TRUSTING, ENTRUSTING THE LAITY
The First Bishops’ Institute for Lay Apostolate
of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences
Changhua, Taiwan, R.O.C., October 31-November 9, 1984

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I. WELCOME
by Bishop Joseph Ti-Kang

It is a privilege for me to welcome you to the First Bishops’ Institute
for Lay Apostolate, our BILA I. You have come from all over East Asia —
from Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau — our FABC
“Chopsticks Region.” Our brothers from Vietnam are not here but are
very much present in our prayers. We have been joined by others from
many parts of Asia and the world.

We bishops, priests and laity are all here as a response to the Holy
Spirit, who has moved the bishops of the world, and in particular the
bishops of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences, to unite our
prayers and efforts in the coming years to study the role and mission of
the laity in Church and Society today, in the world as a whole and in Asia
in particular. Both FABC and the coming Bishops’ Synod of 1987 have
selected this as the central theme of its deliberations, because it is of such
importance for the whole Catholic Church.
BILA I will be one of the first major workshops in preparation for both the FABC Plenary Assembly and for the World Synod of Bishops. I wish to express sincere thanks to all of you for your co-operation and prompt response to spend this precious time of your schedule in exploring with our associates in the Lord, priests, sisters and laity, what is the role of the laity in our young Asian Churches.

Some have said that the time of the laity has arrived. We do celebrate with joy the growing awareness of the great vocation which is proper to the laity. We bishops, priests and sisters gathered here for this important workshop welcome wholeheartedly our lay brothers and sisters to this “Bishops’ Forum.” We wish to enter into a much deeper dialogue with you, to hear from you and not to frustrate you in your rightful expectations in any way.

Our young FABC Committee for the Laity — it is only two years old — is honored to be instrumental in assisting the bishops of Asia in their concern for the laity. To do it better, we have launched two major projects to serve you, brother bishops and laity of Asia. First, our newsletter, “Laity,” which in such a short time has spread fast and is read with interest by both our Asian clergy and our laity. From other continents, Europe, America and Australia, people have already begun to ask for copies. Secondly, a series of workshops for bishops, priests, sisters and lay people which we call the Bishops’ Institute for Lay Apostolate or “BILA.” Today we start BILA I, hopefully to be followed by BILA II, III, and even more, in other parts of Asia, in order to share experiences in the work, to inspire, to train and to integrate more intimately the laity into the mission of our Asian Churches.

The BILA program will be “eminently practical,” with theological input and the presentation of some models for forming lay people in the apostolate. Each delegation will report on the development of lay participation in its country. As part of the training program the participants will visit the Taiwan mountain village of Tili Tsun, which is considered the cradle of the lay apostle movement in Taiwan. In 1971 Father Leonard Marron started the volunteer apostle movement there with seven volunteers.

One unique approach was to choose the participants on a “team basis,” with bishop, his director of lay apostolate, and laity coming as a group, to enable them to go through the process together and to return to adapt to the home situation what was learned here.
Thanks again for coming, thanks for your co-operation and encouragement, and a sincere request for your prayers, so that BILA I and the BILAs to come, will serve their purpose in assisting the bishops of Asia to enter into a greater dialogue and partnership with our Asian laity.

II. INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

The Bishops’ Institute for the Lay Apostolate, held at Manresa House, in Changhua, Taiwan, Republic of China, October 31-November 9, 1984, was the first of a series planned by the Committee for the Laity of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences. Their aim is to deepen an awareness of the importance of the lay person’s role in the mission of the Church and to develop effective training methods that will enable the laity and clergy in their respective roles to share the responsibility for the work of the Church in its service of the Kingdom of God.

Sixteen bishops, seventeen priests, three sisters and sixteen lay men and women from the East Asian — or what has been called the “Chopsticks Region” of FABC — Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, gathered together at Manresa House, Changhua, Taiwan on the evening of October 31, 1984, to take part in BILA I, which lasted until the morning of November 9.

The mechanics of the institute were geared less towards a theological and theoretical input and more towards a sharing of actual successful experiences of lay training and involvement in the respective countries represented at the institute, with a view to exploring practical approaches in lay leadership training, to be implemented after the participants returned home.

To achieve this goal there were three main stresses:

A. Each morning a short theological presentation on some aspect of lay apostolate, by a guest speaker.
B. A presentation of a successful model of training and involvement of lay people, by a resource person.
C. A report and panel discussion on the involvement of lay people in the apostolate.

Each day there was also an open forum for questions and clarifications regarding the inputs and models. Every afternoon the national or regional groups met to discuss the material presented and explore the implications for their own situation.
Preparatory Papers
The papers represented the realities of the local situation and did indeed open the way to dialogue:

- The Layman and the Church Today, by Fr. P. Chang, S.D.B. (R.O.C.)
- Trusting, Entrusting the Laity, by Bishop Francisco F. Claver, S.J. (Philippines)
- Training of the Laity, by Fr. Luke Tsui (Hong Kong)
- The Asian Church and the Laity, by Fr. G. Pica, S.J. (R.O.C.)
- Women and Evangelization, by Mrs. Theresa Oh (Korea)
- Clergy-Laity Partnership and Co-operation, by Fr. J. Heyndrickx, C.I.C.M. (R.O.C.)
- The Theory of Temporary Substitution, by Fr. J. Brena, S.J. (R.O.C.)
- The Laity in a Multiethnic, Multireligious Milieu, by Mr. M.S. Chooi (Malaysia)

Models of Lay Action and Presentations
The sharing of experiences, of joys and "hard knocks," kept our feet on the ground:

- The Legion of Mary and Marriage Encounter in Korea, by Mr. J. Hahn
- The Parish Councils, by Fr. L. McCabe (R.O.C.)
- The Pontifical Council of the Laity, by Mr. M.S. Chooi (Malaysia)
- Barrio Church and Community Leader Training and Work, by Bishop F. Claver
- The Lumko Missiological Institute in South Africa, by Fr. F. Lobinger (S. Africa)
- Volunter Apostles' Training in Taiwan, by Fr. J. Brena, S.J.
- Reports by country were presented by one or two of the participating delegates from each country.

Arising from reflection on the inputs, models and reports on the present situation of the lay apostolate in these countries, the following point became clear: The reality of lay involvement today in our East Asian Region does not match up to the vision of Vatican II twenty years long past.

Some reasons put forward for this gap between the ideal and the reality are:

1. Although many of the clergy and the laity are familiar with the
words of Vatican II, and often speak of sharing, dialogue, and co-responsibility, it is clear that the implications of these values are not understood, and as a result we do not have a participatory model of Church.

2. The passivity of the laity, arising from a long period in which the common priesthood of all the baptized was downgraded, with the resulting tendency to see the ordained minister as the only form of priesthood and leadership in the Church. Hence, the laity in too many cases expect and are content to let the priest do all the leading.

3. In some cases, priests, not having a deep understanding of the respective roles of the priest and laity, are afraid or unwilling to share responsibility with the laity. Consequently, priests often resort to tradition and the law to defend their area of jurisdiction.

4. Where the clergy and the laity do have a clear grasp of the vision of Vatican II and are willing to work together in a partnership of brotherhood and sisterhood, very often they do not know how to go about building this model of Church.

During the meeting the search for concrete plans for action was left to the various national and regional groups. On the last day each group presented a plan of action which they hope to implement when they return home to their respective areas.

A unique feature of this Bishops’ Institute was that the bishops formally invited participants who were not bishops to join them at this conference. There were priests, sisters and lay people present and there was one married couple in the Japanese delegation.

Another feature was the attempt to invite people to come as a team — ideally a bishop with one of his priests and a lay person — so that they could more conveniently work together when they returned home. The ideal was not achieved in all cases but the seed of the idea was sown and appreciated.

At the end of BILA I there was a sense among the participants that the actual make-up of the participants, of bishops, priest and laity, and the style of dialogue that took place, may in themselves be an indication of the way forward. The willingness on the part of the bishops to open the doors of their deliberation to the ideas and suggestions of the priests, sisters and laity, was a prophetic act of trust, an act of faith in the presence of the Spirit not only in the ordained ministers but among the whole People of God.
Evaluation and Comments

In general, the final evaluations made by the national groups were very positive, with a high degree of consensus, and very definite on the strategic value of BILA’s approach for our FABC Churches.

1. Aim The groups agreed that the aim of BILA I was “clear and practical,” though some individual participants came in with some different preconceived expectations of their own. All affirmed unanimously that inputs were well related to the aim, though all felt that inputs and models could have been fewer.

2. National Groups All complained that the time allotted to the national group discussions was not enough to allow participants to go deeper into the content, application to local circumstances and the difficulties raised in the inputs and models presentation.

3. The Format It was found quite satisfactory, though the balance between inputs, models, reports and national groups discussions was unfavorable to the latter.

The working atmosphere was outstanding, but the daily time schedule was too tight and left little or no leisure time for personal reflection. The most rewarding experience for all and in particular for the laity was the cross-section sharing, living, praying, recreating and searching together for ten days as a common concern of bishops, priests, sisters and laity for the building up of a community Church after Vatican II.

4. Living accommodations These were rated from “comfortable” to “very good.” The secretariat, excellent; the food, enough. A national group was extremely polite to say that it was “too(!) good.” The organizers did not feel that way, especially on the first day, and asked their forgiveness.

5. A Few Suggestions
   a) BILA I deserves a good follow-up.
   b) In future BILAs we should try to solve the language problem through simultaneous translation.
   c) Mass should be celebrated in the national languages and with some local color. Each national group could rotate in conducting the Eucharistic celebration. The participants were very pleased with the solemn way in which the Chinese Mass was celebrated on the last day.
   d) Exposure — it was enough, though a group asked for more of it, especially visits to local parishes. Some outside dinners could be omitted.
e) Make each day some kind of a national day, in which a particular country group will deliver inputs, models, reports and conduct the liturgy of that day.

f) Happy hour satisfactory, enjoyable.

g) Five working days (instead of eight) should be sufficient for future BILAs.

h) Written notes on the inputs and models should be distributed before the actual presentation.

III. An Overall View of the Asian Context in Which the Laity Must Fulfil Their Mission*

by Bishop Alan de Lastic

As a bishop from Asia, I will attempt to present a panoramic view of the Church in Asia, mentioning the main realities and challenges facing it, so that within this context the laity of Asia represented here may discern these events, reflect on them in the light of their own faith, and prepare suitable programs for action.

Asia is the cradle of the Great Religions of the world. It is not our purpose to inquire into the causes of this phenomenon but to accept it as it is and to reflect on it, as a challenge to the Gospel. Hinduism in all its varied expressions, Buddhism, Zen, Confucianism, Shintoism, Sikhism, Jainism, Zoroastianism, Islam, all have a large following in Asia.

From the missionary viewpoint it is my opinion that Christianity has made little headway when it has come into contact or confrontation with these organized religions. This is a practical assessment which must be faced courageously. Why is this? The phenomenon merits special scientific study and deep reflection. It is not merely a question of the Christian message obtaining a numerical increase in its adherents or extending itself geographically. We must find out why the Gospel has had such little visible impact on these religions. These religions and their followers are closely allied to highly developed cultures, as is clear from the richness of their literatures, written languages in poetry and prose, drama, dances, art, music, festivals, philosophy, spirituality and forms of worship. What deep influence has Christianity had on these cultures

* This paper was presented at the Asian Laity Meeting, sponsored by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, in Hong Kong, December 2-6, 1983, with the co-operation of the FABC Committee for the Laity, of which Bishop de Lastic is a member of the executive board.
and religions which inspired them? In my opinion the effect has been minimal. It may well be that these cultures and religions still captivate the people because of the inherent good, beauty and truth in them. Since these values have their origin in one source, God, must not the Church seek to preserve these values which belong to the whole human race?

The claim of some of these religions to self-sufficiency makes the acceptance of an objective and historical revelation and redemption difficult. Christianity is also regarded as a newcomer in the quest of men for salvation, since many of these religions existed long before Christ was born.

It is also maintained that Christianity has had no impact on the religions and cultures of Asia because it was presented in a Western garb.

The Church in many countries in Asia has already made rapid strides in inculturation so that the Gospel message, which is universal in its essence, may be adapted to the people of the soil. The Gospel message cannot divest itself completely of the cultures in which it first grew historically; nevertheless in its essence it transcends all cultures so that no one culture can lay claim to a monopoly in proclaiming it. Some forty years ago one of our indologists summarized the relationship of Christianity to culture in the following sentence:

Culture is the ennoblement of man by human ingenuity; Christianity is the divinization of man by divine generosity.

The Church has grappled with this problem over the centuries, and still struggles with it today, especially in our continent of Asia, with its rich variety of developed cultures. The Second Vatican Council has already given some guidelines in a beautiful passage from the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions:

The Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions. She looks with sincere respect upon these ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed she proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, “the Way the Truth, and the Life” in whom men find the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to himself.

The Church therefore has this exhortation for her sons; prudently and lovingly through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, to
acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture. (*Nostra Aetate*, 2)

Three important guidelines emerge from this passage:

1) The Church must uncompromisingly proclaim the fullness of Truth, which is Christ himself.
2) It must approach these religions in a spirit of loving dialogue.
3) It must preserve and promote authentic values found in these cultures.

This problem is being dealt with in almost every Asian country by institutes of higher learning and culture, including our seminaries. At the level of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, through the Bishops' Institutes for Missionary Apostolate (BIMA) and the Bishops' Institutes for Interreligious Affairs (BIRA), special guidelines and orientation papers have already been prepared. The question before this conference is: How far has the lay person been involved in all this?

The reasons offered above for the slow progress of Christianity in Asia are plausible, but to my mind another very important factor is responsible for this, which is very relevant for this meeting, namely, the fact that evangelization, missionary activity and dialogue have all along throughout the years been undertaken almost exclusively by the clergy and religious, and the *laity have not been utilized to fulfil their mission in these fields*. The vast bulk of the People of God in Asia has not been directly involved in this work. Once this fact is accepted and acknowledged, practical remedies at workshop level may be suggested.

I would like to make a reference also to the tribal religions in the various countries of Asia. It is a fact that Christianity has found many followers among the tribals. While this is a great consolation, it should not leave us complacent, for the greater bulk of the Asian population is yet to be influenced by the Christian Gospel. Moreover, in this field, where “missionary activity” in the strict sense of the terms used by the Council is prevalent, the proclamation of the Gospel to those who have not yet heard of Christ should go hand in hand with a deep scientific study of the anthropology, culture, living habits of these people, so that the principles outlined by the Council regarding the role of the Church in promoting and preserving spiritual and moral values may be utilized. These new groups must be helped to preserve their own culture and retain their identity, while at the same time they should be helped to avoid becoming exclusive. Under the inspiration of the Gospel their Christian
life of witness, service and worship must be assisted to express itself in their own culture.

The Conciliar Document on the Missions expresses itself thus:

But whatever truth and grace are to be found among the nations, as a sort of secret presence of God, this activity frees from all taint of evil and restores to Christ its maker, who overthrows the devil’s domain and wards off the manifold malice of vice. And so whatever good is found to be in the hearts and minds of men, or in the rites and cultures peculiar to various peoples, is not lost. More than that it is healed, ennobled, and perfected for the glory of God, the shame of the demon, and the bliss of men. (Ad Gentes, 9)

This conciliar document even envisages the rise and growth of “particular Churches” at a more mature stage of development, when the new community with its own bishops, priests, religious and lay persons, united in themselves, become instruments of further evangelization, preserving at all times “an intimate communion with the Universal Church.” No doubt the document is not limited to the tribal people only, but also to all developing nations where the word of God is sown, takes root and blossoms fully. The growth of these young Churches is already a phenomenon in this Asian continent, and the role of the laity is once again emphasized by the Council as a prerequisite for maturity:

The Church has not been truly established, and is not yet fully alive, nor is it a perfect sign of Christ among men, unless there exists a laity worthy of the name working along with the hierarchy. For the Gospel cannot be deeply imprinted on the talents, life and work of any people without the active presence of laymen. Therefore, even in the very founding of a Church, the greatest attention is to be paid to raising up a mature Christian laity. (Ad Gentes, 21)

2. Apart from a few countries, most of the others of Asia can be termed developing nations, and a general review of their socioeconomic and political life is difficult but necessary.

The Asian nations by and large are immersed in a struggle for a more just society, a more human society, where the benefits of human progress are made available to all. The Church in Asia must follow the lead given by the present Holy Father and his predecessors through their numerous social encyclicals and teachings in guiding the people of God, especially the laity, in meeting the challenges of the socioeconomic and
political fields. The specific role of the Church, however, must be clearly defined. On the one hand, if she is to be the "sign and sacrament of salvation to the world," she cannot isolate herself from the problems of her people, and yet, on the other hand, it is not for her to provide a ready-made solution to any and every given situation.

In the face of grinding poverty and other man-made social evils experienced by the bulk of the Asian peoples the Church in Asia must endorse the statement of the Synod of Bishops in 1971 on Justice in the World:

Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel.

However, no ready-made solution can be offered by the Church in Asia to meet situations which are both complex and varied. A passage from one encyclical of Pope Paul VI is relevant:

In the face of such widely varying situations it is difficult for us to utter a unified message and to put forward a solution which has universal validity. Such is not our ambition, nor is it our mission. It is up to the Christian communities to analyse with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel’s unalterable words, and to draw principles of reflection, norms of judgment and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church. (Octogesima Adveniens, 4)

We are aware of the various movements launched by some groups in the Churches in the various countries of Asia, aimed at bringing about a just society, through the transformation in the consciousness of Christians who have to live in a world that is marked by social, economic and political injustice. To retain their authenticity they must be inspired throughout by evangelical love, which is the actual force that changes the lives of persons and transforms society. These efforts must follow closely the directives laid down time and again in the social doctrine of the Church. The transformation of persons and society must not remain on the socioeconomic and political level only, but it must eradicate the very cause of injustice which is sin, in its individual and collective manifestations. Full development is achieved only when the image and likeness of God in man is fully restored, and he is once again an adopted son of the heavenly Father who sees in him the image and likeness of Christ. There is no place for hatred in this movement of evangelical love.
which inspires a preferential option for the poor. Peace and harmony are not brought about by the conflict of opposites but by the acceptance of evangelical love in both factions. I would like to quote here a relevant extract from the document sent to the Synod by the bishops of India:

The Church in her task of reconciliation must also enter into solidarity, especially with the poor and the marginalized. The Church must identify herself with the legitimate concerns and champion the cause, particularly of: a) the exploited unorganized laborers, b) landless agricultural workers, c) scheduled castes, tribes and backward class, d) the increasing number of the unemployed poor.

Another area in the Church’s tasks of reconciliation is involvement at the grassroots level. This work of reconciliation inspired by authentic Christian love would demand first that the oppressed are helped to take initiatives for their own liberation and then identify and remove the causes of oppression. This liberation as an integral part of reconciliation, while excluding conciliation (which is only peaceful co-existence leaving intact causes of injustice), will stand for methods of non-violence and peacemaking profoundly inspired by the life of Christ and the Sermon on the Mount and enriched by the Indian tradition of ahimsa (practice of non-violent resistance rooted in love) and satyagraha (fidelity to truth) as interpreted and practised by Gandhi. In the Christian view of integral liberation, both the oppressed and the oppressors mutually challenged to conversion by the Gospel, when liberated, healed and reconciled, enter into the project of a new humanity of the Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus, in which they begin to live in a changed relationship of justice, equality, dignity and brotherhood of God’s family. (No. 16)

Finally it must be borne in mind that this movement for working towards justice and peace in the Asian continent must maintain an international dimension, and should not be viewed as an isolated event without any relation to similar movements all over the world.

In an effort to improve the lot of its people not a few countries in Asia, fascinated by the speedy acquisition of power and material progress by China and Russia, have been tempted to turn to extreme forms of socialism as a solution to all the evils in the socioeconomic and political spheres. This has entailed disastrous consequences for the freedom, development and dignity of the human person, who is then reduced to a mere cog in the wheel of material advancement.
While it is heartening to see some countries adopting a government modelled on the pattern of a parliamentary democracy, it is sad to note that on closer analysis it is a few powerful groups which control the lives and destinies of the majority who are denied a just participation in the decisions affecting them. Bribery and corruption, nepotism, wastage of public funds without effective controls of accountability are too often prevalent in these regimes.

The Asian scene is also replete with its quota of military dictatorships, which justify and consolidate their status by maintaining that such a regime is essential for the nation if it is to progress rapidly, or if it is to survive attacks from without or terrorist upheavals from within. In these regimes it is clear that power is controlled by a small group of the elite who enjoy special privileges. Participation of the people at large is minimal or absent; hence it is hard to visualize how a genuine process of human development can take place.

We are also conscious of the fact that Asia has within its confines a few totalitarian regimes where people are denied their human rights, of liberty, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religious beliefs and practices. Indefinite detention without trial, torture and other inhuman forms of physical and mental punishment are meted out to our Asian brothers and sisters. We unhesitatingly condemn such a brutal suppression of human rights and sympathize with the innocent victims of injustice. We will not cease from using the media at our disposal constantly to draw the attention of the peoples of the free world to these atrocities, in the hope that peace and justice may be restored.

We must mention another phenomenon that affects most developing nations and especially those in Asia. Many of the countries in this continent are new by world standards, that is, they have asserted their identity and have obtained their autonomy from colonial powers in the last few decades. However, it is tragic to see that political independence has been replaced by a crippling economic dependence on the more developed nations. Huge monetary loans, instead of playing a catalytic role, have unfortunately hampered the growth towards self-reliance. Even in trade agreements the Asian countries are usually on the losing side of the bargain. How can peace and justice reign when the greater part of the world’s wealth is controlled and enjoyed by a minority?

Following this trend, we are also aware of the tremendous potential in the labor force of the Asian countries, and of the instances where this is cheaply exploited by vested interests to increase their own wealth. The few rich are rendered richer by impoverishing the vast multitudes of the poor. The Church in every Asian country must champion the just cause
of the worker, and see that his dignity and his rights are respected. The worker is a person with all that the word implies, and must on no account be reduced to a commodity utilized and exploited for economic gain.

Like other developing nations most of the countries in Asia have fallen victims to the arms race. Military dictatorships, more than other governments, plead for arms for survival as a protection from external aggression or from internal subversive forces. The arguments put forward for the possession and use of arms are very fallacious. “We want peace so that we can work for ourselves.” The huge amounts of money spent on armaments make a gaping hole in the budgets of developing nations and hamper the growth towards self-reliance and full development. It is thus self-defeating. As soon as one country purchases a few weapons, the others which consider themselves threatened rush to the markets of armaments to keep the balance. The staggering prices of sophisticated weapons are in proportion to their effectiveness as instruments of mass destruction. Once more it is the poorer nations who are forced to support this lucrative business venture of the more developed countries, and their dependence induces a new form of economic slavery. The Synod of Bishops of 1971 expresses this very appropriately:

The arms race is a threat to man’s highest good, which is life: it makes poor peoples and individuals yet more miserable, while making richer those already powerful; it creates a continuous danger of conflagration, and in the case of nuclear arms, it threatens to destroy all life from the face of the earth. (Justice in the World, 9)

The Holy Father in his message to the peoples of Latin America after the Puebla Conference says:

Another thing that sends a shudder through our hearts is the arms race, which continues to engender instruments of death. It involves the sad ambiguity of confusing the right of national defence with the ambitious pursuit of illicit profit. It will not serve to fashion peace.

In an address to scientists recently he told them:

We must disarm science and form a force for peace. ... The only war to be waged is that on hunger. Millions of people could be saved from famine with a mere seven percent of the money rich nations spend on war weapons.
The Synod of Bishops of 1983 condemns:

The building up of arsenals of both conventional and especially nuclear arms and the scandalous trade in all weapons of war.

Another challenge comes from the very instruments which the Asian nations hoped will assist in their growth and development. Technology and techniques imported from the developed countries unfortunately bring in their train deep secularization and dehumanization, with a consequent loss of genuine and authentic spiritual, moral and cultural values. Many an Asian nation has sold its moral and spiritual leadership for material advancement. These influences have had a disastrous effect on the Asian family and society. This wave of materialism has infected many aspects of human life in Asia and even the Church and her institutions have not escaped its evil influence.

Of all the continents, Asia has the largest population in the world, and the cry of “overpopulation” has led many nations to adopt programs of population control which are at variance with the Gospel of Christ. The Church, especially through the laity, must meet this challenge, and, while recognizing the need for limiting the population, have recourse to methods which are in accord with Christian moral principles. Programs and plans for integral human development of the nations must be undertaken in conformity with sound morality. The inviolability of the human person, the sacredness of human life, at all moments of human existence — from conception to the end — must be defended at all costs. The right to be born is an inalienable human right which can never be taken away, nor subordinated to other human needs.

As the countries of Asia try to grow and develop, urbanization seems to be a necessary consequence. A town soon becomes a city, and a city a vast metropolis, because agrarian reform has not had the desired effect. Somehow the economy in the countryside has broken down and cannot provide the type of human existence required today. The influx into the cities where the wealth and power are usually concentrated brings in its train a host of social and moral evils which create serious pastoral problems. Asian cities have their quota of slums, shanties, inhuman living conditions, liquor and drug dens, houses of ill-repute and other evils. The poor are too often pushed out to live on the outskirts in miserable dwellings which are in marked contrast with the multi-storied buildings of those who are better off. Tremendous pressures are exerted on people due to overcrowding. The struggle to obtain employment, the effort to share limited facilities like water, electricity, sanitary arrangements, educational and medical institutions, are constant sources of
tension and conflict. To meet this challenge, the laity must work in close collaboration with the pastoral clergy so that strong bonds of fraternal relationships may be established among the dwellers of the city.

Another striking characteristic of this continent is the fact that the largest segment of the Asian population is composed of youth. This group should be the primary concern of the Church, since the future of the Church and the Asian countries depends on the care and attention that is given to the youth of today. Having left the shelter of their homes and institutions, they are thrown out to face the complex and harsh realities of the world. Their youthful hopes and aspirations are very often dashed to the ground when they encounter a series of frustrations, such as lack of dialogue with the adult generation, failure to secure training and employment and failure to obtain security for the future. In spite of these obstacles the potentialities of youth are immense and have to be utilized for the transformation of the Church and society in Asia. Their generosity, spirit of sacrifice, readiness to risk themselves and make radical commitments, their creativity and adaptability to changing situations, their resilience, their frank rejection of hypocrisy, and their demands for simplicity and authenticity make them the most powerful force for the renewal of the Asian Church and society. The Church in Asia represented here must make a preferential option for the youth in this continent.

One of the most neglected groups in Asian society are women. The women of Asia have a long way to go before it can be said that their dignity and role in the Church and society have been acknowledged. Evils against the status and dignity of women still exist in many of our Asian countries: abortion of the female foetus, undue restriction of the freedom of movement of women, an exaggerated dowry system, rape, prostitution, exploitation of cheap labor, discrimination in wages and employment, the degradation of womanhood in the films, advertisements and other instruments of the mass media are only a few of the social evils perpetrated against women. Of late, unscrupulous agents in not a few Asian cities, taking advantage of the improved facilities for travel round the world, offer the “availability of women” as an added tourist attraction. In the face of such glaring injustices, the Church in Asia, especially through the laity, must initiate effective programs to restore to the women of Asia their equality and dignity, their proper role in the mission of the Church, and their mission in the world.

Finally, our pastoral concern must take note of the vast upheavals of people who migrate from one place to another or from one country to another either because of economic necessity or as a result of violence
caused by wars, invasions, communal hatred and genocide. These migrants who have been uprooted from their homes and families through force of circumstances merit our special care and attention when they arrive in an alien country, among peoples racially and culturally different from themselves. The Church must initiate programs for pastoral care, and with brotherly love assist other agencies, public and voluntary, in their efforts to rehabilitate them, to reunite their families, provide the necessities of life, especially decent housing and employment, and finally integrate them into the existing peoples among whom they have taken refuge.

I have made an attempt to place before this conference the overall view of the situation in which the Church finds itself in this continent of Asia. I have done this as a bishop and a pastor, not as an expert, and I join you in prayerful reflection, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to discern these events and suggest practical proposals so that the purpose of convoking this assembly may find a beginning towards fulfilment.

I have been requested also to indicate what practical steps I would take as a bishop to enable the laity to fulfil their God-given role in the Church’s life and mission in Asian society. I venture a few suggestions here.

It is clear that if the laity are to fulfil their mission, they must be adequately prepared and trained for the task. I would therefore place great emphasis on the integral formation of the laity. This will assume both a generic and specific form.

1. In general, the day-to-day building up of the Christian community by our parish priests, their collaborators and our teachers in educational institutions through a constant catechesis, which aims at deepening our Christian life and strengthening our communion with Christ, must continue.

2. More specifically, the doctrines of the Church, the directives of the Council, the day-to-day statements of the Holy Father must somehow be made available to the laity. Perhaps those skilled in catechetics and in the use of the mass media could be a great help. This communication gap in handing down the teachings of the Church must be bridged. It is primarily through the laity that the Church is present in the vast world of human affairs, called the “temporal order” or the “social milieu,” hence it is imperative that they know and understand the viewpoint of the Church on vital issues which affect human society so that their witness will be more authentic and effective.
3. A right understanding and acceptance of the proper roles of the various sectors of the People of God, especially in the light of Conciliar teaching, is essential:

a) The role of the bishop in assisting the laity, the discernment and proper utilization of their gifts and charisms, the co-ordination of the lay apostolate, etc;

b) The role of the clergy and religious should also be clearly defined. Clergy and religious must at all times assist the laity to exercise their proper though not exclusive role in such fields as development, mass media, certain areas of Church administration, economic affairs, public life, the arts and culture and political institutions. In these fields of the lay apostolate wherever priests occupy positions which should be held by lay persons steps should be taken for a speedy transfer. Priests should evaluate the priorities of their ministry in this regard. It is a fact that the laity in Asia is still too heavily dependent on the clergy who seem to retain a dominant role. Until this situation is remedied and the laity is given its proper place both in the Church and in the Church’s mission to the world, the laity in Asia will never come of age.

c) Systematic courses of specialized training should be organized in dioceses, and if possible in parishes and institutes of higher learning and research, for the ongoing formation of the laity to prepare them for the various fields of the lay apostolates:

i) in the evangelization of the various cultures, through the universities and colleges.

ii) to have lay persons available to work with priests and religious in their effort to enter into dialogue with the Great Religions of Asia.

iii) the vast world of mass media and communications, the press, radio and television. The need to train lay journalists to utilize the secular press is an urgent one.

iv) public life and leadership in the political field where the destinies of nations are decided.

v) human development, especially in the socioeconomic sphere, with a preferential option for the poor.

No doubt these training programs will entail a lot of expenditure, but if this is chosen as a priority, then the finances must be obtained somehow. So much is spent on the training of priests and religious — why can’t we spend more on training the lay person for the lay apostolate?

d) Lay persons should also be trained to work along with the catechists in the field of “missionary activity.” We must think in terms
of having full-time lay missionaries supported by the Church and given the authority and security enjoyed by priests and religious.

e) Pastoral planning should involve the participation of more and more lay persons through diocesan pastoral councils and other parish councils.

f) All existing organizations of the lay apostolate should be evaluated and brought up-to-date in the light of Conciliar teaching to meet the challenge facing the Church’s mission in Asia.

g) Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the universal call to holiness is being answered through the emergence of new groups of lay persons who are genuinely interested in deepening their Christian life and dedicating themselves fully to their mission.

It is the task of the bishop to exercise his pastoral care and after proper discernment assist and guide these groups by providing them with spiritual directors noted for their learning and virtue. These groups should also be helped to integrate themselves into the life of the parish and diocese. The possibility of forming dedicated lay persons to assist these spiritual directors, at least at the doctrinal and inspirational level, could be examined. The special talents and charisms of individual lay leaders should also be acknowledged and utilized.

h) Suitable lay persons should also be prepared to give retreats and spiritual conferences to assist the Christian community in its growth.

i) At the diocesan and parish level existing groups of women should be mobilized to initiate programs for the emancipation of women, so that their dignity and their role in the mission of the Church and in the world may be fulfilled.

j) The efforts made by the Church in each country to care for the youth need to be strengthened. Bishops should see that specially-trained chaplains are made available, while suitable lay persons could be trained to assist them.

k) Special emphasis should be laid on an ongoing catechesis to deepen the Christian life of families, making use of existing organizations, such as the Catholic Family Movement and others, initiating marriage preparation courses, etc. This is an area where the laity must be deeply involved.
I) Finally, in this year of reconciliation, stress should be placed on the role of the laity as instruments of peace and harmony among individuals and groups, which in the Asian context are divided by unhappy structures of caste, language, social status and even religion.

These are the practical proposals which as a bishop I place before this assembly in a spirit of sharing.

In conclusion, I would like all of us here present to be convinced that this assembly has been summoned by the grace of the Holy Spirit acting through the leaders of the Church. St. Paul, in the well-known passage of his letter to the Ephesians, writes:

He has let us know the mystery of his purpose, the hidden plan he so kindly made in Christ from the beginning, to act upon when the times had run their course to the end.

Day by day, from event to event, the mystery of the plan of God through Christ is unfolding and being revealed to the Church and to the world as the People of God live in history. It is through the People of God in Asia that the faith received from Christ through the apostles is made present in this continent. In the words of one of our Catholic theologians:

It is ... believers themselves in the Christian community who make revelation present here and now by their own faith and by making Christian revelation their own. This faith here and now brings revelation into the saeculum of the twentieth century.

It is my sincere hope that this conference will enable the People of God in Asia to make the message of Christ present and relevant to this continent.

IV. TRUSTING, ENTRUSTING THE LAITY
by Bishop Francisco F. Claver, S.J.

Prenote

The old Code of Canon Law was too skimpy in its treatment of the laity and their role in the Church. It defined the layman simply by saying he was neither a cleric nor a religious. This would be like saying "an orange is a fruit that is not an apple" — not much of a definition. The new Code is more fruitful, a result of the fuller treatment given the laity by Vatican II and of the ecclesiology (or ecclesiologies) of the same Council.
Our concern here are the implications for the apostolate of the laity stemming from Vatican II presuppositions.

The Problem of Roles in the Church

There has been plenty of rethinking and redefining of roles in the Church since Vatican II and as a result of Vatican II.

The concept of “role” is a sociological concept. In brief it means the sum of stable and permanent relationships, duties, obligations, rights, etc., that a person has in a society as a member of that society. Thus, to have an idea of the role of lay people in the Church, we would have to examine the relationships they have in regard to others (e.g., clergy), their duties, their rights. We would also have to have an idea of what the Church is as a society, what our vision of the Church is — i.e., look into the ecclesiology that the parish, the diocese, the base community is modeled on.

For understanding any human society, there is need of social analysis to find out how it is actually structured (social relationships make up a society’s structure); also of cultural analysis to see what values govern social relationships. And since we are concerned with the Church as a society, we would also need an analysis of faith values. (This threefold analysis is crucial for inculturation if we define inculturation as the synthesis people make of faith and cultures.)

Impetus from Vatican II

There are three key ideas, all coming from Vatican II, that have much to do with our rethinking of the role of the laity as well as of our concept of Church itself: dialogue, participation, and co-responsibility.

**Dialogue:** People of faith have to talk with one another, share with one another the thinking and reflecting that they do on the faith.

**Participation:** Christians form a community of faith and they must participate actively in the life and concerns of the community. They must involve themselves in common action for that life.

**Co-responsibility:** In the action for the life of the community, every member is responsible. Not just the leaders but all the members must carry the burden of responsibility for the life of the community.

The common note of these three basic ideas is *sharing* — which is actually nothing more than Christ’s mandate of charity. Hence, the
communion model of the Church that is prominent in Vatican II. A Vatican II Church is essentially a participatory Church.

The three ideas are also values. If made operative, their implications worked out at any level of Church, they will result in a truly renewed Church.

Implications for Mission

"Go, preach the Gospel to every creature." In terms of Vatican II, this passage from Matthew will mean: "Go, share what you have received from me; Go, make others share in the same way."

Taking mission in the more particular sense of preaching to non-Christians, we would have to say: The missionary does not only give; he must also receive. And so too must the missionary’s "converts" receive and give.

What’s received and given? Not faith itself, because only God gives this — a free gift. But the missionary shares his understanding and living of the faith as he knows it (influenced by his cultural background) and the convert does the same (from his own background). In this way, both get enriched.

Implications for Pastoral work

Hierarchy and clergy do not only give; they must also receive. So too the laity. The sharing that goes on in a participatory church must be geared at all times to the fuller life of the community. Only in this context will the rather excessive stress on power and authority that marked pre-Vatican II relationships between clergy and laity begin to disappear. For when everyone becomes genuinely concerned with the Church’s life, different questions are asked — questions about promoting and sharing faith, for example, questions in which every believer has full competence.

The Fundamental Pastoral Task

In the light of all that has been said, the (institutional) Church’s main task is to enable the laity to share God’s goodness with the world; to communicate the Good News to others in word and act; to build themselves up into real communities of faith; in short, to help build up the Kingdom.

Christ once told Peter: "When you have been converted, confirm the brethren." This is one way of summarizing the Church’s pastoral
task. It is the simplest of formulas, but it will be good for any life-
situation of the Church. It sums up what we all should be doing whether
we live in a free country or under a Communist regime.

By pastoral we can mean "the care of souls" — with an emphasis
on the spiritual good of people. Or we could mean "the promotion of
integral human development" — with more attention to justice, human
rights, the general well-being of people. We take it here to mean some-
thing more humble: mediating the salvific dialogue that must take place
between the Spirit and his people — an enabling function.

**Enabling the Laity**

The enabling is geared towards the greater and greater participation
of the laity in the life of the Church, towards bringing about a truly
participating Church.

There is only one formula that works: *Let* the institutional Church
allow the laity to participate — as lay people. In the matter of ministries
lay people must participate not because there is a shortage of priests but
because such ministries belong to them as lay.

The enabling role of the clergy is especially important because
historically church leadership has been vested in them. But the laity have
an enabling role too for the same reason; they too must share in the
responsibility of leadership.

**Vatican II Church Attitudes**

If new values (dialogue, participation, co-responsibility) have to be
developed for a participatory Church, so too must new *attitudes*. Two
are especially needed: learning and trust. (These are especially needed for
the clerical part of the Church. But they apply also to the laity.)

*Learning* is called for where dialogue becomes ordinary. There has
been too much stress on the teaching role of the Church. This attitude of
learning is of great necessity where inculturation is a special concern of
the Church.

*Trust* is needed in the face of a "practical heresy" we have been
quite guilty of. The heresy is in this that we act as if lay people will go
wrong without the guidance of the hierarchy. Where co-responsibility is
an accepted value, trust in the laity must be the accompanying attitude.
The Basis of the Twofold Attitude

The basis of demanding learning and trust as attitudes is our faith in the Spirit. Another way of stating the "practical heresy" mentioned above is that we seem to believe the Holy Spirit speaks mainly through the hierarchy (the teaching Church). The fact is he moves in the whole Church, speaks through the whole Church (both clerical and lay). We accept the fact actually in our honoring of the sensus fidei fidelium (the sense of faith of the faithful) — except that we do not give it the pride of place it deserves. Our concern is not to downgrade the magisterium but to upgrade the less favored part of the Church through which the Spirit also speaks.

A concrete expression of the Church's faith in the Spirit is the formation of BCC (Basic Christian Communities), the full working of which includes a strong practical faith in the action of the Spirit in the community of believers. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." The enabling task that we make a great part of pastoral work thus also means allowing the Spirit to speak through the laity.

Lay Leaders in a Participative Church

Most experiments in training lay leaders in the Church end up forming clericalized lay leaders. It is an inevitable outcome since the only model of leadership in the Church is clerical. Hence the need of developing a model of lay leaders as lay — necessarily a hit-or-miss operation initially. But already real models are being developed in the context of BCCs.

Two types of leadership show up in our experience so far: the directing and the evoking types. In the first, the leader leads mostly by teaching, by telling people what to do. In the second, he leads by literally calling out — hence, evoking — the ideas about the responses to a problem or question from the community, articulating them, then throwing them back to the community for decision. The evoking type of leadership is what is needed most in a participative society.

The Laity in a Participatory Society

What happens within a participatory Church (i.e. in its building up) will necessarily have an impact on the wider secular society of which it is part. A community of faith does not only look inward into its life as a Church. It must also look outward, see what it can do to inject Gospel values into the wider secular society for its transformation unto the Kingdom. This is the larger problem of the Church's insertion into the

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world and it is the laity who bear the brunt of the problem. Again, the same principles of dialogue, participation and co-responsibility have much to do with their task “in the world.”

The question of lay spirituality comes up here. Basically it is no different from traditional spiritualities in the fact of its grounding in the Gospel of Christ — and in this sense there is only one spirituality. But how this one spirituality has to be expressed and to “activate” the lay person — this still has to be worked out. The problem is analogous to the problem of working out a model of lay leadership where the only extant model is clerical (or in our case, monastic). The idea of sharing one’s self with others in the task of personal and social transformation has plenty to say to the problem.

The Problem of Ecclesiology

Lay participation in the life of the Church can take place in any kind of Church. But the modes of participation will vary according to the kind of Church one finds in any given country, diocese or parish. Hence the need of analysis — and more, of a theology of Church expressing a people’s vision of the Church. This theology should be explicitated as much as possible — if only for self-understanding.

If one seeks to bring about a truly Vatican II Church, he must move in the direction of a dialogic, involved and co-responsible laity and of a leadership (both lay and clerical) that is more evocative than directive.

V. THE THEORY OF TEMPORARY SUBSTITUTION
by Fr. Jess S. Brenen, S.J.

Introduction

We all, bishops and priests, have been ordained to perform a definite concrete task in the building up of the Body of Christ. Theologians have often described beautifully our role in the Church. We need to be reminded of it, especially today, when we are becoming fewer and older, in order to zero our efforts in to what we were called to do as ordained priests and bishops.

Our starting point in today’s presentation will be the fact of our present tasks, that is, the work we priests and bishops are doing today and move forward to explore the God-given role we are to perform, while we are facing a steadily maturing laity, which is the largest part of the People of God in the Church.
At the end we could rightly put the following questions:

1) Are we really too few, enough, or too many to do the job we were ordained to do?
2) Are we supposed to continue doing tomorrow the very same things we are doing today?
3) Could we do a better service, perhaps, to the Church, to the people of God, if we concentrate our efforts and rally our charisms and gifts for the things we were ordained to do?
4) How much should we share with the laity, especially now when the laity is becoming more mature in our young Churches and have discovered more clearly their role and vocation after the inspiration of Vatican II?

A healthy approach to help us find proper answers to such questions is what someone has called the “Theory of Temporary Substitution.”

1. The Theory of Temporary Substitution (or a Personal Mission)

“The bishop, the priest, the pastoral worker, whether this be a religious or lay person, has a proper role in the Church. Sharing in one way or another in episcopate, by ordination or delegation, they are given as instruments of the unity of life in the Church. They bring unity to the many works of the Church’s mission, and promote this unity in charity. They are nourishers of the Christian life through preaching the Word of God, administering the sacraments and shepherding the community in righteousness.

But history has burdened these offices of episcopacy with all kinds of activity; by reason of education, leisure or enthusiasm priests have had to undertake a variety of works. Now, however, as the laity becomes more educated, more competent and more willing, many find that those who have held jobs only remotely related to the ordained status, or those who have been delegated by priests for these works, are so set in these jobs that they will not allow themselves to be displaced or replaced by laity. Some say that the Church in Asia has not reached the desired point of development of the laity, but there are many places where the Church can now turn to our lay persons and say to them: ‘Come and take the job we have been holding only until you came along.’ This is what we call the theory of ‘temporary substitution’: the priest, or his delegate, has only been substituting for the competent lay person, and now that he has arrived on the scene, the priest can return to what he was trained to do, ordained to do, and should do best: to be the preacher of the Word, the priest at the altar, the enabler of
the laity, to venture out into new frontiers because he is free to do so.

Someone has written that ‘the priesthood gobbled up all ministries.’ By returning as many tasks as possible in the Church to the lay men and lay women, surely this is the highest vote of confidence in the ‘lay person come of age’ in the Church, as he/she has come of age outside the Church.” (FABC Papers No. 33f 33f)

2. Some Examples at Random

a. Social Work

No doubt social work is part of the mission of the People of God, both clergy and laity.

In many places in Asia such work has been often started by priests, sisters, religious ... and they have become the leaders of such works. Even today bishops, priests, and sisters head many such organizations. For how long should it be so, especially now when vocations are few, the clergy overloaded with work and the laity asking for a greater share?

b. A Concrete Case

A social work in a purely secular field was started by a lay person, with the encouragement and support of an old priest, as an independent service to society. The work developed successfully, rendering a valuable service to the Church and society. A year and a half ago the priest retired and the lay person had to leave the job for family reasons. For years she wanted to place that work within the organizational frame of the Church, and before she left, it was finally incorporated into the Social Development Committee of the Bishops’ Conference. A board was created. Who composed the board of such a “purely” secular social work started and successfully organized by a lay person? One bishop, two priests and two sisters, one of whom is the manager of the organization. Not a single lay person, not even as an adviser. Only four lay employees and one lay volunteer.

Where is the presence of the laity in his/her specific role, according to Vatican II and Canon Law?

c. A Last Example

A social service center has been reorganized recently. Before it was under the full control (finance, management ...) of a zealous priest.
The priest is close to retirement and a board has been created. Its formation? Again: three priests over two laymen. Who has the decision-making power in case some problem arises, I ask?

Do we trust the laity in what is their role?

If they are not prepared, have we tried to equip them from the very first day we took that job on the basis of a "temporary substitution"?

No need to bring up more examples. You know enough of them.

A bishop once told me: "I'm buried under a heavy load of administrative work. How much I wish I could be free to take better care of the spiritual needs both personal and communitarian of my flock?"

Could not the laity take over hundreds and hundreds of jobs being done today by the clergy? Free us to do what we can do best? To give them what they need most from us? Doing what we do now we shall be always under stress, under tension. Led by a good, generous and responsible heart, we load and overload ourselves with works which are good and conducive to God's glory. We need reflection, prayer and the light of the Spirit to make the right choice, to give up certain jobs in favor of a competent laity. Let's follow the example of the Apostles, when they were faced at the very beginning of their apostolate with the same dilemma:

Some time later, as the number of disciples kept growing, there was a quarrel between the Greek-speaking Jews and the native Jews. The Greek-speaking Jews claimed that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of funds. So the twelve apostles called the whole group of believers together and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the preaching of God's word in order to handle finances. So then, brothers, choose seven men among you who are known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, and we will put them in charge of this matter. We ourselves, then, will give our full time to prayer and the work of preaching." The whole group was pleased with the apostles' proposal, so they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a Gentile from Antioch who had earlier been converted to Judaism. The group presented them to the apostles, who prayed and placed their hands on them.

And so the word of God continued to spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem grew larger and larger, and a great number of priests accepted the faith. (Acts 6, 1-7)
3. What Then Should We Clerics Do?

This question is now thrown to you for reflection and discussion in your national groups. I would like to request our bishops and priests to invite the laity present in the group to say what they think our role should be NOW, TODAY, in OUR CHURCH, in our SOCIETY, at this present level of development of society, of the Church, of our laity?

To help the discussion I would like to refer you to the new Canons and Vatican II documents as quoted in my book, You Called Me. I Am Here, Part Four, Chapter III, pp. 209-222.

4. An Illustration To Conclude This Presentation

It seems that the Church develops much faster today in Asia where the laity is given a greater share in the work of the Church. You know better what is going on in Korea, Philippines, Malaysia, Burma. As a last one, I got this information a few months ago from a lay leader engaged in training Volunteer Lay Apostles.

Many good Catholics have contributed material means and personal service towards the growth of the Church of Taiwan. Let us see the Church statistics to prove it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1965</th>
<th>1982</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priests</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>242,193</td>
<td>371,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we compare the two statistics carefully, since 1965 the number of priests has been reduced by 38 and the number of Catholics has increased by 128,807. I strongly attribute this tremendous growth of the Church partly to the laity, if not wholly. We may worry about the scarcity of priestly vocations; we should try more seriously to promote and develop the vocation of all Christians as active apostles, as “other Christs.”

Conclusion

There is no point in criticizing the past. This paper is only an invitation to reflect, to evaluate and to plan what we could or should do better as bishops, priests or sisters for the glory of God and the service of the Church, and what we should share with the laity, so that they and we can fulfill better our own roles and specific vocation.
VI. THE CHURCH IN ASIA AND THE LAITY
by Fr. Gino Picca

1. What We Want (As Gleaned from the Magisterium and FABC Meetings)

We want a Church in Asia which is:
— communion (koinonia),
— summoned into one Body,
— in discipleship,
— is guided by the Spirit and nourished by the sacraments,
— with authentic participation and co-responsibility,
— in true oneness with its pastors,
— open, linked to other communities of faith and to the universal Church,
— incarnated in the concrete histories of our peoples,
— in dialogue with the many communities of believers of other faiths,
— a community of faith where men and women are called to make a special contribution to the evangelization of culture in Asia.

We know our inadequacies and failures; we want to change them:
— spirit of domination instead of Christlike servanthood in the exercise of authority,
— sometimes organs of lay participation and co-responsibility have not been established, or are left inactive and impeded, existing only in name,
— the gifts and charisms of the laity (both men and women) are not duly recognized, welcomed or activated in functions and tasks of ministry and apostolate,
— our communities have failed to be “communities of dialogue,”
— our communities have failed to grow in awareness and commitment to evangelical social justice.

A QUESTION: How is it that the laity in such a “community of” is still at large a “passive laity”?

2. We Need — Both Clergy and Laity — a Total Conversion to Christ

Foundational Analysis of Conversion-Experience

Every conversion-experience involves a decision, a choice which makes a radical change, and gives a new orientation to a person’s life.
And this option and decision is a choice on four different levels: the intellectual level, the moral level, the affective level and the religious level. Total conversion includes a conversion on the four levels.

**Nature of the Fourfold Conversion**

1. *Intellectual conversion.* It is the decision to follow consciously the normative pattern of thought which grounds and explains every genuine human insight: experience, understanding, judgment and decision:

   - Experience — It is the multivalent reality we encounter in everyday life and which raises questions and urges us to interpretation of the different data and events.
   - Understanding — It is the moment of insight in which is grasped the true meaning of factual data and their mutual relation. It is obtained by reflection and interpretation, in a given and accepted frame of reference, in which is made possible the inquiry of the different possible answers to a question raised.
   - Judgment — It is the moment of verification of one’s insight into experience, the expression of a mature and responsible personal stand on a certain problem, with willingness to assume responsibility for one’s choice and decision.
   - Decision — It is the judgment brought to expression and to effectiveness. It gives orientation or new direction to one’s life.

2. *Moral conversion.* It is the decision to make and to direct one’s choices in life by consciously understood and verified values rather than just following immediate, concrete, individual and self-centered motivations and satisfactions.

3. *Affective conversion.* It is the decision to integrate one’s own life and the emotional development into a unified process of self-transcendence. Our personal growth is a harmonious whole; there are affective elements as well as intellectual, moral and religious elements. An insight into the normative pattern of the emotional and affective growth constitutes the emotional or affective conversion.

4. *Religious conversion.* It is a “falling in love” experience . . . In a Christian context, it is the decision to accept totally the love of the self-revealing God, and allow him to be and shape our heart, our mind, the whole of our being.
Characteristics and Mutual Relationship of the Fourfold Conversion

These four levels of conversion are distinct moments in the process of self-transcendence and personal maturation.

They may not be present simultaneously. Yet, in order to have a total conversion experience, the conversion at each level should be open and possibly proceed to total conversion at every level.

If this should not happen and there would be a conscious closedness in one or the other level, then we would have elements of inauthenticity and contradiction in one’s beliefs and attitudes.

As an example, a religiously converted person is one who has encountered the Holy, and has been transformed by God. He has said “Yes” to God unconditionally and unrestrictedly. He depends totally on God.

Since God is continually addressing him directly or through his life experiences, the growth in religious commitment depends very much on the authentic interpretation he gives to the different experiences he has. This is openness to intellectual conversion: he has to understand, to judge, and to make ever new decisions ... He would be closed and rigid in one single understanding of his faith, if he should resist to open himself to new understanding, new situations, new life ...

And a man who claims to love God totally, but in certain areas he does not allow God to enter into his life, to inspire him or to challenge him in front of apostolic services and possibilities, and/or does not act according to his moral values but only according to his immediate emotional drives and instincts, this man does not love God at all. He is making of his personal needs an absolute, pretending that God sees and judges situations as he wants. This is hypocrisy!

3. We Need — Both Clergy and Laity — To Change Our Attitudes in the Exercise of Authority (Power) In Order To Be More Effective in Attaining Goals and To Get Involved

1. The quality of the relationship is of primary importance for effectiveness in achieving our goals, and for getting people to be involved. A person may be already totally converted ... Yet, if he/she will feel always “overpowered,” then he/she will loose interest, will withdraw angrily.
2. From "unilateral power" to "relational power." Allow yourself to recall a time or a situation when you felt "overpowered" by somebody, when you experienced some kind of coercion. Let your memory recall details. What was your behavioral reaction? How did you experience the behavioral traits of the person overpowering you? ... An example:

- person overpowering:
  - aggressive certainty about his opinions
  - easy assumption of superiority
  - failure to negotiate details
  - concentration on work without any empathy
  - impersonal, businesslike, competitive approach

- person overloaded:
  - passive, aggressive withdrawal from involvement
  - self-doubting, refusal to risk offering ideas
  - hostile tendency to criticize and argue rather than to co-operate
  - failure to talk freely of personal feelings

Now allow yourself to recall a time or a situation when you felt "empowered" by somebody (in the sense of being enabled to live more creatively or in new ways). ... How did you experience his/her behavior? ... How did you experience your own behavior? ... An example:

- person empowering:
  - insistence on equality of relationship
  - readiness to receive and to give feedback
  - commitment to consultation and joint decision-making
  - readiness to share feelings as well as ideas
  - commitment to reciprocity
  - capacity for empathy and fearless challenge

- person empowered:
  - acceptance of peer-status
  - open communication (self-disclosure, challenge, directness)
  - assumption of joint responsibility
  - using skills co-operatively rather than competitively
  - mixing task skills (suggestions, questioning, etc.) with personal support and empathy (responding to feelings, anticipating needs, etc.)
  - freedom to discuss feelings as well as ideas

In the first case, we have a clear example of impersonal and one-sided control. No reciprocity at all. It causes hostility, withdrawal,
distance. In the second case, by contrast, we have sharing of feelings as well as of ideas, personal equality with due respect of differences in knowledge and skills. Readiness to share and to listen creates an initial and progressive co-operation. At the core of the experience, there is the perception of mutual influence, of having a highly creative and positive experience. It facilitates involvement, mutual trust, mutual growth, joy and creativity. We have just described unilateral power (first case) and relational power (second case).

3. Relational power demands stature. It involves receiving as well as giving, being influenced as well as influencing. It is the quality of the relationship itself that creates, that makes another person involved in my life, or in a common task. In the Church, it is the quality of the relationship between clergy and laity, between the bishop and his priests, between the pastor and his lay collaborators, that creates involvement, a sense of belonging, joy and enthusiasm, creativeness in the apostolate, in new forms of inculturated liturgy, or in new forms of inculturated evangelization.

VII. SOME MAIN POINTS ON THE FORMATION OF THE LAITY FROM THE DECREE ON THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY

by Fr. Luke Tsui

A. The Formation Itself

1. Balanced and Diversified Formation
   — Spiritual and temporal; ecclesiastical and secular.
   — Secular quality of lay state; lay spirituality (the story of Mary and Martha).
   — Care for the material and spiritual needs of one’s neighbor; to open the minds to ecclesiastical and temporal communities.
   — To be a good Christian and at the same time an active member of one’s society, adjusted to one’s culture.

2. Human Formation
   — A human and well-rounded formation adapted to the natural abilities and circumstances of oneself.
   — From childhood through one’s whole life, keeping the demands of new responsibilities (a continuous formation).
   — Unity and integrity of personality.

3. Spiritual Formation
   — Belief in the divine mystery of creation and redemption.
— Being sensitive to the movement of the Holy Spirit who impels all to love God as well as the world and humankind.

4. Doctrinal Formation
— Solid instruction in theology, ethics and philosophy, adjusted to differences of age, status and natural talents.

5. Practical and Technical Training
— Know-how, pedagogical skills, methods, methodology, anthropology, psychology, sociology.

6. Human Relations
— Fostering of true human values; the art of living fraternally with others, co-operating with them, and initiating conversation with them.

7. Formation through Actions
— Energetic service; deeper knowledge and adjustment of activities; to throw oneself wholly and energetically into the reality of the temporal order and effectively to assume one’s role in conducting its affairs.
— To make the Church present and active in temporal affairs.
— Renewal of temporal order.
— To know the true meaning of temporal things; to be trained in the right use of things and the organization of institutions.

8. Particular Formation
— For making the Gospel known: need of ability to engage in conversation with others, believers or non-believers, using ordinary language, knowing well the main points which are subjects of controversy.
— Witness of an evangelical life.

9. The Trainers
— Parents, priests, Christian educators, teachers, lay associations, lay groups, small groups (in which to examine the methods and results of apostolic activity, and to measure the daily way of life over against the Gospel).

10. The Means
— Training centers for documentation and study, catechetical instruction, ministry of the word, spiritual direction, schools, colleges, other Catholic institutions, study sessions, congresses, periods of recollection, spiritual exercise, frequent meetings, conferences, books and periodicals.
B. A Few Reflections

1. We Need a Supportive System

Twenty years have passed since the Vatican Council was over. Many important changes have taken place, but the role of the laity seems to be almost the same as before. There are a lot of beautiful ideas about the laity; there is also a will to accept and to train the laity from the part of the hierarchical Church. But the laity are as passive and subservient as before. Both the clergy and the laity know that the status of the laity should be raised; more responsibilities should be given to lay people. But there is only a very small proportion of lay people who would really be willing to get involved in Church affairs. With the theory that if there is a rich theology, there is a will too; what else, then, is needed? It seems that a “supportive system” is lacking here.

Any theory needs a special framework, and an environment to realize itself. Some people even contend that it is the system or the environment that gives birth to a theory, that begets consciousness. A new idea can take root only in good soil. There is the seed of lay participation in the Church, but the Church does not seem to be a good soil to let the seed grow and flourish. An example will illustrate this very clearly: responsibility is always connected with the power of decision-making. He who makes the decision will take the responsibility. Now, in the Church, almost at every level, the laity need not or cannot make any important decision at all because the Church structure, which is still a power structure at every level, does look like a one-man bus or a one-man machine with the clergy on top making all the decisions; the laity are merely required to co-operate in name, but to follow in most cases. In this way, how can a lay person develop his sense of responsibility for Church affairs? Another example is that we say the Church does belong to the lay people too. But in practice, the parish priest is in every way the visible and the real “boss” of the parish; he stays there, lives there, he is in charge of everything from hiring an amah to repairing a window. On the other hand, the laity are just like Sunday clients, very uninformed about the Church. Under such circumstances, how can a lay person have a feeling that the Church belongs to him too? If the Church wants to put into practice the theory that she regards so highly in her documents, one important thing for her to do is to devise a corresponding structure in which these new ideas can be implemented.

2. We Need a Radical Change of Mentality on the Images of the Church

The clergy, as well as the ordinary faithful, should have a correct understanding of the Church, before a correct image of the Church can
emerge. The chart on "The Two Images of the Church" (see Chart 1) shows how we can see the Church in different perspectives, with corresponding consequences following different images. It is up to the Church, both the clergy and the laity, to choose a suitable one, and to develop it.

3. Laity Formation through Small Groups and Associations

At present, most lay associations in the Church are either task oriented or "social" (making friends, etc.) oriented. The "frequent meetings" which the Document on Laity describes as a means of laity-training have in many cases become routine and mechanical happenings, sometimes very boring too. To make these "frequent meetings" occasions for forming the laity, a supportive system is very much needed. Chart 2 is a model for a meeting of any association; it is worthwhile for the Church to make it a standard and an ideal for all Church groups.

4. Laity Formation Should be Much More Solid and Serious

The Document on Laity talks about "solid instruction in theology, ethics, philosophy," "thorough formation," "starting with a child's earliest education," "to be especially formed to engage in conversation with believers or non-believers," "learning how to view, judge, and do all things," "learning the main points of controversy," etc., etc. These imply a really profound (almost professional) training. Lay apostolate should be treated somehow like an "enterprise"; it is never merely a volunteer-type hobby.

The Church of Hong Kong is using more and more mass media and audiovisual aids to help spread the Gospel message and to train the laity. I would like to point out immediately that this is only the first part of training; it should never end there.

We can start with audiovisual aids, but we must encourage the participants to share, discuss, debate, evaluate, internalize and conceptualize what they do or what they see and hear, i.e., to create new ideas, getting new convictions through audiovisual aids. Plato said that children can only understand through "sight and sound," while an adult must be able to understand the concept and to express it in words.

To be able to express our faith in words is very important either for spreading the Good News, or for communicating with our children, pupils or friends. And this requires a lot of hard learning, reflection and reorganizing the Good News as we understand it.
### Chart 1: The Two Images of the Church and Their Implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social stratification</th>
<th>Pyramidal</th>
<th>Concentric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From the diagrams</td>
<td>There is a &quot;vertical&quot; relation, but no &quot;horizontal&quot; relation</td>
<td>All centered around Christ as brothers and sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social stratification</td>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>Laity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Give orders</td>
<td>Obey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy-making</td>
<td>Decision power</td>
<td>Consultative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging to Church</td>
<td>Strong; master, supplier</td>
<td>Weak; clients, receivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctrine</td>
<td>One book for all</td>
<td>Growth, internalization, sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liturgy</td>
<td>Mechanical, clerical, unchangeable</td>
<td>Participation, adaptation, creativeness; different liturgies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacraments</td>
<td>Emphasis on rituals</td>
<td>Emphasis on disposition of recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catechumenate</td>
<td>Can be finished</td>
<td>No ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic unit</td>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>Family, small communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>Institution, structured</td>
<td>Community, leaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social involvement</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership training</td>
<td>Academic, college type</td>
<td>In-service training, through actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministries</td>
<td>Mainly liturgical &amp; sacramental</td>
<td>Diversified lay ministries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. The chart is to be understood as a trend or a tendency; it is not true in all cases.
Chart 2: A Model for Association Meetings

N.B. The four functions (doctrinal, etc.) are to be fulfilled in a community in which sharing, mutual supporting, developing a more intimate relationship, etc., are of utmost importance. This type of community will be a community of friendship as well as of mission; it should be a truly "missional community."
VIII. THE STATEMENT OF BILA I

We, the participants of the first Bishops' Institute for the Lay Apostolate, are happy to share with you some important insights we received during our eight days together.

Despite some inspiring examples of lay involvement in the Church in East Asia, we have come to the clear realization that there is a big gap between the vision of the Church as the People of God, promulgated by Vatican II almost twenty years ago, and the actual situation existing in our Church today. Dialogue, sharing, co-responsibility are words that we use regularly, but now we clearly see that the vast majority of our laity do not share in dialogue with their clergy; nor do they share the responsibility for the work of the Church with their clergy in a partnership of brotherhood.

In some situations this gap between the vision of Vatican II and the reality as we live it may be due to the passivity of the laity who tend to leave the "leading" to the clergy. In other situations it may be due to an unwillingness on the part of the clergy to share responsibility. However, it has been our discovery that this gap is due more to a lack of a real understanding of the dialogue and shared responsibility that Vatican II is asking us to work towards. Moreover, where this vision of a participating Church is understood and accepted, there is very often a lack of knowledge and methodology of how to go about building this Church.

Most of us came to this institute hoping to learn more about training the laity. However, we quickly discovered that not only the laity but all of us, bishops, priests and religious, need to update our vision of the Church and learn new methods and skills to enable us to work together in realizing the vision of Vatican II.

The four national regional groups spent hours in clarifying our vision of the Church and in drawing up concrete plans for action when we return home. We beg all of you, our fellow bishops, priests, religious and laity, to encourage us and to co-operate with us in making this new vision a reality.

Here we would like to draw your attention to some basic principles and attitudes which we discovered are of fundamental importance for us as we draw up training programs.

1. Priests, religious and trainer-catechists themselves first need a deeper understanding of the respective roles of the clergy and laity in the
mission of the Church.

2. Where possible all formation should be done locally.

3. Formation is better done in small groups and not for individuals.

4. We must try to avoid creating “clerical” lay leaders or minipriests.

5. Involvement of the lay people in the planning of the training programs from the beginning is important.

6. Experience has taught us that lectures are not an effective way to create new values and attitudes. Lectures tell people they belong to the Church, but they do not feel they belong. We are challenged to create training programs that enable people to do things, to share, to create.

7. The co-operation and participation of the parish priest, religious or trainer-catechist are vital. When these are lacking, the laity change but the priest does not and this leads to further frustration. Ideally, the priest should take a part in conducting the formation, and this would create the situation where the priest learns along with the people.

8. Prayer, bible, liturgy should be the sources of life for the group. Methods of Gospel-sharing should be promoted.

9. We must be clear at all times that the mission of the Church is directed outwardly to the world and society. A community that spends most of its time dealing with internal matters is not fulfilling all its mission.

10. The formation should put equal stress on personal spirituality and social responsibility.

11. The formation should enable the laity to share with the community and society what God has given them.

We share the above ideas with you because we have come to realize their importance. They are some of the basic principles that are behind the more successful lay training programs presently operating in the Church. Here at BILA I we experienced at first hand a new sharing and dialogue. Not only bishops but also priests, religious and lay representatives sat down together for eight days in an atmosphere of openness and trust. This itself is a new model, and our positive experience urges us
to call on you to take concrete action to inspire, train and integrate in a
deep relationship the laity and clergy.

Including the laity in the mission of the Church is not a matter of
choice. It is a must; because without the full participation of lay people,
the Church cannot fulfill the mission for which it is sent into the world.
The various national/regional groups, having developed a new level of
awareness of the Church as People of God, have drawn up what they
believe are feasible, practical steps to move us towards the ideal
presented by Vatican II.

Our hopes, prayers and wishes are with you as we commit ourselves
to working together under the guidance of Mary, Queen of the
Apostles, to make real the words of Vatican II, "the Church is the
People of God."

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