



B: SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

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GUIDING LEADERSHIP

TOPICS OF AsIPA TEXTS:

A : GOSPEL SHARING

B : SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

C : A PARTICIPATORY CHURCH

D : TRAINING FOR PARISH TEAMS

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GUIDING LEADERSHIP

Some sections of this AsIPA text can well be used during retreat days and spiritual weekends for all parish leaders because of their spiritual dimension

INTRODUCTION

A Participatory Church requires a 'guiding not dominating leadership' from all leaders in the Church: bishops, priests, pastoral assistants, catechists and anybody who exercises leadership in the Christian community.

Adopting a non-dominating but 'guiding style of leadership' is more than a 'technique' or a 'skill'! It is a spiritual challenge.

One bishop at a General Assembly of a large Bishops Conference put it in a nutshell when he told his fellow bishops, 'We agree, this is the future of the Church! We have to adopt a guiding, not a dominating style of leadership! This means, however, a constant dying to ourselves!'

A. A DOMINATING LEADER

Read the following story and reflect on the questions that follow. You may prefer to do a role play of a similar situation.

An SCC was meeting in the home of the Nathans. Twenty people had gathered from the neighbourhood as they have done for three years already. They had a change of facilitators for the various ministries about a month earlier. During this particular SCC meeting the facilitator for visiting the poorer families announced that everyone would have to come to the church on the following Sunday for a visit to a very poor village some distance away. He added that all the arrangements were already made. Some members of the SCC were quite surprised since they had not heard about this plan earlier. Some were amazed that this new facilitator could insist in such a way since no one had been consulted. They began to protest very politely but the new facilitator raised his voice and said that he and the sub-committee already decided it. The members again reminded him that this is not the way things are done in this SCC but he would not listen. The members were divided and upset.

Question for reflection

- *What kind of leadership is the new facilitator exercising?*
- *What are some of the characteristics of this kind of leadership? Make a list.*

B. EXAMPLES OF 'GUIDING LEADERSHIP'

1. The example of Christ

Small groups of 3/4 read the text given below.

Discuss the question.

Report after 10 minutes.

*Read the text: **Mark 9,33-37***

Question for discussion

Describe the ways in which Jesus, in this event, exercises his leadership.

Supplement

- Jesus, the great leader, is patient.
- Jesus did not step in immediately when he heard his disciples giving 'wrong ideas'. He waited until all were in the house before he called them together.
- Jesus did not 'scold' or 'condemn' when his disciples did something wrong, he respected them as adults.
- By a right question, Jesus helped his disciples to find out for themselves what was wrong with them.
- Jesus did not raise his voice and give his disciples a 'moralizing' talk on right behaviour. Rather, Jesus inspired his disciples with a 'new vision' of leadership.
- Jesus did not force his new vision on the disciples but gave them a chance to 'catch it' themselves.
- The type of leadership that Jesus showed us in this event, we call "non-dominating", 'guiding', 'up-building' and 'inspiring' leadership.
- At the same time Jesus shows us very clearly that his leadership is 'directive' and not a 'anything-goes' approach.

C. FEATURES OF 'DOMINATING' AND 'GUIDING' LEADERSHIP

1. Read in the whole group the following examples of 'dominating' and 'guiding' leadership:

DOMINATING	GUIDING
<p>- 'I must provide for them!' - 'I must tell them!' - 'They know nothing!' - 'I must initiate things!' - 'I do everything for my people!' - 'I know the answer!' - 'I have studied theology!' - 'I choose the leader because I know my people!' - 'This is good for you!' - 'Discussions are a waste of time!' - 'I am right!' - 'I take the decision!' - 'I can not trust them!' - 'I need helpers for my task!' - 'No criticism, please!' - 'How can you make such a suggestion! I am in charge!'</p>	<p>- 'I want to build up people!' - 'I help them that they can see for themselves!' - 'I want to inspire and animate people!' - 'I trust the people, in spite of some disappointments!' - 'I like to discover the talents of people!' - 'One of my main tasks is to train and enable people!' - 'I share my responsibility!' - 'I have to learn how to listen!' - 'We pray, discuss and decide together!' - 'I work with the people!' - 'I respect the people!' - 'The people have much good will' - 'We share a common mission' - 'I accept criticism even if it is not so pleasant!' - 'I accept the lay-faithful as my brothers and sisters!'</p>
<p>I AM THE CHURCH</p>	<p>WE ARE THE CHURCH</p>

2. My own style of leadership?

- *In small groups of 3/4*
- *Share with the group one example of dominating or guiding leadership. You can choose from the list given above.*

Individually reflect

Each participant reads silently again the features of DOMINATING Leadership above and asks himself / herself (3 minutes):

Questions for personal reflection.

- 1. Where do I find myself reflected in this list of 'guiding or dominating behaviour'?***
- 2. What do I need to change to be more like Jesus in exercising guiding leadership?***
- 3. What may be the most difficult thing for me to change so that I can move to a more 'guiding' style of leadership?***

D. THE EXAMPLE OF FACILITATING GOSPEL SHARING

Important: *The following reflection can only be done by those who are familiar with the 7-step gospel sharing.*

Form small groups of 3/4.

Discuss the question below.

Report after 5 minutes.

Question for discussion

Compare the style of leadership exercised in facilitating gospel sharing with the event of Mark 9,33-37. -- -

Supplement

- The facilitator 'inspires' the members of the group to become active themselves. He/she treats the participants as adults.
- The facilitator 'enables' the group to come into contact with Christ themselves.
- The facilitator is the 'first' by becoming 'last' in the process of gospel sharing., e.g. He/she animates others to invite Jesus in a prayer; he/she announces the text but asks somebody else to read; he/she encourages to share but is not the first to share, etc.

Conclusion

The desire to change is half the battle won. Let us pray sincerely from the heart asking the Lord to change us more and more into 'Guiding' leaders.

Sing a hymn to end.

METHOD OF ASIPA TEXTS

ASIPA TEXTS are compiled for Christian men and women at grass root level of the parish. They can be conducted most fruitfully in Small Christian Communities, Neighbourhood Communities, Parish Pastoral Councils or any other small groups in the parish.

ASIPA TEXTS can also be used with larger groups, e.g. in the parish hall - provided the “participatory method” is maintained in smaller working groups.

Features of the “ASIPA approach”

1. ASIPA TEXTS adopt a **“participatory approach”** in which all participants of a group search and discover for themselves as far as they are able to.
2. The texts are compiled in such a way that the facilitator can use them with a **minimum of preparation**.
3. The facilitator is requested to **follow the text** as closely as possible and allow the participants to contribute when indicated in the text.
4. The facilitator is not content with one answer to a question but he/she encourages as many participants as possible to search for an answer. **“Buzz groups”** of 2/3 are helpful to achieve maximum participation.
5. The **SUPPLEMENT** can help add to the findings of the participants and summarize them.
6. The **SUMMARY** is meant to be used as ‘input’.

ASIPA:

As-ian -I-ntegral -P-astoral -A-pproach

The Asian Bishops declared in the Final Statement of their Fifth Plenary Session in Bandung: The Church of 1990s has to be a "Participatory Church", a "Communion of Communities", a Church that "witnesses to the Risen Lord" (*FABC5,#8*).

The question was, how to promote this "new way of being Church". Therefore, late in 1993, jointly sponsored by the FABC Offices of Human Development and of Laity, a consultation meeting was held in Malaysia. It was during this consultation that the pastoral process for promoting a "Participatory Church" in Asia was termed ASIPA: Asian Integral Pastoral Approach.

ASIPA TEXTS (training programmes) follow this directive:

ASIAN

They want to implement the vision of the Asian Bishops and help Asian Christians face Asian life in the light of the gospel.

INTEGRAL

They aim at achieving a balance between the "spiritual" and the "social", between the individual and the community, between hierarchical leadership and the co-responsibility of the laity.

PASTORAL

They train the laity in their pastoral mission in Church and world.

APPROACH

The process of ASIPA TEXTS can be described as a pastoral approach which is "Christ- and Community centred". It involves the participants of workshops to search for themselves and allows them to experience a "New Way of Being Church."
