

“A Renewed Church in Asia: Communicating Love and Service”

FABC-OSC

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1. Communicating love and service

It is our understanding that there can be no service without love and hence, the service rendered by the Church in its various spheres of activities need to be charged by Divine Love of which Jesus Christ is the supreme example.

To communicate love and service to the peoples in Asia, we, as communicators, need first to develop a personal relationship with God and then with our audience. We must touch peoples' lives as spiritual persons who provide services to them (cf. BM '98, 1f). To awaken peoples' conscience and to struggle for justice often means building bridges with people from different walks of life.

- More specifically, today in Asia, we shall communicate love and service by, – Identifying ourselves with the peoples of Asia through a deeper listening and availability. In this process of communicating, we are called to be and journey with the people. This listening implies being enriched by faith-experience, cultural diversity, literary traditions and the wisdom of the past.
- A healing ministry enlightened by truth and justice like that of the Good Samaritan to the people wounded by ethnic, inter-religious and linguistic conflicts as well as political, economic and cultural exploitation.
- Enduring patiently the present-day sufferings and tortures like the suffering servant through forgiveness and compassion, and being able to change the situation working relentlessly with fortitude.
- Promoting fraternity, liberty and human dignity and refusing religious fanaticism, “ghettoism” and exclusivity.
- Fostering greater ecumenism among all Christians, and openness to inter-faith dialogue (cf. BM '97, 3).
- Befriending and empowering our brothers and sisters experiencing the negative effects of globalization and a market economy in the Spirit of Kingdom values.
- Promoting the activities of Basic Christian Communities (BCC's) and traditional groups with emphasis on the young and family.

2. A Renewing Church Communicating Love and Service

To witness the life of a renewed and always renewing Church with the people in Asia, communicators should focus on facts based on the communion of communities (cf. *A New Way of Being Church in Asia, BM '97,1*), which comes from the word of God. By promoting the value of this communion, communicators can help improve the quality of peoples.

A renewing Church expects to:

- Continue social and humanitarian services to enrich and empower people, helping them stand on their own, and retain human dignity. The help offered needs to come not only from the abundance or foreign support but from what we have.
- Be a community sharing and reflecting charity, including talents and resources: "Look how they love each other ..." (*Acts 2:43ff, 4:32ff*)
- Respect and dialogue with other religions through service and charity (*cf BM '97,3*).
- Be a Church of the poor ("*Anawim*"), open to the spiritual and material needs of the people.
- Be a participatory Church, wherein especially the role of laity is duly recognized (*cf BM '97,2*).
- Be aware of the gifts and charisms of its members, and use them for the growth of the Church.
- Be a Church generating and serving life.
- Welcome new ways of communication in witnessing, catechesis, worship, and proclamation (*cf. BISCOP II, 1999*).

3. Ways and means of communicating love and service

Every Christian, by his/her way of life, must communicate love and service. His/Her words and deeds should radiate Christ.

All means of communication are at our disposal. We need to stress, however, that traditional means, which have grown over centuries in culture, are the very root of communications. Only through a clear understanding of the traditional means can we really discover the Asian way of communicating and thus, the Asian face of Jesus.

The *mass media* available to the Church today, should not be seen only under commercial and consumerist possibilities, but rather should be used by the Church as an alternative voice disregarding commercial gains.

Modern communication technologies (*cf BISCOP II, 1999*) are offering the Church new ways of communicating the Good News, as well as increasing pastoral possibilities.

A renewing Church must use all forms of communication available especially newly emerging technologies. However, all these new developments cannot substitute a living face-to-face dialogue.

The Christian communicator should move freely in different ways of communicating and be able to balance the use of the media of communications according to the call of the Gospel.

Special communication concerns in a renewing Church are:

- A spirituality, which "flows out of the communication of the Holy Trinity" (*Bishops' Meet '98*) reflected in and matched with deep daily life experiences. Such a spirituality is horizontal and vertical, personal and communitarian at the same time.
- A communicator who needs to develop a spirituality emerging from his / her own deep experience of God's love. A deep commitment to experiencing the message giver (Triune God), the message (God's love), and ways of "witnessing" and

sharing this message (self-communication as well as communication skills) are basic elements of this spirituality (*cf. BM '98*).

Areas of special concern in our communication are:

- Basic Christian Communities, Small Christian Communities, catechesis, biblical apostolate, family, women, migrant workers, youth, formation of priests and religious, and inter-religious initiatives;
- Social action and development of people;
- Formation and training of communicators.

An effective communicator must be familiar with all of these ministries. He/She should live a deep spirituality of communication, strongly identifying himself/herself with Jesus – “the perfect communicator.” (*Communio et Progressio, 11*)