

FABC-OSC
10th annual Bishops' Meet
Theme: "Asian Spirituality for Communication"
Salesian Retreat House
Hua Hin, Thailand
21 – 26 November 2005

FINAL STATEMENT

We, the 32 participants of the 10th Annual FABC-OSC Bishops' Meet, from 15 countries of Asia, comprising of bishops and communications experts met in Hua Hin, Thailand, from Nov. 21 to 26, 2005. We studied the theme "Asian Spirituality for Communications" and reflected on our role as Catholic communicators here in Asia.

We reviewed the communication-related documents of the Asian bishops and examined the statements made by FABC-OSC in the last ten years under the perspective of spirituality.

In the broad context of spirituality, we began by exploring the means of communication in our local cultures and realized the ongoing relevance of some traditional means and their capacity to continue speaking to the hearts and minds of our Asian people.

Just as Jesus, the "perfect Communicator" (*Communio et Progressio II*), bridged the old and the new, we welcome the Church's role in using traditional communication as well as modern electronic media in the service of his people here on our continent. Jesus' life and teachings impress on us the compelling urgency of mystical-interior spirituality as well as active-prophetic witnessing spirituality in the ministry of communications.

We realized that the specific Asian dimension of communication lays in the deep conviction for silence and contemplation, but also in the yearning for harmony, oneness with Creation and openness to the Spirit as reflected in the various religious traditions of Asia.

The spirituality of a Christian communicator is not just a personalized or individual spirituality or the pious exercise of some virtues. Such spirituality must see the whole of theology under the perspective of communication. The Trinity, Revelation, Incarnation and the Church give us the whole basis for our understanding of what communication really is and how we should engage in it.

In the light of our discussions, we present the following reflections:

1. A Christian communicator has to be a person of deep faith and faith-based professional involvement S/he has to possess a spirituality rooted in the Bible and the personal acceptance of Jesus as Savior, Redeemer and Liberator.
2. S/he must be imbued with a contemplative and prayerful spirit that reflects communication in the context of Asian spiritualities and values. In our multi-religious situation our communication ministries must emphasize Gospel values for life.
3. A Christian communicator's spirituality must help her/him to see media challenges in the dual perspective of local social realities as well as the realities of the global Church.
4. Such dispositions must equip the Christian communicator with a positive approach to news and media work, and a commitment to "Good News" and positive values.
5. The commitment as a Christian communicator implies a mandate for witness to justice, human rights, the integrity of Creation, pro-life issues.
6. A Christian communicator must constantly engage in dialogue with one's own community, and be open to the Kingdom values reflected in other living faith traditions of Asia.

Consequently,

- 6.1 The priorities set by FABC for social responsibility like in the case of the oppression of the girl-child, relegation of women to a second class status, the plight of migrant workers, the threat to family life demand urgent attention also under the perspective of spirituality. In particular, family values and traditions under threat in a fast-changing society must be considered a priority area for Church media apostolate.
- 6.2 The current economic boom in parts of Asia and the parallel economic plight in other parts, natural and man-made disasters, religious fundamentalism as well as political upheavals in parts of our continent demand the concern and concerted action by Church media. These situations must be considered an invitation for deeper reflection and spirit-based collaboration within and outside the Church.
- 6.3 The challenges of secularism, consumerism, materialism, the craving for comfort needs to be addressed with a prophetic discernment that is based on contemplation and prayer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Christian Communicators need to be provided with appropriate spiritual formation for their unique ministry. The Church must make a special effort to prepare laypersons for the communications ministry through an appropriate spirituality.

2. Asian spiritualities, Asian value systems and communication approaches that characterize the contemplative mindset of Asians need to be highlighted and developed through a proper formation and training.
3. In a spirit of solidarity those Churches with local adequate facilities and qualified personnel for training and formation must be encouraged to offer their services for a authentic communication also to Churches with less resources.
4. It is highly recommended that a study be made of the spiritual foundations and treasures of local Asian cultures and religions and that they be integrated into a proper communication ministry.
5. Episcopal commissions for social communication or other Church media groups should be encouraged to offer incentives for a genuine spirit filled communication ministry and to honor and promote especially the spiritual witness and service of communicators. They should provide appropriate facilities and programs for retreats, recollections and theological formation courses for Christian Communicators. In a special way they should also consider the spiritual dimension in celebrating the World Day of Social Communication. The spiritual values of communication productions especially of films should be appreciated.
6. In Asia's multicultural context, local Churches need to explore ways to deepen their communication ministry and localize religious and Church events like Christian feasts as also the celebrations of other religions.
7. The need to counter the media world's own role in fostering a decline of values is a special challenge. Thus formation through information which leads to deeper understanding of the interior realities of life can be a vital church ministry. Such ministry should maximize all relevant communication possibilities from traditional to electronic media.
8. In selecting instruments for outreach, communicators should be encouraged to have an open-mind flowing from a genuine spirituality and should opt for audience-oriented media rather than communicator preference.

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