourth Plenary Assembly (FABC IV), September 16-25, 1986, Tokyo, Japan.
- Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church, March 5, 1977, Hong Kong.
- 47 Ibid
- 48 Conclusions of the Theological Consultation, November 10, 1991, Hua Hin, Thailand.
- 49 Message of the Delegates, International Congress on Mission, December 7, 1979, Manila, Philippines.
- Message and Resolutions of the Asian Bishops' Meeting, November 29, 1970, Manila, Philippines
- 51 Asian Christian Perspectives on Harmony, March 1996.
- Prayer The Life of the Church of Asia, Statement and Recommendations of the Second Plenary Assembly, November 25, 1978, Barrackpore, Calcutta, India.
- 53 BIRA IV/12, February 21-26, 1991, Hua Hin, Thailand.
- 54 Conclusions of the Theological Consultation, November 10, 1991, Hua Hin, Thailand.
- 55 Evangelization in Modern Day Asia, Statement and Recommendations of the FABC First Plenary Assembly (FABC I), April 27, 1974, Taipei, Taiwan.
- 56 Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church, March 5, 1977, Hong Kong.
- 57 BIMA II. November 30, 1980, Trivandrum, Kerala, India.
- 58 BIMA III, August 25, 1982, Chingshan, Changhua, Taiwan.
- 59 Letter of the Participants of the Second Bishops' Institute for the Lay Apostolate (BILA II), May 25-31, 1986, Bangalore, India.
- 60 Conclusions of the Theological Consultation, November 10, 1991, Hua Hin, Thailand.
- Asian Christian Perspectives on Harmony. March 1996.

62 BIMA III, August 25, 1982, Chingshan, Changhua, Taiwan.

FABC IV, September 16-25, 1986, Tokyo, Japan.

- BILA III, June 23-28, 1986, Singapore.
- Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church, March 5, 1977, Hong Kong.

66 BILA III, June 23-28, 1986, Singapore.

Message of the Delegates, December 7, 1979, Manila, Philippines.

BIRA IV/12, February 21-26, 1991, Hua Hin, Thailand.

69 BIRA IV/3, November 2-7, 1986, Hong Kong.

Conclusions of the Theological Consultation, November 10, 1991, Hua Hin, Thailand.

Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church, March 5, 1977, Hong Kong.

FEISA I, July 6-17, 1994, Pattaya City, Thailand.

BIMA I, July 27, 1978, Baguio City, Philippines.

Our Pilgrimage of Hope, Asian Movement for Christian Unity. Joint Project of CCA-FABC,
March 12-16, 1996. Cheung Chau, Hong Kong.
PISA V. May 21. June 1, 1070. Repuis City. Philipping.

BISA V, May 21 - June 1, 1979, Baguio City, Philippines.

Asian Christian Perspectives on Harmony, March 1996.

Final Statement of Taoist and Confucian Contributions to Harmony in East Asia: Christians in Dialogue with Confucian Thought and Taoist Spirituality. April 15 - 19, 1996, Tienti Chiao Research Center, Nant'ou Hsien, Taiwan.

Final Statement of Eleventh Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs (BIRA IV/11) on the Theology of Dialogue, July 1-7, 1988, Sukabumi, Indonesia.

A Call to Harmony, Buddhist and Christians in Dialogue (BIRA V/2), FABC Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, April 25-29, 1994, Pattaya, Thailand.

Asian Christian Perspectives on Harmony, March 1996.

FABC V, July 27, 1990, Bandung, Indonesia.

82 FABC IV, September 16-25, 1986, Tokyo, Japan.

83 Conclusions of the Theological Consultation, November 10, 1991, Hua Hin, Thailand.

- Walking Humbly, Acting Justly, Loving Tenderly in Asia. A Statement of the Colloquium on Social Doctrine of the Church in the Context of Asia, January 20-24, 1992, Pattaya City, Thailand.
- 85 BIMA II, November 30, 1980, Trivandrum, Kerala, India.

FABC IV, September 16-25, 1986, Tokyo, Japan.

FABC V, July 27, 1990, Bandung, Indonesia.

Published April 1999