

Seventh Plenary Assembly: Workshop Discussion Guide

THE ASIAN IMAGE OF JESUS
Theological, Biblical, Catechetical & Liturgical Renewal

by
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I. INTRODUCTION

"Christ himself wills to be ...even more Asian"(John Paul II)

1. The theme of this workshop is one of the important concerns consistently expressed by the FABC for over a quarter century, and both by the Synod for Asia and the Post-Synodal Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia* of John Paul II. The latter uses the word 'culture' and the related terms 'cultural' and 'inculturation' 101 times, thus giving a thrust for the future of the Church and her mission in Asia in the Third Millennium.

2. The fervent appeal made by Pope John Paul II in his message to the III FABC Plenary Assembly (Bangkok, October 1982) contains, in unambiguous terms, the agenda for the Churches in Asia: to be and to present the Asian image of Christ.

Jesus Christ is truly alive in Asia.... As shepherd(s) of the flock, you are endowed with a pastoral charism... to help your people express the Catholic faith in the rich context of their Asian cultures. In the members of his one body, the single Church... the undivided **Christ himself wills to be and to become, even more, Asian.**¹

3. Becoming authentically Asian is inseparably connected with our mission of being Church in Asia and presenting Jesus with an Asian face. For,

A faith, which has not become inculturated is a faith which has not been fully received, which has not been completely thought

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through, which has not been faithfully lived.

These words of John Paul II contained in a letter he wrote to Cardinal Secretary of State (20th May 1982) express clearly the indispensable necessity of inculturation of faith in all its aspects.² The last part of the sentence, "faith...which has not been fully lived", draws our urgent attention to the link between the life of the Church and the Asian image of Christ in our life-style and mission. It should serve as a motto, a constant reminder for the Church in the task of total or all-round inculturation.

4. The "key areas of inculturation" identified by the Synod Fathers are "theological reflection, liturgy, the formation of priests and religious, catechesis and spirituality".³ We shall reflect on the emerging challenges and tasks of inculturation in some of these key areas. Even though we know about the need for inculturation, we begin by becoming aware of the split between the Gospel and culture by entering into the experiences of people, both within and outside the church.

5. It would be helpful to feel the pain of the split between the Gospel and culture in Asia. For "The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time...."⁴ The following testimonies, in the context of our discussion, will help us get in touch with the struggle of the Asian people. The experiences described, however, are not related to all the dimensions of the context of Asia. They are only meant to evoke the experience of struggle and grief in the heart of Asia.

"Not under the Same Roof"

6. Mai Thanh, a Vietnamese writer's personal experience poignantly epitomises the Asian drama of the split between the Gospel and Christianity.

It was the autumn of 1946. Dark clouds covered the sky of my country, broken here and there by the gloomy grumbling of cannons: it was the war between the French army and a Vietnam which had proclaimed its independence the previous autumn under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, founder of Indo-Chinese Communism and President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. I was eighteen. Motivated by the certainty of finding the light of my life in Christ, I took the decision to ask my father for permission to receive Christian baptism.

'That's impossible,' my father replied, visibly shaken. 'If you want to remain my daughter, swear to me that you will never commit this impiety.' I kept silent.

'If you are resolved to become a Catholic, we cannot live under the same roof. You have to choose: one of us will have to leave this house.' I didn't dare to speak or move. Papa took his umbrella and went out of the house without saying a word.⁵

"Conversion must not mean denationalisation"

7. In 1925, Ganhihi wrote in *Young India* about the need for Christians to act fast in inculturating Christianity. His insistent plea 'conversion should not mean denationalisation' seems to echo all over Asia today.

Years ago, I met the late Kali Charan Bannerjee. Had I not known before I went there that he was a Christian, I should certainly not have noticed from the outward appearance of his home that he was one. It was no different from an ordinary modern Hindu home - simple and meagre in furniture. The great man was dressed like an ordinary un-Europeanized Hindu Bengali. I know that there is a marvellous change coming over Christian Indians. There is on the part of a large number of them a longing to revert to original simplicity, a longing to belong to the nation and to serve it, but the process is too slow. There need be no waiting. It requires not much effort. The late Principal Rudra and I used often to discuss this evil tendency. I well remember how he used to deplore it. I am offering a tribute to the memory of a dead friend when I inform the reader that he used often to express his grief that it was too late in life for him to change some of the unnecessary European habits to which he was brought up...

"Conversion must not mean denationalisation... Conversion, therefore, should mean a life of greater dedication to one's own country, greater surrender to God, greater self-purification"⁶

Cultural Alienation

8. Any self-complacency that church image, and therefore the face of Jesus in Asia, is what it should be is very dangerous for the future of the church's mission. It betrays a deep malaise of cultural alienation, which is generally widespread in Asian churches. To be culturally alienated is to become a stranger to one's own cultural identity. Cultural alienation is to think that one has no particular culture or to feel out of place in one's own original culture and to feel comfortable in an alien culture just because one has been made to grow up in that culture.

Some Characteristics of Cultural Alienation

9. * Not to be aware of one's own authentic cultural identity
- * To have a false identity by mistaking another cultural identity for

one's own

- * To feel at ease and comfortable in a false identity
- * To affirm and defend one's false identity as one's own real identity
- * Not to feel the real need for jettisoning oneself from the false identity and finding one's own genuine identity
- * To think that since most nations are multi-cultural, it is better to have a so-called universal culture(which in fact does not exist), which is generally a foreign culture.
- * To consider one's own people as strangers and speak in terms of "they" and "we"
- * To be at ease in habits of insensitivity to the cultural ethos of the people of the land.
- * To continue to do certain things that jar on others in the wider cultural community to which one actually belongs.⁷

Alienation can be at work at various levels - of individuals, groups, wider ecclesial community etc. There are also various forms of alienation in this regard: cultural, social, theological, ecclesiological, liturgical etc., which we need not elaborate here.

A Prophetic Stance

10. A prophetic stance on the part of the Church in favour of inculturation can take place if we experience the agony of the split between the Gospel and culture particularly in our continent. For, prophets, to use a phrase of Abraham Heschel, are those who experience the experiences of the people. These days we are witnessing what might be described, at least partially, an angry and even violent protest against this split in some parts of Asia (e.g.India). Ecclesia in Asia refers to the concerns expressed in this regard during the Asian Synod when it says:

In the opinion of the Synod Fathers, the difficulty [of proclaiming Jesus] is compounded by the fact that Jesus is often perceived as foreign to Asia. It is paradoxical that most Asians tend to regard Jesus - born on Asian soil - as a Western rather than an Asian figure.

It is in this context that the challenge of "rediscovering the Asian countenance of Jesus" becomes an urgent task.⁸

11. We shall now look at the challenge of inculturation in the areas of theological, biblical, catechetical, liturgical renewal in order to "be open to the new and surprising ways in which the face of Jesus might be presented in Asia".⁹

II. INCULTURATION OF THEOLOGY

1. Thirty years ago, in their very first meeting at Manila, November, 1970, the Bishops of Asia made a historic commitment "to develop an indigenous theology and to do what we can so that the life and message of the Gospel may be ever more incarnate in the rich historic cultures of Asia..."¹⁰ The vision of an inculturated theology found therein is holistic incorporating the triple dialogue with religions, cultures and the poor of Asia. Asian theology is visualised as emerging from within this Asian context, in a dialogic process.¹¹

2. The Aim of such Inculturation is:

- "so that the life and message of the Gospel may be ever more incarnate in the rich historic cultures of Asia,
- so that Asian Christianity may help to promote all that is 'authentically human in these cultures'"¹²

Dialogue with cultures and with the religions in the context of the social realities of Asia is like the two inseparable sides of the one coin. This mutual relationship is important as we engage ourselves in discerning the paths toward a new Asian identity of the Church.

The Final Statement of the first Plenary Assembly of FABC, 1974, states:

Once again in relation to the tasks we have emphasised, the construction of a genuinely Asian theological reflection must be given a special priority. For the discernment of theological imperatives and the formulation of theological insights and principles, living contact with concrete Asian realities is necessary, and thus the collaboration of the entire local church, in dialogic process, is called for. All this is especially relevant in view of that contemporary search for meaning we have earlier mentioned."¹³

3. Asian Image of Jesus

'Becoming' and presenting the Asian image of Jesus boils down to rigorously applying the principle of inculturation in all areas of Church's life. Inculturation should be viewed as integral to Christian life, affecting every aspect of the life and mission of the Church. It is a collective task of the whole Christian community. Therefore the task of genuine inculturation does not belong to a particular expert group in the Church. However, "experts in sacred and secular disciplines have an important role to play in the process of inculturation. But the process must involve the entire People of God, since the life of the Church as a whole must show forth the faith which is being proclaimed and appropriated".¹⁴ Theological inculturation should

accompany the unfolding of the life and mission of the Church. As Ad Genes puts it, "Theological investigation must be necessarily stirred up in each major socio-cultural area, as it is called....A fresh scrutiny will be brought to bear on the deeds and words which God has made known ..." is called for.¹⁵

4. Inculturated Christology - a priority

Theological inculturation, which must provide the basis and impetus for such a process, should give priority to the development of a contextualised Asian Christology. Ecclesia in Asia lists theological inculturation, especially of Christology, as the first among the key areas of inculturation: "The Synod expressed encouragement to theologians in their delicate work of developing an inculturated theology, especially in the area of Christology. They noted that this theologising is to be carried out with courage, in faithfulness to the Scriptures and to the Church's Tradition, in sincere adherence to the Magisterium and with an awareness of pastoral realities. I too urge theologians to work in a spirit of union with the Pastors and the people..."¹⁶

In this Christological venture it is the person of Jesus and his mission that must be the over-arching concern. For as the Second Report at the Synod for Asia expressed it, "All the Synod Fathers agreed that there must be a new way of presenting Jesus Christ to the people's of Asia. It is the person of Jesus Christ who needs to be presented and not doctrines about him".¹⁷ The Asian Churches have to take up this challenge with a courage similar to that of the early churches which undertook with creativity the task of being and presenting the image of Jesus Christ culturally rooted in their own contexts.

5. Different Images of Christ at work in Asia

It might be helpful to take a critical look at the different images of Jesus which have been presented to Asia over the years. They can be described in very broad terms as:

"the Euro-ecclesiastical Christ of the official church; the non-Western Christ of scholars and intellectuals". And the emerging concern of Asian theology and praxis today is to present "the Asian Christ". (See the footnote for an explanation of these terms).¹⁸

6. Images appealing to the heart

There is an urgent need to break out of the mould which has made us 'prisoners of the head', rational and intellectual in the presentation of the person Christ. Our catechetical texts, by and large, perpetuate this approach. Some Images of Jesus which would appeal to the heart of Asia, to "the sensibilities of the Asian peoples" were identified by the Synod: "Among them were Jesus Christ as the Teacher of Wisdom, the Healer, the Liberator, the Spiritual Guide, the Enlightened One, the Compassionate Friend of

the Poor, the Good Samaritan, the Good Shepherd, the Obedient One".¹⁹

The synoptic Gospels present the face of Jesus in a gradual unfolding, being faithful to the pedagogy of Jesus himself. For

a progressive contextual presentation of the mystery of Jesus Christ, starting with the discovery of the man Jesus during his earthly life and passing on gradually to the elaboration of the mystery of his person as it is proposed in the New Testament in the light of the paschal experience of the disciples, corresponds to the pedagogy which Jesus himself used to make himself progressively understood by his followers. The Church tradition has moreover followed the same pedagogy in the way she ascended from the meaning of what "Jesus is for us" to the comprehension of "who the Christ is in himself". In the pedagogy of the Christian faith "Jesuology" must precede "Christology".²⁰

It is in this context an assessment of our presentation of the face of Christ in the past and its impact on Asian 'eyes' is important. Why such efforts of the past did not meet with acceptance?

"Such efforts have not been in vain. There is no denying that they still occupy an important place and continue to make a valuable contribution towards an Indian, and an Asian presentation of the mystery of Jesus Christ. One may nevertheless ask whether their limited success and impact in the field of Christology is not to be attributed partly to the fact that they concerned themselves directly with transposing the doctrine of the God-man rather than with fostering a personal encounter with the man, Jesus of Nazareth. Did not such Christology, in some way, put the cart before the horse? A return to Jesuology was then in order, and is, ... the main concern of the ongoing Christian reflection on Jesus Christ in the Asian context".²¹ Such a Jesuology will be centred first on the person and ministry of Jesus with a clear focus on the reign of God, with his preferential option for the poor. A personal encounter with Jesus will necessarily be related to the reality of the reign of God - its gift and task. It is a focus in which both "regnocentrism and theocentrism" coincide. The FABC insists that the person of Jesus can not be separated from his message and ministry centred on the reign of God.

7. Surprising Ways

Ecclesia in Asia opens up a new horizon for theologising in Asia and calls for an adventurous journey on "surprising ways".

"... the Synod Fathers were well aware of the pressing need of the local Churches in Asia to present the mystery of Christ to their peoples according to their cultural patterns and ways of thinking. They pointed out that such

an inculturation of the faith on their continent involves rediscovering the Asian countenance of Jesus... and identifying ways in which the cultures of Asia can grasp the universal saving significance of the mystery of Jesus and his Church".

"In fact, the proclamation of Jesus Christ can most effectively be made by narrating his story, as the Gospels do. The ontological notions involved, which must always be presupposed and expressed in presenting Jesus, can be complemented by more relational, historical and even cosmic perspectives. The Church, the Synod Fathers noted, must be open to the new and surprising ways in which the face of Jesus might be presented in Asia "²²

8. Go to Galilee : Go to Asia

A return to Asia where the ministry and mystery of Jesus began to unfold gradually is perhaps one of the surprising ways. "Go... to Galilee "(Mk16:7) can in this sense be paraphrased as "go to Asia". What Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-1884) said, more than a century ago, though with a different concern in mind, may be an indication of a path to follow:

"Is not Christ's native land nearer to India than England? Are not Jesus and his apostles and immediate followers more akin to Indian nationality than Englishmen? Why should we, then, travel to a distant country like England, in order to gather truths, which are to be found much nearer our homes? Go to the rising sun in the East, not to the setting sun in the West, if you wish to see Christ in the plenitude of his glory."²³

9. Dialogic Theology

There are several other important aspects related to the question of inculturation of theology. The Fourth Colloquium of Indian Bishops and Theologians, held at the NBCLC, Bangalore in 1998, profiles some features of Indian theologising which can be applied to Asian theologising in general. Asian theologising is primarily an activity of the heart, not of reason alone. Being religious in Asia is to be inter-religious. Doing theology therefore has to be inter-religious in its approach. Dialogue revolves around the sharing of God-experience. Only when theologians enter into contact with the God-experiences of believers of other faiths through sincere dialogue will they be capable of contributing to the emergence of an Asian theology. It is not merely a question of an Asian theology of religions; theology itself has to be inter-religious. The scriptures, traditions, myths and festivals etc do not stand apart. It is all part of the life of the people in Asia. Dialogue is not with religions in the abstract, but with people who live their religious experience. Such dialogic theology is a process of a theologising which is based on the Asian experience of reality which is not linear but spiral and symbolic. Such an approach is inclusive. Conceptual language tends to be exclusive and aggressive, while the symbolic communication, which is the familiar idiom of Asia, is sensitive, inviting, evocative and

inclusive. It stresses the aesthetic more than the conceptual and systematic. Hence it communicates the Good News through narratives, popular celebrations, music, dance, story, poetry, and other art forms.²⁴

10. Primacy of Experience

"For a profound inculturation of theology it is important that new theological methods and ways of interpretation be devised which will reflect the culture and traditions, the mindsets and ways of thought of Asian peoples. In this regard we must single out the place of experience. All Asian philosophical traditions accord particular importance to experience and/or immediate relationship with reality. Thus experience should provide the starting point for any genuine Asian theology. Conceptual elaboration should be firmly rooted in experience. Theological reflection thus enrooted in experience and life, will help our local churches to understand and interpret their faith and express it in authentically creative ways."²⁵

11. Other Issues

The FABC has time and again emphasised the great importance of contemplative approach to spirituality and prayer; mission and ministry in keeping with the thrust of its policy of inculturation of all aspects of the life of the Church.

"Asian thinkers have found the Gospel of John closer to the spirit of Asia, and have been fascinated by the image of Jesus presented in it. The rich symbolism and interiority and the mystical dimension with which the Johannine image of Jesus is presented could be helpful to the bishops for a relevant pastoral praxis in this Asian continent"

Some important questions that the Bishops of Asia need to confront in their effort to promote the theologising toward an Asian face of Jesus are indicated by Fr. Felix Wilfred: "First of all there is the fact of the millions of followers of Jesus Christ in Asia who do not belong to the visible church. Thousands of such people frequent our churches, assist at our religious services, and visit our shrines and pilgrimage centres. Many of them claim to have experienced Jesus Christ in their lives, and others have tried to interpret him. These experiences and interpretations could be of great value. Secondly, there is the pressing question of women. Unfortunately, the Federation has not really faced this issue. The experience of Asian women, discriminated against by traditional society and ruthlessly exploited by modernity, offers perspectives which can take us deeper into the mystery of Jesus Christ and to the heart of his message. Thirdly, there is the issue of religious fundamentalism in Asia, with its serious social consequences: violence, destruction and death. One of the reasons for this is the conflict of claims to absoluteness among the various religious traditions. In this context of general fundamentalism, for an appropriate pastoral praxis it is very

important to rethink the traditional Christian language of presenting Jesus Christ, his person and message in Asia."²⁶

III. BIBLICAL RENEWAL

In our search for the Asian image of Jesus Biblical renewal is of paramount importance. Theological, catechetical and liturgical renewal are to be grounded on it, and acquires validity from it. Biblical renewal in the context of our concern for the Asian image of Christ centres around the issue of inculturation of the Biblical message.

1. Inculturation of the Bible has been carried out from the first centuries, both in the Christian East and in the Christian West, and it has proved very fruitful. However, one can never consider it a task achieved. It must be taken up again and again, in relationship to the way in which cultures continue to evolve. In countries of more recent evangelisation, the problem arises in somewhat different terms. Missionaries, in fact, cannot help bring the Word of God in the form in which it has been inculturated in their own country of origin. New local churches have to make every effort to convert this foreign form of biblical inculturation into another form more closely corresponding to the culture of their own land.²⁷

2. There are two aspects to the process of inculturation of the Biblical message - actualisation and inculturation. Interpretation of the Bible should go beyond the academic analysis and exegesis of the texts of scripture. In order that the Bible may be experienced as the living word of God, the word of life, it is necessary to promote the task of both the actualisation and inculturation of the biblical message.²⁸

3. Actualisation

It consists in re-reading and applying the text in the light of the life-situations of the people in Asia and sincerely seeking to discover the relevant message for our present time.

"By virtue of actualisation, the Bible can shed light upon many current issues: for example, the question of various forms of ministry, the sense of the Church as communion, the preferential option of the poor, liberation theology, the situation of women. Actualisation can also attend to values of which the modern world is more and more conscious, such as the right of the human person, the protection of human life, the preservation of nature, the longing for world peace."²⁹

This focus on the word in the Bible and in life is best achieved in the Basic Christian communities. There the word is listened to and pondered over and prayed in groups in the light of the experiences of the community

and the neighbourhood in view of translating the word into relevant response in the actual context of life. Promotion of such communities who actualise the word of God in the Asian context of life is necessary also from the point of view of the need of the over all aim of the inculturation of the Church. Only such communities can effectively facilitate the encounter between the biblical word and Asia.

"And since they grapple with life-issues in the light of the Word of God, they are able to appropriate personally for themselves the meaning of the Word of God and recognise its concrete challenges and demands. ..Thus BECs become especially potent places and agents of the inculturation of the Gospel. In them the Gospel of Jesus Christ becomes the Gospel of the people."³⁰

4. Inculturation of the Biblical word

The second task, which goes hand in hand with actualisation, is inculturation of the Biblical word. The latter is related to the diversity of people and their varied cultural riches. Underlying this process is the vision that the word of God transcends the limits of the cultural world in which it first manifested itself and it has the potential, like a seed, to be enrooted in any cultural soil.³¹

5. Translation

The first stage of inculturation is the translation of the Bible into Asian languages. The Message to the People of God of the Synod for Asia expressed satisfaction over the fact that, thanks to good Bible translations available in local languages, people have access to 'the words of eternal life' (Jn.6:68)³²

Translation demands " a passage from one language to another and necessarily involves a change of cultural context. Concepts are not identical and symbols have a different meaning..."³³ Biblical translation in Asia should exploit the rich treasures of Asian scriptural idiom and style thus availing to the full the potential of the dynamic of inculturation.

6. A thorough inculturation of the word in Asia requires the development of Asian approaches to Biblical interpretation in the light of the religious and socio-cultural contexts of Asia. Such a hermeneutical journey is still at its initial stages even where such efforts have already been made. By accelerating its momentum the Church in Asia can contribute effectively to the emergence of a dialogic interpretation of the Biblical word. The word in dialogue with the cultures and religions of Asia will certainly point to the Asian image of Christ. Such interpretation should set the biblical message in more explicit relationship with the ways of feeling, thinking, living and self-expression which are proper to the local culture. From interpretation,

one passes then to other stages of inculturation, which lead to the formation of a local Christian culture, extending to all aspects of life (prayer, work, social life, customs, legislation, arts and sciences, philosophical and theological reflection)³⁴

7. An Asian Reading of the Word of God

In Asia, we need a paradigm shift in the Biblical interpretation, just as there took place a paradigm shift in the 16th-17th century Europe in the wake of the Reformation, Renaissance and Enlightenment. The result of this European paradigm, as far as the Bible was concerned, was the emergence of the historical-critical method for biblical interpretation.³⁵ It introduced a scientific temper into the academic study of scripture and became the standard and universally valid method. It was even considered as the neutral method for the study of the sacred text. The led to a highly objective and rational stance towards the scriptural and its interpretation. Historical-critical method itself was founded on a rational approach to reality. As a result the mystery dimension of the word was diluted. The objectification of the word also contributed to the loss of the sense of being claimed by the word. A certain form of domestication and privatisation of the word also became a feature of spirituality. Its power for transformation of life and society was not experienced. Asian Exegetical methods were not even envisaged as coming within the scope of the academic discipline of Biblical study. The historical critical method was, like any branch of science, considered neutral and cultre-free.³⁶

The Asian reader has the habit of his heart of reading a text in a contemplative intuitive style. In fact, in most of the Asian religious traditions the Scripture is not so much read but chanted or musically recited. This is a mechanism for 'tasting the word' and for letting it echo within and without. This is what is meant by the words of the marvellous phrase "God has spoken once, twice I have heard." (Ps 62:12)

"The oriental reader is more open to intuit the infinite, due perhaps also to the eastern type of writing which predisposes to this dimension. In antiquity, Hebrews read the written Scriptures according to an alphabetic system made up of consonants. The vowels are unwritten, like the invisible life breath which animates and gives meaning to the string of consonants, transforming them into a word. The vowels are flexible, variable, moveable, defined by the reader at each reading; while the consonants are fixed, ordered in a certain manner, waiting for their meaning to be revealed." "...This characteristic is common to the writings in the Far East. For example, in the Chinese ideogram the words are not made up of a string of letters, but are an overall, symbolic representation of reality." "...Reading the oriental scriptures, instead, tends to lead readers to "go beyond" the letters, the signs. The meaning of the words is not the result of the logical

combination of single elements; rather it is self-evident, revealing itself not so much in a rational analysis of the parts, but in the contemplation of the whole."³⁷

Asian forms of prayer, like bhajan and namjap (repetitive rhythmic singing, alternating in silence and sound, alternating between the solo singer and the group, leading to silence is a movement from words to silence. It is this silence that enables us to remain "open, humble and grateful, quick to welcome surprises..."³⁸

That is why Oriental traditions, even of the early Fathers of the Church use symbols and images, 'wisdom style' of teaching and express the mystery more by figurative language in their interpretation of Biblical passages.

8. A Dialogic Reading

While reading the Bible in Asia Christians should hear the echoes and resonance of the Asian religious scriptural traditions, discovering harmony, re-inforcement in their own faith and even welcoming a fuller discovery of the mystery. The reading of scripture in Asia should enable us to enter into depth level dialogue with the religious heart of Asia.

Besides, a dialogic reading can be compared to different lamps casting their light on the one painting - the mysterious face of God. Yes, such a reading might help us see the Asian face of Jesus with greater brightness and to experience the face of God as multi-coloured. Mahatma Gandhi invites Christians to read the Bible in dialogue with the spiritual treasures of Asia:

"...It becomes perhaps necessary to reread the message of the Bible in terms of what is happening around us. The word is the same, but the spirit ever broadens intensively and extensively, and it might be that many things in the Bible will have to be reinterpreted in the light of discoveries - not of modern science, but in the spiritual word in the shape of direct experiences common to all faiths. The fundamental verses of St. John do require to be reread and reinterpreted. I have come to feel that, like us human beings, words have their evolution from state to stage in the contents they hold."
"...To you who have come to teach India, I therefore say, you cannot give without taking. If you have come to give rich treasures of experiences, open your hearts out to receive the treasures of this land, and you will not be disappointed, neither will you have misread the message of the Bible."³⁹

The community that reads the Word of God will thus become the prism through which the splendour of God in Asia will shine. The Bible and the Bible reading community will then become a bridge between the Word in the Bible and the seeds of the Word in the scriptures and traditions of the

religions of Asia. Then a journey will begin to seek the face of God and to hear the Word of God in its fullness.

IV. INCULTURATED CATECHESIS

1. An Experience

We shall get in touch with experiences of people before we begin our reflection on the Asian face of Jesus in our catechesis and on the renewal of catechetical ministry especially in terms of inculturation. A catechetical leader in India shared the following experience with me in connection with the above topic.⁴⁰

Between 1963-68 I was a full-time teacher Catechist and spiritual counsellor for over one hundred rural youth in a residential high school in North India. First, I decided upon running a volunteer 12 week bible-picture competition. Each week I hung up one bible picture and asked the students to give the picture an attractive title and in about twenty five words say what the picture meant for them. Prizes were offered for the best three entries. The results of this competition were just so-so. But the real pay-off came at the end of the year when exams came. I decided that as part of their final exams they were to give their opinion on the 12 bible pictures which had figured in the competition. I held up, one after another, the dozen paintings used that year. I asked them to choose one picture, the one which spoke them personally. The results were for me like a bomb going off!

Among the students sitting for this exam were a dozen tribals and over 100 students belonging to what are known in India as Scheduled Castes.⁴¹

I did not foresee any differences in their choices. I was quite confident that most of them would choose what other teenagers anywhere in the world would select. However, the results were a very big surprise to me. Among the pictures, one was a teenaged David slaying Goliath. I had thought many of those teenagers would identify with it. But, not a single one did! Almost all the boys from the tribal background selected a picture of God creating Nature (the jungle, the animals, birds, mountains, flowers, etc). Most of the scheduled caste boys picked up the painting of the Suffering Job, covered with bodily sores, sitting on an ash heap and being lectured by ["upper" caste] neighbours, standing arrogantly around him pointing fingers at him. I was stunned. They had identified themselves with the figure of the long suffering, innocent Job.

The following year I took 12 other pictures. The result was the same. The Dalit boys, independently of each other, chose a pictures of Jesus stripped naked, covered with wounds, being scourged by a Roman ["upper" caste] soldier!

A protestant minister who together with a team was engaged in an ongoing ministry of visiting hundreds and hundreds of homes in India was asked: which aspect of Jesus was most attractive to the people he visited. Unhesitatingly, he said: 'The Good Shepherd' for the ordinary people. But to most businessmen it was the image of 'King of Kings'.

2. The newly published "Catechism for Filipino Catholics"⁴² "Jesus, the Suffering Servant of the prophet Isaiah, is portrayed through our favourite Filipino images of Padre Hesus Nazareno, the Santo Entierro or the Sacred Heart. Through these images, Jesus appears as one of the 'least of our brethren': the hungry and thirsty, the naked, the sick, the lonely stranger and the prisoner (cf. Mt 25:31-46).

Jesus the Suffering Servant can thus reach out to us Filipinos as a healing and forgiving Saviour who understands our weaknesses, our failures, our feelings of depression, fear and loneliness. He has been through it all himself! To us Filipinos who can even celebrate the sufferings and hardships of life in song, Jesus Christ calls: 'Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you' (Mt 11:28)" (para 40, emphasis added).

* Paras 467-68 call attention to three popular Filipino images of Christ:

- a. The Santo Nino (Holy Child) -- reflecting innocence, simplicity, child-like wonder of Christ. But, if this focus is overdone, it can produce an immature faith (and sentimentality) that neglects adult responsibilities.
- b. Hesus Nazareno images the suffering Jesus and is very consoling. But, as the text recalls, this image must be balanced by the Risen Christ who is the powerful victor over all evils -- sin and death; otherwise there can be a passive, self-centred and fatalistic attitude which is an obstacle to offering a mature and free response to daily challenges.
- c. The Sacred Heart -- meek and humble -- evokes like attitudes in his devotees. But this revered image needs other images also valid, e.g. Christ the Liberator. This image is very appealing to many Filipinos today who want freedom from the bondages that enslave them personally and socially.

"In its content, method and terminology, catechesis must be attuned to the experience, pedagogical traditions, psychological make-up and linguistic genius of the people. As an integral part of the life of the local Church, faith-formation should reflect all the dimensions of its life and mission. While holding firmly to the truth of affirmations of faith, it should not be reduced to set of doctrinal and catechetical formulations made out to be

immutably valid for the appropriation and expression of belief, for all times and all cultures."⁴³

The General Directory for Catechesis published by the Vatican contains orientations for the inculturation of Catechesis. In different sections of this document, we find under the following titles, guidelines for those involved in the process of inculturation of catechesis. . Under the following headings are given the relevant points for an Inculturated catechesis as found in this Document.⁴⁴

3. Inculturation of the Gospel Message #109

- The Word of God became man, a concrete man, in space and time and rooted in a specific culture: "Christ by his incarnation committed himself to the particular social and cultural circumstances of the men among whom he lived" (AG 10; cf AG 22a)
- This is the original inculturation of the word of God and is the model of all evangelization by the Church, "called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures" (CT 53; cf EN 20)

Inculturation of the faith whereby in a wonderful exchange are comprised "all the riches of the nations which have been given to Christ as an inheritance" (AG 22a; cf LG 13, 17; GS 53-62; GCD [1971] 37), is:

- a profound and global process and a slow journey (cf RM 52b)
- not simply an external adaptation designed to make the Christian message more attractive or superficially decorative
- on the contrary, it means the penetration of the deepest strata of persons and peoples by the Gospel which touches them deeply, "going to the very centre and roots" (EN 20; cf EN 63; RM 52) of their cultures.

In this work of inculturation, however, the Christian community must discern,

- on the one hand, which riches to "take" up as compatible with the faith (LG 13);
- on the other, it must seek to "purify" (LG 13) and "transform" (EN 19) those criteria, modes of thought and life-styles which are contrary to the kingdom of God.

Such discernment is governed by two basic principles:

- "compatibility with the Gospel
- and communion with the universal Church" (RM 54a)

All the people of God must be involved in this process which

- "... needs to take place gradually,
- in such a way that it really is an expression of the community's Christian experience" (RM 54b)

4. Some Tasks for Catechesis in Inculturation #110

- looking to the ecclesial community as the principal factor of inculturation (with catechists possessing a profound religious sense, a living social conscience, and who are well rooted in their cultural environments)
- drawing up local catechisms which respond to the demands of different cultures (CCC 24) and which present the Gospel in relation to the hopes, questions and problems which these cultures present
- making the catechumenate and catechetical institutes into centres of inculturation, incorporating, with discernment, the language, symbols, and values in which the catechumens and those to be catechised live
- presenting the Christian message in such a way as to prepare those who are to proclaim the Gospel to be capable "of giving reasons for their hope" (1 Pet 3:15) in cultures which are often pagan or post-Christian: effective apologetics to assist the faith-culture dialogue is indispensable today.

5. Duties of catechesis for inculturation of the faith #203

These duties form an organic whole:

- to know in depth the culture of persons and the extent of its penetration into their lives;
- to recognise a cultural dimension in the Gospel itself, while affirming, on the one hand, that this does not spring from some human cultural humus, and recognising, on the other, that the Gospel cannot be isolated from the cultures in which it was initially inserted and in which it has found expression through the centuries;
- to proclaim the profound change, the conversion, which the Gospel, as a "transforming and regenerating" (cf. CT 53) force works in culture;
- to witness to the transcendence and the non-exhaustion of the Gospel with regard to culture, while at the same time discerning those seeds of the Gospel which may be present in culture;
- to promote a new expression of the Gospel in accordance with evangelised culture, looking to a language of the faith which is the common patrimony of the faithful and thus a fundamental element of communion;
- to maintain integrally the content of the faith and ensure that the doctrinal formulations of tradition are explained and illustrated, while taking into account the cultural and historical circumstances of those being instructed, and to avoid defacing or falsifying the contents.

6. Methodological Processes #204

Catechesis

- avoids all manipulation of culture
- is not limited to a mere juxtaposition of the Gospel with culture in some "decorative way"
- proposes the Gospel "in a vital way, profoundly, by going to the very roots of culture and the cultures of humankind" (EN 20)

This defines a dynamic process consisting of various interactive elements:

- a listening in the culture of the people, to discern an echo (omen, invocation, sign) of the word of God;
- a discernment of what has an authentic Gospel value or is at least open to the Gospel;
- a purification of what bears the mark of sin (passions, structures of evil) or of human frailty;
- an impact on people through stimulating an attitude of radical conversion to God, of dialogue, and of patient interior maturation.

7. The need for and criteria of evaluation #205

- In the evaluation phase, particularly in cases of initial attempts or experimentation, careful attention must always be given to ensuring that the catechetical process is not infiltrated by syncretistic elements.
- In instances where this happens, attempts at inculturation will prove dangerous and erroneous and must be corrected

In positive terms, a catechesis is correct which

- inspires not only intellectual assimilation of the faith, but also touches the heart and transforms conduct
- generates a dynamic life which is unified by the faith
- bridges the gap between belief and life, between the Christian message and the cultural context, and
- brings forth the fruits of true holiness.

8. Responsibility for the process of Inculturation #206

Inculturation

- must involve the whole people of God and not just a few experts since the people reflect the authentic 'sensus fidei' which must never be lost sight of (RM 54)
- needs to be guided and encouraged, but not forced, lest it give rise to negative reactions among Christians (RM 54)
- must be an expression of the life of the community, one which must mature within the community itself and not be exclusively the result of erudite research (RM 54)
- requires the co-operation in catechesis of all who live in the same cultural condition - clergy, pastoral workers, catechists and laity.

9. Other points about Inculturation

#91 - "the baptismal catechumenate is also an initial locus of inculturation. Following the example of the Incarnation of the Son of God, made man in a concrete historical moment, the Church receives catechumens integrally, together with their cultural ties. All catechetical activity participates in this function of incorporating into the catholicity of the

Church, authentic 'seeds of the word', scattered through nations and individuals."

#97 - "The Gospel message seeks inculturation because the Good News is destined for all peoples. This can only be accomplished when the Gospel message is presented in its integrity and purity".

The challenge of discovering and presenting the Asian image of Christ through catechesis is very urgent, given the fact that it is through catechetical ministry that the very first image of Jesus is imprinted in the hearts and minds of people and is nurtured

V. LITURGICAL RENEWAL

1. Ecclesia in Asia offers, though briefly, its reflections on this theme from various angles:

- * First of all, it speaks of the urgency of inculturation from the perspective of the evangelising power of the liturgy.
- * Recently established churches need to ensure that the liturgy becomes an ever greater source of nourishment for the people of God through a wise and effective use of elements drawn from local cultures
- * It is not enough to incorporate traditional symbols and ritual
- * Must take into account the shift in consciousness that is taking place as a result of the impact of the emerging secularist and consumer cultures
- * Nor can the specific needs of the poor, migrants, refugees, youth and women be overlooked in any genuine liturgical inculturation in Asia
- * Closer relationship between Bishops conferences and the concerned Roman Discastery "for effective ways of fostering appropriate forms of worship in the Asian context".⁴⁵

2. Liturgy is the epiphany of the Church. Liturgy expresses the faith of the church and manifests the very being and mission of the Church. Liturgy must be the outcome of the faith-experience of the Lord and the emergence in a particular cultural environment of a genuinely local church. In turn, such experience of the transforming presence of the Lord in history should flower in a Christian life that is fully inculturated. Authentic liturgical inculturation, therefore, "cannot be done from without and introduced through an external and artificial process; it should spontaneously spring forth from the life of the faith lived fully in the context of culture and the life-realities of the people"⁴⁶ A traditional saying goes like this: "As the Church, so the liturgy. Show me how you celebrate your eucharist, and I shall tell what kind of church you are"⁴⁷

3. Not a matter of cosmetic changes

Inculturation is not a matter of cosmetic changes in the ritual, substituting Roman rituals with external elements from the local culture. Ritual change without actual change of life (relationships, life-style, values, choices, commitment to one's neighbours in need, dialogue with neighbours in other faiths and with culture) is not the liturgical change and renewal envisaged by Vatican II. "The liturgical renewal intended by Vatican II is a "change of life" and not "change of rite". In the conciliar understanding, liturgy is the exercise of the priesthood of Christ, Head and members.⁴⁸

It is in the 'liturgy of the world' or 'liturgy of life' that the seed of authentic inculturation can take roots. The liturgy of the Church should manifest the liturgy of life, the liturgy of the world. Inculturation therefore should begin with life, in the totality of life, in the variety of the aspects and areas of the day-to-day life.

More importantly, inculturation should take place in the life that we live as the Body of Christ, in our living the mystery of Christ's life and mission individually and collectively to realise the Reign of God in our personal and social life.

Our liturgy should not be seen as something that is exclusive. It is not something which we do and for ourselves exclusively. Liturgy is the celebration of the presence and action of God - in the paschal mystery - in the heart of the world and for the whole world. Therefore it is not a question of explanation, understanding and intelligibility for Christians alone. It is also a question of intelligibility for the world around.

4. "Inculturation means becoming proclamational"

"Our sacramental liturgy is not an esoteric ritual of a secret society. We are not free masons. Our sacraments are not clandestine operations. We are a light on a lamp-stand, a city on a mountain. What we celebrate among us, we also proclaim to the rest of the world. The cultural language and idiom of our celebration should also be the language and idiom of a proclamation...We Christians must use the language, the idiom, the media, the signs and symbols of all the people around us who have a right to understand what we celebrate in the liturgy; namely the Reign of God as announced by Jesus' words, as illustrated in his life and as demonstrated by his death and rising"⁴⁹

In the liturgy of the world, in which we live the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection in the different circumstances of life there "happens" a transformation as a result of an encounter with the God of life and history, a discovery of this presence and plan in the midst of his people, the double movement of inculturation of becoming fully Asian and authentically Chris-

tian can take place in such a context. When such a life of experience of God and surrender to him expresses itself there is bound to take place a natural and spontaneous process of inculturation. For God's spirit who is at work in the Church is also at work in the people and in their cultures.

5. Experiments of inculturated liturgy

Only when experimentation in inculturated liturgy is promoted at least in selected committed communities, especially the BCCs and Christian movements of committed Christians that we can hope for an Inculturated liturgy can emerge in Asia. It can not work with blue prints prepared elsewhere. It has to be the local community's faith response in a particular cultural context. If we are unable to take such bold steps our liturgy will never take and become capable of presenting the Asian image of Christ.

Nevertheless, given the estrangement in the liturgical life of the Asian local churches from their cultural traditions it is certainly necessary at this stage of history that we undertake certain liturgical experiments and models too are important. What is important is that it should not be done only by experts and secondly they should be the result of the community's involvement.

We give below a few creative liturgical experiments undertaken in Sri Lanka as described by Fr. Aloysius Pieris, sj., in his article quoted above.⁵⁰

The Christian Workers Fellowship -- an ecumenical-lay group -- has a liturgy called "The Workers' Mass" which draws crowds of workers of all beliefs and no belief. In that mass, Christ is proclaimed as God who works in all workers and thus builds God's Reign of peace and justice. Not one dogma of the church is diluted in that liturgy. The one who composed the lyrics, as well as the one who composed the music are Buddhists. The language, the symbols, and the music speak to the workers who are alienated from all religions. It used the worker's language.

How did this inculturation come about? Where did it begin? Not with the sacramental liturgy. Rather they were first involved with the workers' problems for many years. They struggled with the people, and they met and reflected over their experience in the light of the Word of God as they listened to the Scriptures. They tried to understand the history of this country of salvation (as you see in their numerous publications); they tried to listen to God's Word heard in the history of Israel and in the history of our country, and allowed that Word to shape their minds and hearts in the course of their action on behalf of workers. This is what I mean by the Liturgy of life. It is the daily struggles of the people in their lay vocation, trying to live the demands of the Kingdom."

The Pubuduwa (Charismatic Movement) has also meaningful and proclamational liturgies. There again, they did not start with the eucharist. They began with life. They listened to the Word of God and began to shape their lives according to the demands of a biblical spirituality, and respond to the demands of the Kingdom. Then gradually their sacramental liturgy began to express what they had already gained in their liturgy of life.

Our liturgies at Tulana are of the same provenance. They started with a life-style, with the involvement with people and listening to the Word of God in the context of the yearning of the non-people for both spiritual and social liberation, for wholeness of life. Our experience of God as Silence from Which all Words break forth, and Jesus as the Word that leads us to this Ultimate Silence, and the Spirit as the harmony between Word and Silence -- came as a result of our involvement with the Buddhists in their spirituality. Our contemplative Eucharist celebrates as it proclaims the Christ Mystery in the idiom of the Buddhists.

CONCLUSION

What is said by the Pontifical Biblical Commission about the risks involved in the actualisation of the Bible is valid for the venture of inculturation. "In any case, the risk of error does not constitute a valid objection against performing what is a necessary task: that of bringing the message of the Bible to the ears and hearts of the people of our time (Interpretation p.117). Inculturation is not a clearly defined task. It is a venture of hope. It is an adventure the Church in Asia is engaged in with trust in the Lord of history.

I make my own the sentiments expressed by one of the Asian Christian artists:

Somewhere in the effort to find an Indian cultural form to the Gospel there lie the seeds of a future visioning. The field has been prepared, often with much labour. Who knows what fruits all this will bring in the future? I believe that the harvest we are looking for is not just a matter of drawing everything within the Church but rather respecting all and nurturing the rich diversity of forms which we find abounding in all cultures.

FOOTNOTES:

- ¹ Quoted in Simon Pimenta (Cardinal)"Presidential Address", Report of the General Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, CBCI Centre, New Delhi, 1983, p.9. (emphasis added)
- ² International Theological Commission, *Christianity and the World Religions*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta del Vaticano, 1997, n.26, p.19. (Emphasis added)
- ³ Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia*, n.21. Biblical Apostolate, though not listed in the key areas, is included in no.20 in which each of these above areas are taken up for reflection; following the sequence of *Ecclesia in Asia*, we begin with the question of inculturation in the area of theological reflection.
- ⁴ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n.20.
- ⁵ Mai Thanh, "Aspects of Christianity in Vietnam", in *Concilium*, 1993/2, p.95.Emphasis added) Mai Thanh adds that in the spring of 1980, at the age of 85, her Confucian father was baptized at his own request.
- ⁶ Robert Ellsberg (Ed), *Gandhi on Christianity*, Orbis Books, New York, 1991, p.39. Note the phrase Gandhi uses "Christian Indians and not Indian Christians". (emphasis added)
- ⁷ Cf. D.S.Amalorpavadass, unpublished notes, NBCLC archives, NBCLC, Bangalore.
- ⁸ *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 20.
- ⁹ *Ecclesia in Asia*, n.20. We want to look at these challenges from the perspective of inculturation. (emphasis added).
- ¹⁰ G.Rosales & C.G.Arevalo (Eds), *For All The Peoples of Asia*, Asian Bishops Meeting, (Manila, Philippines, November 1970), Resolutions of the Meeting, n.13, Orbis Books, New York, Claretian Publications, Quezon City, 1992, p.9.
(hereafter referred to as *For All The Peoples of Asia*).
- ¹¹ Cf. *For All The Peoples of Asia*, Statement & Resolutions of the First Plenary Assembly, April 1974, nos. 9-28, pp.14-16.
- ¹² *Ibid.* p.9.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, n.33, p.17.
- ¹⁴ *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 21.
- ¹⁵ *Ad Gentes*, n.22.
- ¹⁶ *Ecclesia in Asia*, n.22. Here the document incorporates Proposition n.7 of the Synod.
- ¹⁷ Second Report by Cardinal Paul Shan Kuo-Hsi of Taiwan, quoted in J.Dupuis, "Jesus with an Asian Face", *Third Millennium*, 1999(1) , p.6.
- ¹⁸ Aloysius Pieris, "Does Christ Have a Place in Asia? A Panoramic View" *Concilium*, 1993/2 p.33. Pieris adds: History's response to ...[the] question [Does Christ have a place in Asia?], however, is harsh and clear: they are all out of place in Asia, but each for a different reason...Asia has always been impenetrable to Christianity (a mere 3% converted after two millennia). This was not necessarily or primarily due to Christ's colonial appearance; nor, conversely, would an indigenized Christ have tricked the Asians to accept Christianity" He describes the reasons in his article. By Non - Western Christ is meant the "Buddhist Christ" of the Nestorian community in China(653 to 845) and the others are Matteo Ricci's Inculturated Chinese Christ, and Roberto de Nobili's Brahmanic Christ and the Gnostic Christ of the nineteenth century Hindu Renaissance . Pieris makes a very sharp comment: "none of these [last] four 'Christ's' has found a place in the hearts of the masses of Asia, nor in the minds of the majority of today's elite. The examples of genuine Asian images of Christ according to Pieris are the 1) Christ of the Dalits (the broken people) theology and praxis of India; 2) Christ of the Minjung Theology and praxis of Korea, 3) Christ of Asian Womanhood. Further he states that we should not be busy with inventing the Asianness of Christ as the Christness of our Asian identity.)

For detailed description of different images of Christ in Asian theology see J. Dupuis, *Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions*, Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books (second edition) cfr. also Sugirtharajah (ed), *Asian Faces of Jesus*, Orbis Books, New York, 1995.

- ¹⁹ *Ecclesia in Asia*, n.20.
- ²⁰ J.Dupuis, "Jesus with an Asian Face", in *Third Millennium*, 1999 (1), p.7.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9; cf. also Felix Wilfred, "Images of Jesus Christ in the Asian Pastoral Context" - An interpretation of Documents from the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, *Concilium*, 1193/2, Orbis Books, New York, 1993, p.53.
- ²² *Ecclesia in Asia*, no.20, (emphasis added).
- ²³ Sugirtharajah (ed), *Asian Faces of Jesus*, Orbis Books, New York, 1995, p.1, (emphasis added).
- ²⁴ "Report of the Fourth Colloquium of Bishops and Theologians" *Word and Worship*, Nov-Dec.1998, vol31.No 6.
- ²⁵ *FABC Papers*, (n.60) *Theses on the Local Church - A Theological Reflection in the Asian Context*, published by FABC, Hong Kong, 1991, p.30.
- ²⁶ Felix Wilfred, "Images of Jesus Christ in the Asian Pastoral Context" - An interpretation of Documents from the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, *Concilium*, 1193/2, Orbis Books, New York, 1993, p.58.
- ²⁷ *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, IV, B, p.119.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.113.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.116.
- ³⁰ *FABC Papers*, *Theses on the Local Church - A Theological Reflection in the Asian Context*, p.32.
- ³¹ Cf. *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, no.117, Cf also *Ad Gentes* n.22).
- ³² Cf. *Origins*, May 28, 1998, Vol.28, no.2.
- ³³ Cf. *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, p.118.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, n.118.
- ³⁵ Cf. G.Soaes, Jeevadhara, xxx, 146, p.100; *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, pp 34-69 deals with the various forms of this method: literary criticism, genre criticism, tradition criticism, redaction criticism, etc., and offers a critical evaluation of this and other methods and approaches in Biblical interpretation.
- ³⁶ Practically all over Asia, this method is the predominant method of scripture study in seminaries, formation programmes for the religious and the laity. A certain Bishop who himself was a scripture professor in a Major seminary confessed the fact that after the introductory courses on Scripture in the first year of theology, seminarians often lose their love and reverence for the Bible.
- ³⁷ Maria Ko Ha-Fong, fma., "Reading the Bible in an Asian Context", *Word of God - Source of Life*, Catholic Biblical Federation V Plenary Assembly, (2-12 July 1996, Hong Kong, 1996), Stuttgart, Germany, 1997, pp.64-67.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.66.
- ³⁹ Robert Ellsberg (ed), *Gandhi on Christianity*, Orbis Books, New York, 1991, p.41.
- ⁴⁰ Edwin Daly, sj, who has contributed much to the catechetical renewal in India during the past more than thirty years shared with this author some his experiences in the early stages of his catechetical ministry in North India. Given here are some of his experiences.
- ⁴¹ This is the phrase used in the Constitution of India for referring to the so-called "lower" castes. The more recent nomenclature is "Dalit" meaning 'broken' and oppressed.
- ⁴² *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, Word & Life Publications, Manila, Philippines, 1997.
- ⁴³ *FABC Papers*, *Theses on the Local Church - A Theological Reflection in the Asian Context*, published by FABC, Hong Kong, p.29.

- ⁴⁴ Congregation for the Clergy, General Directory for Catechesis, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City, 1997.
- ⁴⁵ Ecclesia in Asia, n.22.
- ⁴⁶ FBBC Papers, Theses on the Local Church, p.29.
- ⁴⁷ Aloysius Pieris, sj., "Inculturation: Some Critical Reflections", in Yearbook of Contextual Theologies, Missionswissenschaftliches Institut Missio e.V., IKO-Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 1993, p.137.
- ⁴⁸ *ibid*, p.135.
- ⁴⁹ *ibid*, p.137.
- ⁵⁰ *ibid*, pp.138-139.
- ⁵¹ Jyoti Sahi, Holy Ground A New Approach to the Mission of the Church in India, Pace Publications, Auckland, 1998, p.14

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