

**FABC-OSC Bishops' Meet '02/BISCOM IV**  
**E-generation**  
**The Communication of Young People in Asia.**  
**A Concern of the Church**

Pattaya, Thailand  
November 26-30, 2002

**ORIENTATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

We, the 60 participants of BISCOM IV, including 29 Bishops, national chairmen for communication, national secretaries, youth leaders and communication experts, were gathered at the Redemptorist Centre, Pattaya (Thailand) from November 26-30, 2002 to pray, reflect and deliberate on the theme "E-generation: The Communication of Young People in Asia. A Concern of the Church."

Inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, a friend of the youth, who commissioned His disciples to go to the ends of the earth proclaiming the Kingdom of God, we re-dedicate ourselves to work with the youth of Asia to share our common destiny.

A specific mission we have is for the young, who constitute half of Asia's population. The stirring words of Pope John Paul II in "Ecclesia in Asia" challenge us with a sense of urgency: "The Christian formation of young people in Asia should recognize that they are not only the object of the Church's pastoral care but also 'agents and co-workers in the Church's mission in her various works of love and service ... If young people are to effective agents of mission, the Church needs to offer them suitable pastoral care.

**ORIENTATIONS**

During the course of our deliberations, the following significant insights struck us forcefully:

1. Asia has been profoundly impacted by the communication revolution in the world. Many Asian countries are emerging as information technology (IT) powers and are contributing a major share to the communication revolution in the world. (cf. BISCOM II) In this electronic and digital era, Church leaders need to relate to youth and engage them creatively particularly in the field of social communication. Communication essentially involves listening and hence, Church leaders need to listen to aspirations, dreams and anxieties of the youth.
2. The young are looking for a profound and deep spirituality, and for role models in life. The youths of today do not want only to be informed about God but would like to talk to and connect to God. They value silence, contemplation and a deep prayer experience. (BM'98, 1; BM'01, 1)
3. The youth are not only the future but the present of the Church of Asia today. They are an integral part of the Church's mission, and not merely objects of evangelization. They can be effective agents in the field of e-communication, entertainment, liturgy, social action, particularly with regard to the younger generation.
4. The youth are in transition and open to new ideas coming from the culture created by modern means of communication. In the new media landscape, the

youth grow up with a new language. Because they are the largest consumers of mass media, they need to develop critical evaluation and processing skills. They should also be involved in production, distribution and broadcasting processes.

5. Youth often questions the traditional forms of authority and structure. However, in a world of rapid change, they are seeking for meaning and direction. Work with the youth calls for a holistic approach, reaching out to them with a sense of belonging and partnership, avoiding a judgmental approach.
6. Asia is a spiritual continent and the cradle of world religions. Youth should experience and grow into this spiritual vitality and contribute to it.
7. Young people are attracted by creative and participatory activities, especially liturgical celebrations. When these are not sufficiently provided by traditional agents like family, teachers and religious leaders, they will be easily substituted by values and roles models offered by media.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Reflecting on the above, we make the following recommendations:

1. Youth apostolate begins with a fresh attitude. Hence, love youth, walk with them, introduce Jesus, open the treasures of the word of God, share with them in self discovery, through meaningful faith formation to be part of the Church's mission and thus, help in their quest for authentic spirituality.
2. Church leaders must acquire skills in communication, be acquainted by electronic media including the Internet and go through awareness programs so that they can journey with young people. (cf. BISCOP III)
3. Church by her essence is communication and because of this, interdisciplinary by nature. Therefore, communication offices and commissions should network with other Church bodies to involve youth effectively. (BM'97,3)
4. A participatory style of communication includes young people on parish, diocesan and national levels in decision-making processes.
5. Pastoral communication should be an integral part of any diocesan planning. Greater efforts should be made to promote media education in any formation, especially in our educational institutions. (cf. BM'96,5.4; BM'97,5d, BM'01,7) Social communication should be an integral part of the formation of seminarians and religious.
6. Christian communicators and professionals working in the media should promote a culture of peace and life, instead of contributing to a culture of death and violence.
7. Parents are the first formators of the young. Hence, the Church should assist them and their families in understanding the new media culture and help to play their proper role in guidance and formation.
8. A large number of the youth are untouched by our ministries because they are not part of the Church structure. They should be our special concern. All, especially youth organizations, should strive to be with them also through the modern means of communication.
9. Church and communicators should motivate and assist youth to be bridge builders and agents of social harmony and peace in Asian countries where there is a growing tendency to division for various causes.
10. The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) and Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) should join efforts for ecumenical/interreligious formation in communication of young people in Asia.

The task at hand is urgent and challenging. We count on the solidarity of Christian communicators and the cooperation of the young. Trusting in the presence, guidance and providence of God, we look into the future with hope and commitment.