

PETER N.V. HAI

FEATURES OF THE FABC'S THEOLOGY OF THE LAITY

Introduction

Lay people have always played a vital role in the life and activity of the Church, but have never become so much a subject of theological reflection as they have today. In Asia, where Christians are only a tiny minority, their vocation and mission have been one of the primary concerns in the mind of the Asian Bishops who have devoted an entire plenary assembly to the subject and regularly reflected on its themes in the overall context of evangelization.¹ Indeed, for them, the age of lay people has dawned upon the churches in Asia.² In this paper we will examine the distinctive concept and role of lay people in the documents of the Asian bishops, and provide a detailed analysis of the elements and developments of their theology of the laity from 1970 to 2001.³ We will emphasize the centrality of the concept of "priesthood of life,"⁴ and argue that there is both fundamental continuity and gradual development in the FABC's theology of the laity. Specifically, in the first section, we will examine the identity of lay people, their vocation, mission, ministries, and spirituality. We will also summarize the FABC's theology of the laity in an ecosystem to highlight its key tenets and theological approach in the context of the challenges of Asia. In the second section, we will discuss the development of the FABC's theology of the laity over a thirty-one-year period from 1970 to 2001. Besides a brief explanation of the terminologies and concepts used in the organization and synthesis of its thought, this paper is largely based on the FABC's own statements.

I

Elements of the FABC's Theology of the Laity

Of all the documents of the FABC that deal with the question of

laity and ministries, the statements of the Fourth Plenary Assembly on "The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and the World of Asia," held from 16 to 29 September 1986, and the conclusions of the 1977 "Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church" provide the most comprehensive treatment of these topics.⁵ Therefore, focusing on these two statements, this section will discuss the identity of the laity, their vocation, mission, ministries, and spirituality.

Identity of the Laity

In their official statements the FABC tends to use the terms "we," "us," or "our" to refer, first, to the participants in the various gatherings,⁶ second, to the bishops themselves,⁷ and third, to the entire people of God including bishops, priests, religious, and lay people.⁸ They often make this fourfold distinction of bishops, priests, religious and laity, though not always following this order, in the introductory paragraphs of their statements.⁹ This is not the case with the first "Asian Bishops' Meeting" in 1970 with Pope Paul VI, and the plenary assemblies held in 1974 and 1978, which identify the participants by the use of phrases such as "we, the bishops of Asia,"¹⁰ "we, Bishops-delegate,"¹¹ and "we, the Bishops-

delegate.”¹² The Third Plenary Assembly in 1982 simply uses the words “we, the participants,”¹³ to acknowledge the contributions of other attendees besides the bishops.

Indeed, a list of concerns raised by people attending the various workshops held in conjunction with this Plenary Assembly is accepted as an integral part of its final statements.¹⁴ The laity as participants in a plenary assembly are explicitly mentioned in relation to the Fourth Plenary Assembly, immediately after the bishops, and followed by religious and priests in this order, no doubt implying the canonical lay status of the majority of the religious.¹⁵ The Asian bishops employ the words “laity,” “lay people,” and their cognates to emphasize lay roles and responsibilities.¹⁶ Yet, to date they have not provided an explicit definition of the laity. Rather, they have described lay people in the context of the whole community rooted in Asian realities, and stressed that it is in the Christian communities that people experience that they belong, and that “together they are the Church.”¹⁷

For the Asian bishops, the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are the gateway to Christian discipleship and Church membership.¹⁸ Discussing the messianic functions of lay people in the Asian context at the Fourth Plenary Assembly, the bishops give an implicit description of the laity by making three interrelated distinctions in three successive paragraphs. First, with reference to the priestly function, the clergy are distinguished from the people of God in general, the faithful, the Christian disciple, and all Christians.¹⁹ Second, in the framework of the prophetic office, a distinction is drawn between the hierarchy and the whole community or people of God, and between the leadership of the Church and the believing community or people of God.²⁰ Third, within the ambit of the royal function, a clear and specific distinction is made between leadership and the laity, while comparing their respective roles in the building up of the kingdom.²¹ These dual references are presented in a tabular form in Figure 1 showing their hermeneutical polarity.²² Viewed together, they approximate to a descriptive definition of the laity.

Figure 1

Priestly Function	Clergy	as distinct from	people of God, the faithful, the Christian disciple, all Christians
Prophetic Function	Hierarchy, Leadership	as distinct from	whole community, people of God, the believing community
Royal Function	Leadership	as distinct from	the laity

According to the bishops of Asia, lay people are “Asian Christians,”²³ “disciples of Christ,”²⁴ “full-fledged members”²⁵ of the Church, “mature subjects and persons with dignity and freedom, with their gifts and powers as well as rights and responsibilities.”²⁶ Sometimes they employ the terms “Christ’s faithful”²⁷ and “Christians” to mean lay people, and also use “Christians” and “Christian laity” interchangeably.²⁸ At their First Asian Laity

Meeting held in 1994, they referred to the laity as "Asian citizens and Christians."²⁹ The laity's Christian identity, formed by following Jesus, is rooted in the realities of Asia,³⁰ the world's exploited market place, a theatre of conflict and division, a continent of suffering humanity, and at the same time, a cradle of ancient cultures, a birthplace of great religions, and a continent awakening to new challenges and responsibilities.³¹ In particular, several challenges of Asia are mentioned, namely, politics, the youth of Asia, Asian women, the family, the world of education, mass media, the world of work, social responsibilities in the world of business, and health services.³² They are the signs of the times that the Churches in Asia must discern and respond in faith to discover the vocation and mission of the laity.³³

Vocation and Mission of the Laity

According to the FABC, Asian Christians, both laity and clergy, are called to a communion with Jesus and a communion of liberation.³⁴ In the Asian context, their vocation is to form a community of disciples, committed to Jesus the Liberator and united in the service of liberation.³⁵ As a liberating community they are called to move beyond the confines of their passive *modus vivendi* and become actively involved in the life and activity of the Church in response to the dynamic challenges of the world.³⁶ Only when the Churches become truly Asian, rooted in the peoples of Asia and in solidarity with their everyday life, is their bond of liberation strengthened.³⁷ Indeed, in the Church and in the world of Asia, lay people are called to "live their discipleship" of Jesus by living the common priesthood of the faithful, which is the real "priesthood of life," shared by all Christians.³⁸ They have assumed and continue to play a central role in the evangelizing mission, and are called to share in Christ's mission according to their proper lay state in the Church.³⁹ Their call to holiness, and consequently to the mission of the Church, is a demand of their Christian identity, which is based on their baptismal incorporation into Christ and in the Eucharist.⁴⁰ Facing an uncertain and challenging future in Asia, the Asian bishops have turned to Jesus Christ to renew their vision of the mission of the Church.⁴¹

For the FABC, there are three priorities of mission.⁴² Evangelization is the highest priority in the mission of the Church followed by the imperative to serve the kingdom of God and the social question.⁴³ Evangelization is a complex reality, encompassing many aspects such as "witnessing to the Gospel, working for the values of the Kingdom, struggling along with those who strive for justice and peace, dialogue, sharing, inculturation, mutual enrichment with other Christians and the followers of all religions."⁴⁴ Its ultimate goal is the ushering in and establishment of God's kingdom, namely, God's rule in the hearts and minds of people.⁴⁵ In this mission of the Church, lay people have their own assignment.⁴⁶ Indeed, they play a vital and irreplaceable role in the evangelizing mission by proclaiming Jesus Christ through their life, work, and words.⁴⁷ This proclamation, the center and primary element of "the grace and task of evangelization," is strengthened and supported in Christian families, which make up the people of God.⁴⁸ The evangelizing mission of the Church has become more urgent and decisive, and it needs to be actualized and contextualized in the Asian realities.⁴⁹ Therefore, Asian churches must discern the signs of the times as signs addressed to them by Jesus, and as signs of the Spirit's active presence in the world.⁵⁰ In the context of Asian societies, the mission of the Church, and hence of the laity, is Christ-centered, kingdom-focused, world-oriented, dialogical and liberative.

We begin with a brief explanation of these concepts and return to explore them in detail in subsequent paragraphs. First, in the context of the statements of the Fourth Plenary Assembly, Christ-centered means that the disciples follow and reproduce Jesus in their lives, and in particular, in his threefold office of priest, prophet and king. As the Asian bishops employ the terms "messianic mission" and "messianic functions" only in the statements of

the Fourth Plenary Assembly, and make an explicit reference to the triple mission of Jesus in the context of liberation,⁵¹ it seems likely that they want to employ these terms in a Christological sense to emphasize the meaning of the Hebrew word *messiah*, or the Greek equivalent *christos*, which means "the anointed," a title applied to various figures in the Old Testament, especially, priests, prophets, and kings.⁵² Second, the phrase "Kingdom of God," or the more biblical concept of reign of God, has often been used interchangeably, in an anthropological, ethical, and historical sense to stress the duty of the Christian community to infuse the world with the values of the kingdom, such as "justice, peace, love, compassion, equality and brotherhood."⁵³ Third, the term "world" encompasses the familial, social, professional, political, economic, religious, and cultural spheres.⁵⁴ Fourth, the concept of "dialogue" is a leitmotiv that underlies the entire corpus of the FABC's literature, and it has a threefold orientation: dialogue with cultures (inculturation),⁵⁵ dialogue with religions (interreligious dialogue) and dialogue with the poor (development and liberation). Finally, the liberative feature, which is associated with social justice and social change, implies the idea of transforming the world, and the structures of injustice and economic dependence that oppress the poor people in Asia.⁵⁶ This brief overview of the main characteristics of lay mission will serve as a preamble to the following presentation of the FABC's view on the role of the Asian laity.

First, the Asian bishops remind Christian communities that Jesus envisions his mission as priestly, prophetic and pastoral,⁵⁷ and he is the messianic leader who leads the Church in the journey to liberation.⁵⁸ In this journey of life, it is the duty of all Christian disciples to reproduce Christ in their life by sharing his vision, adopting his behavior, and sustaining themselves through his word and sacraments.⁵⁹ They actualize their baptismal discipleship by exercising the triple function in the concrete realities of Asia.⁶⁰ Indeed, in the Asian context, it is an urgent task of the whole people of God, including the clergy, to live the common priesthood of the faithful by reproducing in everyday life the mysteries of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection.⁶¹ The prophetic function is a witness and a service of the whole community to the saving truth of Christ, and not just limited to the teaching function of the hierarchy.⁶² The pastoral function, which is intimately linked to the baptismal priesthood of life, is to be understood as the duty of the entire community to build up the kingdom of God, and not only as the basis for the hierarchy's ministry of governance.⁶³

This pastoral focus on the kingdom of God is the second feature of the mission of lay people in the documents of the FABC that affirm that the laity participate in their own way in the building up of the kingdom through their actions within and outside the Church.⁶⁴ In the fast changing societies of Asia, lay people are called to actively participate in the mission of the Church by being both a sign of the reign of God and a leaven in the world.⁶⁵ Their mode of mission may vary depending on the social context, but fundamentally, it is a mission of triple dialogue by "witnessing to the values of the Gospel, in order to make the reign of God present in a non-Christian milieu, in secularized society, and especially in places where so much misery and poverty abound."⁶⁶ This focus on the kingdom provides new insights into the mission of the laity in the world.⁶⁷

Indeed, the third feature of the mission of lay people is its orientation to the world, a term which encompasses the familial, social, professional, and political dimensions of human life.⁶⁸ For the bishops, lay apostolate still remains "parish-oriented, inward-looking and priest-directed."⁶⁹ Therefore, it has to change its focus and become "outward—and forward—looking" due to the demands of Asian realities.⁷⁰ As an inward-looking community does not fulfil its mission,⁷¹ lay people should initiate and direct newer forms of lay ministries in response to the needs of the local situation.⁷²

Fourthly, in the theology of the FABC, the mission and ministries of lay people are linked to the triple dialogue with the cultures (inculturation), the religions (interreligious dialogue) and the poor of Asia (liberation/human development).⁷³ Dialogue is their mode of mission because their discipleship is rooted in Christ, in the community, and in the Asian context.⁷⁴ It is understood as a dialogue of life as they witness to Christ in their cultural environment, their religious traditions, and their socio-economic situation.⁷⁵ A commitment to cultural and interreligious dialogue, coupled with a preferential, but not exclusive, option for the poor, is a major thrust of the lay mission.⁷⁶ Inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and the preferential option for the poor are part and parcel of any Church's activity.⁷⁷ Together with proclamation, they are just different aspects of one reality.⁷⁸ These ministries should be world-oriented and channelled to address the priorities of human development and promotion of justice in the region, and not just limited to Church-oriented functions.⁷⁹

Finally, the FABC affirms that Asian Christians are called to become the instruments of Jesus in his work of liberation.⁸⁰ But to become effective agents of liberation they will need to activate the spiritual character and functions received through baptism.⁸¹ They also must act as an evangelizing and liberating force in the struggle for the fullness of life,⁸² which involves the task of transforming the Asian realities in order to build up the kingdom of God.⁸³

To fulfil this mission, local Churches have to discover their own types and structures of ministry that are suitable for their context.⁸⁴ At the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church held in 1977, the FABC discussed ways to make ministries more relevant and better suited to the needs of local people and particular Churches.⁸⁵ In its view, most of the needs for service in the Asian context can be met effectively by calling on lay people with special charisms to exercise ministries.⁸⁶ Lay people who perform these ministries will exercise in a public manner some aspects of the Christian's triple function of priest, prophet and pastor.⁸⁷ Their ministries in the context of the challenges of Asia will be discussed in the next section.

Challenges of Asia and Ministries of the Laity

For the FABC, the Church can only respond adequately and meaningfully to the enormous challenges of the Asian milieu through a diversity of ministries, which will emerge gradually according to the needs of a particular community.⁸⁸ By way of example, the Asian bishops list a number of lay ministries such as evangelist,⁸⁹ catechist – preacher – Religion teacher,⁹⁰ ministry for liturgy and liturgical animation – prayer leaders – acolyte – lector – cantor, ⁹¹ ministry of family apostolate,⁹² ministry of healing – health services – health education – counselling,⁹³ ministry of interreligious dialogue,⁹⁴ ministry of social concern – social leaders – community service peace officers – peacemakers,⁹⁵ ministry for youth – university students – high school students – campus leaders,⁹⁶ ministries to workers – farmers – other occupations,⁹⁷ ministry for education, formal and non-formal – adult education – social education – literacy,⁹⁸ community builders – community leaders – presidents of rural communities – basic community leaders – organizers – rural leaders – rural development workers,⁹⁹ ministries of communication – mass media – group media,¹⁰⁰ and ministry of pastoral community leadership.¹⁰¹ At the Fourth Plenary Assembly in 1986, the Asian bishops identified nine challenges that require specific ministries of the laity: politics – their first pastoral priority – youth, women, family, education, mass media, work, business, and health services.

The task of the whole people of God, including lay people, is to engage in politics, understood as a purposeful activity seeking the common good, to infuse the kingdom values

of love and justice into the political, economic, cultural, and social world of Asia. Their participation in politics, as a faith witness and a leaven in the world, is a duty that flows from the secular character of their Christian identity and the imperative of the gospel.¹⁰² It is from inside the political machinery that they can effectively influence the philosophies, programs, and activities of political parties and personalities for the common good in the light of the gospel.¹⁰³ Their ministry is to transform society in politics and the workplace, the preeminent places where their involvement has not yet been strong as compared to education and social welfare.¹⁰⁴

Young people who constitute the majority of Asia's population are the second challenge addressed by the Fourth Plenary Assembly.¹⁰⁵ Their situation, which mirrors the manifold problems of Asia, is both negative and positive.¹⁰⁶ On the negative side, many of them are living in extremely poor conditions, worsened by their lack of education and training, and hence become vulnerable to the temptations of materialism, consumerism, ideologies, and destructive substitutes such as drugs, alcoholism, and suicide.¹⁰⁷ On the positive side, they live their lives in witness to the values of the kingdom, and play an important role in social transformation endeavors.¹⁰⁸ Other members of the Church must provide them with full support and trust, and empower them to become evangelizers and instruments of God.¹⁰⁹ The Asian youth are the Asia of today, and if the Church wants to transform this continent of the young, it must become in a certain sense a "Church of the young."¹¹⁰

The third challenge faced by the FABC is Asian women, who make up half of the population of Asia.¹¹¹ They have suffered enormously from exploitation, degradation, dehumanization, and many injustices due to discrimination inherent in traditional mores and new economic situations.¹¹² Their tragic realities now cry out for transformation.¹¹³ However, there is a genuine appreciation of Asian women who are considered to be the heart of the family.¹¹⁴ They have made numerous contributions in many professions, and in the Church, their contribution is significant in a variety of ministries, especially in person-oriented ministries due to their special capacity to love and give life, and their receptive, sensitive, and reflective attitude.¹¹⁵ Based on "their fundamental equality in the Church's universal ministeriality,"¹¹⁶ they must be recognized as full partners, and allowed to play their rightful role in the world and in the Church.¹¹⁷ All members of the Church have a special responsibility to uphold and defend the dignity of women, and to change attitudes, policies, practices, and legislation that lead to the discrimination against, and repression of, women.¹¹⁸

The fourth and perhaps the greatest pastoral concern in the minds of the FABC is the Christian family, which is both the cellular receptacle of all social and economic problems plaguing the Asian society¹¹⁹ and the domestic Church, where evangelization initially takes place and a civilization of love begins.¹²⁰ The Asian family is thus both evangelized and called to evangelize others.¹²¹ To ensure that this double gift and task continues to prosper in the family is one of the most urgent ministries of lay people in Asia.¹²²

The world of education in Asia, the fifth challenge addressed by the Fourth Plenary Assembly, is characterized by two observations, the illiteracy of the majority of Asians and the high visibility and reputation of Catholic educational institutions.¹²³ Catholic schools must reflect the Church's preferential option for the poor¹²⁴ and act as vehicles of social change.¹²⁵ Teachers must consider teaching as a call from God and a formation in values, and not simply as a communication of knowledge.¹²⁶

Mass media rank sixth in the list of challenges confronting the Asian bishops, who observe that the Church lags behind consumer industries in taking advantage of the powerful means

of proclaiming the liberating gospel to Asian people.¹²⁷ Lay people in Asia are called to evangelize through the mass media,¹²⁸ because the Church "must reach out to millions struggling for social transformation."¹²⁹

In the world of work, the seventh challenge of Asia, workers participate in God's own ongoing process of recreating and transforming the world.¹³⁰ Therefore, it is of utmost importance that they retrieve the religious meaning of human work as an expression of human creativity and a participation in the work of the Creator.¹³¹ Asian Christians, especially business people, government officials, managers and policy makers, have to listen with compassion to the problems of the poor and needy workers, and to cooperate with other groups in society to transform exploitative and oppressive work systems.¹³²

In this context, lay people in the world of business, the eighth challenge of Asia, are called to live out their faith in accordance with gospel values and in consideration of the needs of others.¹³³ This faith witness can range from a simple action based on the values of truth, justice, and love to an active participation in transforming the social structure to achieve "greater worker participation, more discerning consumer guidance, more responsible interventions by governments and a more equitable society."¹³⁴

Health services are the ninth challenge facing the Church but more particularly the laity engaged in the provision of medical services. Here, the issues range from the application of modern medicine to significant bioethical problems.¹³⁵ Hence, lay people have to improve their understanding of the moral dimension of modern medicine and its practice.¹³⁶ Their ministry is to bring the saving power of God to transform the world of health care, and in particular, it must reach out to farmers, workers, the landless and slum dwellers.¹³⁷ These nine ministries of the laity are the concrete expressions of an authentic Christian discipleship, which is intimately linked to lay spirituality. In contrast to the traditional neglect of the subject,¹³⁸ the FABC has paid special attention to lay spirituality, a topic that will be examined in the next section.

Lay Spirituality

For the FABC, the entire people of God share "one Christian spirituality,"¹³⁹ which has six features. First, it is incarnated in Asian realities.¹⁴⁰ Second, it is Christocentric and animated by the Holy Spirit.¹⁴¹ Third, it is ecclesial and communitarian as Christian discipleship is lived in the community of the Church.¹⁴² Fourth, it is biblical, nourished on the word of God.¹⁴³ Fifth, it is sacramental, based on the sacraments of the Church, especially the Eucharist, the summit and the source of Christian liturgy and spirituality.¹⁴⁴ Finally, it seeks to build up the kingdom of God in the concrete experiences of the social, political, economic, and cultural world of Asia.¹⁴⁵ This spirituality is an "involvement spirituality," bringing gospel values to the various dimensions of Christian life, and embracing God's plan for the whole creation.¹⁴⁶ It manifests itself in communion, solidarity, compassion, justice, love, and reconciliation with God the Father.¹⁴⁷ However, within this one Christian spirituality of discipleship and participation in Jesus' mission,¹⁴⁸ a lay spirituality can be identified by its secular character and orientation to the world.¹⁴⁹ It is integrated with a life of authentic prayer, which is also a life of service and love, a self-gift to others, a way of proclaiming the gospel, and a means of collaborating with the Holy Spirit in furthering the mission of the Church.¹⁵⁰ This spirituality, which entails the duty to transform the Asian world in the spirit of the gospel,¹⁵¹ encapsulates the main elements of the FABC's theology of the laity, which will be summarized in a schematic form in the following section.

Ecosystem of the FABC's Theology of the Laity

The oversimplified ecosystem presented here aims to provide some clarity, and is not meant to do justice to the richness of the FABC's theology of the laity. It summarizes the salient features of the FABC's theology of the laity by highlighting the challenges of Asia, the theological methodologies employed by the Asian bishops,¹⁵² the centrality of the concept of priesthood of life, and the mission of lay people as both a triple function and a triple dialogue with the cultures, the religions, and the poor of Asia. (See Figure 2.)

First, the list of "Challenges of Asia" is taken from the statements of the Fourth Plenary Assembly held in 1986 on "The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World of Asia."¹⁵³ The Asian bishops consider politics and the community of believers as the first of these challenges confronting the Church followed by the youth of Asia, Asian women, and the family. These challenges continue to be the FABC's pastoral priorities in their subsequent theological deliberations.¹⁵⁴ At the Seventh Plenary Assembly held in 2000, they added "indigenous peoples, sea-based and land-based migrants, and refugees"¹⁵⁵ to the list of concerns that require their pastoral focus. Education, mass media, work, the world of business, and health services are other challenges facing the Asian Churches.

Figure 2

Second, in 1986 the FABC introduced a four-stage Pastoral Cycle, a theological and pastoral methodology, to be followed in 1990 by another three-phase theological pastoral process of "dialoguing with the realities of Asia from within," "discerning the movement of God's Spirit in Asia," and "translating into deeds" according to the Spirit's biddings.¹⁵⁶ The FABC refers to these

methods of theological reflection in other documents, especially in a comprehensive treatment in 2001 of the subject issued by their Office of Theological Concerns.¹⁵⁷

Underlying these theological methodologies is the simple discernment process of "see, judge, act" employed by the *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* movement in the early 20th century.

Third, the mission of lay people is essentially priestly, prophetic, and pastoral, modeled on the ministry of Christ, the leader of the Church.¹⁵⁸ It is linked to the triple dialogue with the religions, the cultures, and the poor of Asia.¹⁵⁹ It is also inseparable from the urgent duty of all Asian Christians to exercise the priestly function by living the priesthood of life, which has "its origins in Christ himself."¹⁶⁰ As the challenges changed so did the Asian bishops' view on lay people and their mission. The following section will endeavor to trace the development of their reflection on the role of lay people in the Asian context, from 1970, the date of their first meeting around Pope Paul VI in Manila, to 2001, the last year covered by the third of the four-volume collection, which contains all of the important documents issued by the FABC over this period of time.¹⁶¹

II

Development of the FABC's Theology of the Laity

In the statements of the Fourth Plenary Assembly held in September 1986 the FABC admitted that *in the past* they had channeled their efforts to support "an inward-looking" view of the Church, and now realized that they must reassess their priorities and resources to ensure that the Church become "an outward-looking" community.¹⁶² This admission suggests a plausible division of the development of their theology of the laity into two periods marked by the Fourth Plenary Assembly, which was a culmination of the FABC's theological reflection on the subject in the first phase from 1970 to mid-1986, and a change of emphasis in the second period from September 1986 to 2001. This shift of emphasis can be identified in five interrelated areas: its orientation to the world, its contextualization of the role of the laity based on geographic regions, its emphasis on the empowerment for, and autonomy of, lay people, especially women and youth, its focus on an integral formation of and for the laity, in particular, the social teachings of the Church, and a deeper exploration of a spirituality of discipleship and a spirituality of harmony.

First, the statements of the FABC, issued in the first period, tend to emphasize the role of lay people in the Church as compared to those produced in the second phase, which show a more pronounced focus on their ministries in the world. Indeed, the 1977 conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church place more emphasis on the *ad intra* aspects of ministries, discussing their background, context, forms, and formation, and their implications for the life and structure of the Church.¹⁶³ However, at the Fourth Plenary Assembly in 1986, the Asian bishops stressed the need to make ministries of lay people more world-oriented and kingdom-oriented because they realized that lay apostolate was still "parish-oriented, inward-looking and priest-directed."¹⁶⁴ They reiterated this emphasis in other statements, especially those issued in subsequent plenary assemblies. The Church, they affirmed, has to balance the "efforts on inward looking concerns with concerns for social issues especially regarding workers, women and youth."¹⁶⁵ Lay people should influence the world of business and politics, education and health, mass media and work, by being a servant of the Lord and a companion of all Asians in the journey aiming for full life in the kingdom of God.¹⁶⁶ Their duty is to witness to the values of the kingdom by promoting "justice, peace, love, compassion, equality and brotherhood."¹⁶⁷ This change of emphasis had already been signaled in other documents issued by the FABC in the two years immediately prior to the Fourth Plenary Assembly. The first and second Bishops' Institute for the Lay Apostolate (BILA) in 1984 and May 1986 stress that, to fulfill its mission, the Church has to direct its ministries to the world and society, especially to justice and developmental priorities of the region.¹⁶⁸ The mission of lay people, says BILA III, is to witness to the values of the gospel by dialoguing with Asians, especially the poor, in a non-Christian milieu and a secularized society.¹⁶⁹

Secondly, since 1986 the FABC's theology of the laity has become more contextualized with two Asian meetings held in 1994 and 2001: the first to discuss the mission of lay people with special reference to the social teachings of the Church, and the second, to reflect on both the Church's social doctrines and the role of the laity as a moving force of love and service in a renewed Church.¹⁷⁰ Regional gatherings of laity were held in East Asia, South Asia, and South East Asia to study the social teachings of the Church in the context of their regional concerns. East Asia consists of Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macau, and Taiwan; South Asia comprises Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka; South East Asia includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The first East Asian regional meeting took place in Taipei in 1986 to discuss "The Role of the Laity in the Local Churches of East Asia," and it was followed by a second meeting in Tokyo in 1989 addressing the theme of "Spiritual Crisis amidst Material Affluence and the Role of the Laity."¹⁷¹ Three more East Asian regional meetings were held in 1992, 1996 and 1999 to examine the specific role of lay people in this region, dealing with issues that were more pertinent to East Asia such as the participation of the laity in the life of the Church in East Asia, their role in human development, and their formation towards a renewed Church.¹⁷² Two South Asian regional meetings were held in 1995 and 1998 on the theme of the role and mission of lay people in a multi-religious context.¹⁷³ Between these meetings the bishops of South Asia also met to discuss the principles for a Christian response to the growing phenomenon of religious fundamentalism and violence in South Asia, and to emphasize the formation of lay leaders.¹⁷⁴ In South East Asia, two meetings were held in 1996 and 1999 to reflect on the role of the laity in the Church's mission with special emphasis on human development and the social teachings of the Church.¹⁷⁵

Thirdly, from 1986 on, the Asian bishops have increasingly emphasized the empowerment and the autonomy of lay people in undertaking their ministries in the Church and in the world. The Fourth Plenary Assembly highlighted the need for developing collaborative church structures to make full use of lay people's talents and expertise.¹⁷⁶ The Fourth and Fifth Bishops' Institute for Lay Apostolate (BILA IV and V) in 1988 and 1991 searched for ways to restore to the laity their rightful place and role in the over-clericalized churches in Asia.¹⁷⁷ The Fifth Plenary Assembly in 1990 affirmed that lay people are the primary evangelizers of cultures and societies.¹⁷⁸ The clergy have to be active in the formation of lay people to enable them to be "evangelizers of their own – the young evangelizing the young, workers evangelizing workers, professionals evangelizing professionals, government officials evangelizing government officials, families evangelizing families," and to become a leaven for the transformation of Asian society.¹⁷⁹

The FABC acknowledges that discrimination based on gender exists in the family, in the economy, politics, culture, religion, and mass media,¹⁸⁰ and that women want to be treated more equally in the Church.¹⁸¹ The first BILA on Women in 1995 formally recognized that women are co-evangelists and active agents in their own transformation.¹⁸² The FABC acknowledges that Catholic morality and spirituality are biased against women, and traditional Marian spirituality favors the docility of women.¹⁸³ To remedy this situation and to empower women, what is required is an inspiring reinterpretation and presentation of Mary as a true disciple, who listens to and acts on the Word of God in the public sphere.¹⁸⁴ At a colloquium held in 1997 to discuss their plans for the churches in Asia in the 21st century, the Asian bishops considered it a priority to identify the key issues of discrimination against women in Asia and to promote the empowerment of women in the Church and in society.¹⁸⁵ They proposed that women be invited to become members of theological commissions at national and FABC levels.¹⁸⁶ Between 1995 and 2001, three special BILAs on Women were held to address issues relating to the role of women in the Church and the world of Asia.¹⁸⁷

At other forums, the FABC recommended that existing structures within the Church be reviewed and appropriate mechanisms be set up to enable women and youth to participate in the decision-making bodies of the Church.¹⁸⁸ To show their deep concern for women and youth they instructed that a women's commission and a youth office be established.¹⁸⁹ In 1997, the first BILA on Youth was held to discuss the ministry to Asian youth.¹⁹⁰ The FABC also stressed the need to impart Christian values to children and train them to be agents of change,¹⁹¹ and held the first consultation on children in 2000.¹⁹² For the FABC, women, youth, the family, as well as other sectors of people such as indigenous peoples, sea-based and land-based migrants, and refugees, are their pastoral priorities, and at the same time, equal partners in the mission of love and service.¹⁹³

Fourthly, after the 1986 Plenary Assembly, there has been an increased emphasis in the FABC's reflection on the "formation of and for the laity."¹⁹⁴ Three meetings of the BILA were held to discuss the topic of lay formation.¹⁹⁵ The FABC identify three levels of formation,¹⁹⁶ the first of which is a general formation of all Christians, in particular lay people, aiming to make them aware of the Second Vatican Council's teachings on their vocation and mission.¹⁹⁷ Special training seminars, weekend courses, and block courses for volunteers and selected leaders belong to the second level of formation,¹⁹⁸ while the third level is the ministerial formation designed for "those who enjoy the charisms for stable ecclesial service."¹⁹⁹ The Asian bishops' vision for the renewal of the Church is based on a holistic formation of the people of God, which emphasizes that lay people's training must be accompanied by the formation of the clergy and religious to enable them to understand and accept the emerging role and responsibility of the laity.²⁰⁰ They affirm that formation of the lay faithful is an ongoing process and must be placed among the priorities of a diocese.²⁰¹ At the Plenary Assembly in 1990, they called for a thorough education of Catholics in the social doctrines of the Church,²⁰² and repeated the same message at BILA VI in 1992,²⁰³ and the First Asian Laity Meeting in 1994.²⁰⁴

In addition to this emphasis on the formation of lay people with special reference to the social teachings of the Church, the Asian bishops recognize the need for lay people to have ongoing formation, and in particular, adequate training "needed for the emerging ministries and for new way of being ministers."²⁰⁵ They stress that lay formation must be adapted to the cultural contexts of Asia, and involve all members of the Church.²⁰⁶ As a result of the review of the many programs and methods that had been implemented, the FABC designed an integral formation process, which they termed "Asian Integral Pastoral Approach" (AsIPA) to promote a new way of being Church in Asia.²⁰⁷ They devoted two general meetings in 1996 and 2000 to discuss the AsIPA methodology, which they considered to be a very useful means to make the Church a communion of communities and to develop basic ecclesial communities.²⁰⁸ With an increased emphasis on the contextualized and integral formation of lay people and a focus on the Church's social teachings in the second period of their theological reflection on the lay experience, the FABC shifted from a theology *of* the laity to a theology *for* the laity, a theology not focused on dealing with lay people as a subject of theological discussion, but aiming to empower them to assume their rightful role in the Church and in the world.

Finally, after 1986, the Asian bishops have further deepened their reflection on the spirituality of all Christians by emphasizing that it is a spirituality of discipleship and a spirituality of harmony. First, this spirituality is a journey of authentic discipleship, love, and service in the context of Asia after the pattern of Jesus' death and resurrection.²⁰⁹ It is a contextualized Christian spirituality that discerns the movement of the Spirit who reenacts in Christians the mysteries of Jesus Christ in the contextual realities of their daily life and struggles.²¹⁰ Second, it is a spirituality of harmony which expresses their intimate

communion with God, their docility to his Spirit, and their following of Jesus-in-mission.²¹¹

It integrates every aspect of Christian life: liturgy, prayer, community living, solidarity with all and especially the poor, evangelization, catechesis, dialogue, social commitment, etc.²¹²

It is a spirituality of the new way of being Church, a spirituality of those who trust in the Lord, a spirituality of the powerless and the *anawim*.²¹³ It is a spirituality that emphasizes being over doing and seeks to challenge the disharmonies of the Asian world by a life of simplicity, humble presence, and service.²¹⁴ As such, it is already a living proclamation of Christ, convincing, powerful, and far-reaching in its impact.²¹⁵ The depth of this spirituality also prepares Christians for ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.²¹⁶ At the Sixth Plenary Assembly in 1995, the FABC affirmed that in Asia, where peoples have long traditions of deep religiosity, prayer is absolutely indispensable because the inner life of prayer builds the Church into a credible community of faith, which, in turn, works for a fully human future of Asian peoples.²¹⁷ For the FABC, spirituality and social justice go hand in hand, and together they are the keys to the kingdom of God in the world of Asia.²¹⁸

In sum, there was both a fundamental continuity and a gradual progression in the FABC's theology of the laity from 1970 to 2001, which displays a high degree of consistency and integration, coupled with discernible elements of growth.²¹⁹ This contextual theology, developed in response to the challenges of Asian societies, was increasingly manifested by an orientation to the world, a more regional contextualization of the role of lay people, a move towards their empowerment and greater autonomy, a focus on their integral formation, and an emphasis on a deeper and more engaging spirituality of discipleship and harmony.

Conclusion

This paper has reviewed the elements of the FABC's theology of the laity and traced its development over a period of thirty-one years from 1970 to 2001. First, in the documents of the FABC, lay people first and foremost are Asian Christians, a contextual reality and constitutive part of the Church, the faithful, the disciples of Christ, the people of God, and the believing community. Their identity is based on the baptismal, common priesthood of life, characterized by Asian secularity. Their calling is intimately bound to the vocation of local churches where all Asian Christians are called to a contextualized communion by being committed to Jesus the Liberator and to live the priesthood of life in a communion of integral liberation. Their mission and ministries are essentially Christ-centered, kingdom-focused, world-oriented, dialogical and liberative, as they endeavor to actualize the priestly, prophetic, and pastoral functions in their faith response to the challenges of Asia.

Fundamental to their vocation and mission are the two concepts of priesthood of life and contextualized communion, a common matrix for all Asian Christians which, intrinsically linked to their prophetic and pastoral functions, integrates both their *ad intra* role in the Church and their *ad extra* mission in the familial, professional, social, and political world. For the Asian bishops, the entire people of God is priestly, and its common priesthood of life, which has its origins in Christ himself, is more real and inclusive than the ministerial priesthood of the clergy.²²⁰ It encompasses and harmonizes two organizing frameworks dynamically used by *Lumen Gentium*, namely, the common priesthood and the triple mission of the Church. Mission is the purpose of lay ministries, which aim to transform the world by a triple dialogue of life with the cultures, the religions, and the poor of Asia. Evangelization is the highest priority of mission, and its goal is to build up the kingdom of God.

Secondly, there was both a fundamental continuity and a gradual development in the FABC's theology of the laity from 1970 to 2001. As the challenges of Asia changed so did

the teachings of the FABC. Indeed, following the Fourth Plenary Assembly in 1986, its theology of the laity has become more world-oriented with an increased emphasis on the empowerment and the autonomy of lay people, on the contextualization of the role of the laity based on geographic regions of Asia, on an integral and contextualized formation of and for the laity with a focus on the social teachings of the Church, and on a deeper exploration of a spirituality of discipleship and harmony. In this theology, the vocation and mission of lay people is constitutive of the life and activity of the Asian Church, which is called by Jesus to be a community of faith in Asia, a communion of committed disciples working for the liberation of Asia. Their priestly, prophetic, and pastoral ministries are based on the ministry of Jesus Christ who is their model and point of reference. While there was no paradigm shift in the FABC's contextual theology of the laity from 1970 to 2001, only a change in emphasis in some areas of pastoral concerns, this contextual theology and its interaction with other post-Vatican II theologies of the laity will remain a topic of abiding interest and relevance to both researchers and all Asian Christians.

NOTES

1. Gaudencio B. Rosales and Catalino G. Arevalo, ed., *For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, Documents from 1970 to 1991* (hereafter, *FAPA*), Vol. 1 (Quezon City, Phil.: Claretian Publications, 1992), 177-198. At the First Asian Laity Meeting held in 1994, the FABC observed that "there has been a deepened awareness of the vital role of the laity in the life and mission of the Church in the last 30 years." Office of the Laity (OL), "The Commitment of the Laity in the Church's Mission with Special Reference to Implementing the Social Teachings: Final Report on the First Asian Laity Meeting," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, ed. Franz-Josef Eilers (Quezon City, Phil.: Claretian Publications, 1997), 119; "Final Statement of the First Asian Laity Meeting," in *The First Asian Laity Meeting*, 4-9 September 1994, Korea, [edited by] Pontifical Council for the Laity (PCL), FABC-OL, [and] Catholic Lay Apostolate Council of Korea (CLACK), 255. The Asian bishops acknowledge that "the contribution by countless numbers of the laity to the life of faith among the People of God in Asia cannot be measured." Art. 2.4, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 179.
2. Office of the Laity (hereafter, OL) "Fifth East Asian Regional Laity Meeting," art. 1.3, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, ed. Franz-Josef Eilers (Quezon City, Phil.: Claretian Publications, 2002), 93.
3. This analysis is based on the three important documents of the FABC issued from 1970 to 2001: *FAPA*, Vol. 1 (1992), Vol. 2 (1997), and Vol. 3 (2002). Vol. 4 (2007) is not included in analysis.
4. Art. 4.4.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 192.
5. *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 177-98; Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church (hereafter, *ACMC*), *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 67-92.
6. For example, "We, the participants of the Third Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences" Art. 1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 55; "We, the participants of the first Bishops' Institute for the Lay Apostolate" Bishops' Institute for the Lay Apostolate (hereafter, *BILA*) I, Art. 1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 235; "... we, the delegates to BILA III – bishops, priests, religious and lay people" BILA III, Art. 13, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 245.
7. For example, in the final statements of the Fourth Plenary Assembly, the FABC writes: "Therefore, we bishops of Asia have come together ... with laity, Religious and priests ... The gathering of ours with the laity" See Arts. 2.1- 2.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 178; "We wish now to communicate to you the reflections that the laity, Religious and priests have shared with us" Art. 4.8.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 195; Biblical Institute for Biblical Apostolate (*BIBA*) II, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 231.

8. For example, "the call for us Asian Christians" Art. 4.1.3, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 191; "In a Church of communion, we, clergy as well as laity," Art. 4.7.1.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 194.
9. Art. 2.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 178; Art. 1.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 274; Art. 1, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 1; see also the footnote to the Introduction of FABC VII, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 1.
10. Asian Bishops' Meeting, art. 1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 3.
11. Art. 1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 12.
12. Art. 1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 29.
13. Art. 1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 53.
14. "The 'Syllabus of Concerns' of the Plenary Assembly," *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 63.
15. Art. 2.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 178. Lay people's participation in various Bishops' Institutes was acknowledged much earlier than FABC IV, e.g., Bishops' Institute for Social Apostolate III (BISA) III in 1975, art. 1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 207; Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate (BIMA) I in 1978, art. 1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 93; Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs (BIRA) III in 1982, art. 1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 119. Here the FABC seems to adopt the definition of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* (Canon 207), which defines the laity as the Christian faithful (*Christifideles*) who are not in holy orders: "By divine institution, among Christ's faithful there are in the Church sacred ministers, who in law are also called clerics; the others are called lay people." See *The Code of Canon Law*, new revised English translation, prepared by the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland in association with the Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Canadian Canon Law Society (London: HarperCollins, 1997), 44.
16. There are numerous instances in the Statement of the Fourth Plenary Assembly which discusses the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and in the world. See also "The Role of the Lay Faithful," art. 5.0, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 282; "Ministries of Lay People," in *ACMC*, art. 54, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 78.
17. Art. 3.3.3, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 281.
18. Art. 4.8.6, *Ibid.*, 197.
19. Art. 4.4.2, *Ibid.*, 192.
20. Art. 4.4.3, *Ibid.*, 193.
21. Art. 4.4.4, *Ibid.*, 193.
22. For Kenan B. Osborne, hermeneutical polarity means that "one term cannot be understood without its correlative term." See "The Meaning of Lay, Laity and Lay Ministry in the Christian Theology of Church," *Antonianum* 63 (1988): 240. We note that in these comparative paragraphs the FABC did not mention the words "priest" or "religious" explicitly, but prefer to use the generic terms of clergy, hierarchy, and leadership. It is also worthwhile to recall Peter C. Phan's insightful remarks on the distinction between the identity and mission of a layperson, a religious, and a member of the hierarchy based on their basic relationship with Christ, the Church, and the world. In his view, "each of these three categories enacts the mystery of Christ in the Church and in the world in a way distinct and appropriate to its state.... In the priestly state the Church and its *transcendent-mediating* mission is symbolized and realized; in the religious state the Church and its *transcendent-eschatological* mission is symbolized and realized; and in the state of the laity the Church and its *incarnating-recapitulating* mission is signified and realized. It is the same mission of being the sacrament of Christ in the world that is represented, manifested and made visible in three different states of life." See "Possibility of a Lay Spirituality: A Re-examination of Some Theological Presuppositions," *Communio* 10, no. 4 (1983): 384.
23. Art. 4.1.3, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 191.
24. Arts. 4.3.1, 4.1.3, *Ibid.*, 191.
25. Art. 4.5.1, *Ibid.*, 193.

26. Art. 4.2.2, *Ibid.*, 192.
27. OL, "Second Asian Integral Pastoral Approach (AsIPA) General Assembly II, art. 4.3, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 111.
28. South Asia Bishops' Meeting, "Christian Response to the Phenomenon of Violence in South Asia," art. 7, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 16.
29. OL, "The Commitment of the Laity," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 119; "Final Statement of the First Asian Laity Meeting," 255.
30. Arts. 4.8.2-4.8.3, *FAPA* Vol. 1, 195.
31. Art. 3, *Ibid.*, 179-191.

32. Art. 1.1, *Ibid.*, 178.

33. Art. 4.0.1, *Ibid.*, 191.
34. Arts. 4.1-4.2, *Ibid.*, 191.

35. Arts. 4.1.1-4.1.3, *Ibid.*, 191.

36. Art. 4.2.1, *Ibid.*, 192.
37. Art. 4.1.3, *Ibid.*, 191.

38. Arts. 4.8.8, 4.4.2, *Ibid.*, 197 and 192, respectively. Following Marie de la Trinité, H. M. Nicholas, and H. Urs von Balthasar, G. Chantraine prefers to use the term personal priesthood of the faithful—"sacerdoce *personnel* des fidèles"—rather than the common priesthood, because through the common priesthood the faithful become *filis dans le Fils et ainsi personne*. Cf. G. Chantraine, "Le laïc à l'intérieur des missions divines," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 109 (1987): 341.

39. Office of Evangelization (OE), "Evangelization among the Indigenous Peoples of Asia," *FAPA* Vol. 2, 213; art. 4.8.8, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 197.
40. BILA III, art. 6, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 244.
41. ACMC, art. 21, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 71.
42. ACMC, art. 15, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 70.
43. ACMC, arts. 16-8, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 70.

44. BIMA IV, art. 5, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 292.

45. BIMA IV, art. 5, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 292.
46. BILA III, art. 2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 243.
47. BIMA IV, art. 10, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 293.
48. BIMA IV, art. 6, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 292; BIMA III, art. 5, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 104; BIMA III, art. 6, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 104.
49. ACMC, art. 24, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 71-2.
50. ACMC, art. 21, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 71.
51. Arts. 4.3, 4.4, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 192.

52. Citing L. Schick's study into the origin and use of the threefold ministry schema, Hervi Rikhof notes that this framework "has been used Christologically in order to explain the name 'Christ.'" This use occurred in the patristic period and the Middle Ages and can be found in the *Catechismus Romanus* of the Council of Trent. It was also used in the context

of the doctrine of redemption to express the functions of Christ." See "The Competence of Priests, Prophets and Kings: Ecclesiological Reflections about the Power and Authority of Christian Believers," *Concilium* 197 (1988): 58. For Donald J. Goergen, the threefold ministry approach has "a biblical basis in the naming and proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah. As the 'Anointed One of Israel,' Jesus sums up within himself all the anointed ones of Israel. The prophets (1 Kgs 19:16; Sir 48:8), the priests (Ex 29:7; Lev 8:10), and the kings (1 Sam 10:1; 16:12-13) were anointed messiahs in the sense in which that would have been understood early in Israelite history.... There is a theological sense in which Jesus as Messiah came to be understood as having incorporated into his ministry dimensions of priesthood, prophecy, and kingship." Cf. Donald J. Goergen, "Priest, Prophet, King: The Ministry of Jesus Christ," in *The Theology of Priesthood*, ed Donald J. Goergen and Ann Garrido (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 190. It is worth noting that, according to I. De La Potterie, in the New Testament there was no connection between the theme of anointment and the title of "Christ" (anointed), and "le véritable et, en un sens, l'unique contexte où le Nouveau Testament parle de l'onction du Christ, c'est celui du baptême." See "L'onction du Christ," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 80 (1958): 251, 250, respectively. In his view, the explanation of the name of "Christ" by way of the threefold ministry was the result of a later theology (la théologie postérieure). *Ibid.*, 250-1.

53. Art. 1.7, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 275; Arts. 3.1.2, 3.2.3, 4.8.7, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 180, 182, 196.
54. Art. 4.8.7-8, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 196-7.
55. Peter Schineller makes a helpful remark that "inculturation takes seriously the *who*, the *where*, the *with whom* and *for whom* one does theology and one builds church. In fact, the local community ideally should become the maker of theology, a theology that is in dialogue with the larger Church, but one that speaks God's word for that particular cultural situation." Peter Schineller, "Inculturation as the Pilgrimage to Catholicity," *Concilium* 204 (August 1989): 99.
56. The editors of International Catholic Weekly, *The Tablet*, note that "social justice has a long Catholic pedigree, with the term first coined by the Jesuit Luigi Taparelli in the 1840s, and later being expressed more fully in Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, in which he emphasized that society should be based on cooperation rather than class conflict." See "Towards Justice and Dignity," *The Tablet* (30 September 2006): 2.
57. Art. 4.3.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 192.
58. Arts. 4.3.1, 4.4.1, *Ibid.*
59. Art. 4.3.1, *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*; Office of Laity and the Catholic Council of Lay Organizations in Thailand, "The Role of the Laity in Church Mission in South East Asia with Special Emphasis on Implementing the Church's Social Teachings," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 130.
61. Art. 4.4.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 192.
62. Art. 4.4.3, *Ibid.*, 193.
63. Art. 4.4.4, *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*
65. Art. 2.4, *Ibid.*, 179.
66. BILA III, art. 7, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 244.
67. Art. 4.4.4, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 193.
68. Art. 4.8.8, *Ibid.*, 197.
69. Art. 4.6.2, *Ibid.*, 193.

70. Arts. 4.3.2, 4.6.2, *Ibid.*, 192-4.
71. BILA III, art. 6.9, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 237.
72. Art. 4.6.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 194.
73. Arts. 12-24, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 14-6; Part I.A.8, Part III, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 4, 8. Jacques Dupuis reminds us that "interreligious dialogue was hardly spoken of before the Second Vatican Council." See Dupuis, "The Church's Evangelizing Mission in the Context of Religious Pluralism," *The Pastoral Review* 1, no.1 (2005): 20. For Francis A. Sullivan, "John Paul II is the first pope to recognize interreligious dialogue as a 'part' and 'expression' of the Church's evangelization." See "The Evangelizing Mission of the Church," in *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook on Ecclesiology in Honour of Patrick Granfield*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 241.
74. BILA on Women II, art. 3.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 75.
75. BIMA I, art. 5, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 94; Art. 3.1.11, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 181.
76. BILA III, arts. 11, 10, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 245; BIMA II, art. 12, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 100. For Gustavo Gutiérrez, the word "preferential" has "a very important meaning, because we cannot overlook the universality of God's love. The big challenge is to keep together the two aspects of *universality* (meaning that no one can be excluded from our love), and *preference* for the last ones, the insignificant persons." See "The Church of the Poor," *The Month* (July 1989): 266.
77. Part III, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 8.
78. BIRA IV/12, art. 51, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 333.
79. BILA II, art. 9, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 241.
80. Art. 1.5, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 179.
81. Art. 4.3.1, *Ibid.*, 192.
82. Art. 3, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 2; Art. 4.8.7, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 196
83. Arts. 4.8.7, 4.8.10, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 196-7.
84. APMC, art. 25, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 72.
85. Art. 4, *Ibid.*, 68.
86. Arts. 53-4, *Ibid.*, 78.
87. APMC, art. 54, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 78.
88. Arts. 53, 57, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 78-99.
89. Art. 58, *Ibid.*, 79.
90. Art. 59, *Ibid.*
91. Art. 60, *Ibid.*
92. Art. 61, *Ibid.*
93. Art. 62, *Ibid.*
94. Art. 63, *Ibid.*, 80.
95. Art. 64, *Ibid.*
96. Art. 65, *Ibid.*
97. Art. 66, *Ibid.*
98. Art. 67, *Ibid.*
99. APMC, art. 68, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 80.
100. Art. 69, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 81.

101. Art. 70, *Ibid.*
102. BILA IV, art. 8.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 297; OL, "Participation of the Laity in the Life of the Church: Final Message: Third East Asian Regional Laity Meeting," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 99; Arts. 3.1.2-3.1.3, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 180.
103. Art. 3.1.6, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 180.
104. OL, "Participation of the Laity in the Life of the Church," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 99; OL, "Second Asian Laity Meeting," *FAPA*, Vol. 3, art. 3.5, 115.
105. According to FABC IV, "[o]f the total population, 60% are between 15 and 24 years of age." See art. 3.2.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 181.
106. Art. 3.2.1, *FAPA* Vol. 1, 181.
107. Art. 3.2.2, *Ibid.*, 182.
108. Art. 3.2.3, *Ibid.*
109. Art. 3.2.4, *Ibid.*
110. Art. 3.2.5, *Ibid.*
111. Art. 3.3.3, *Ibid.*, 183.
112. Art. 3.3.1, *Ibid.*, 182.
113. *Ibid.*
114. Art. 3.3.2, *Ibid.*, 183.
115. *Ibid.*; ACMC, art. 90, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 83.
116. ACMC, art. 89, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 83.
117. Art. 93, *Ibid.*, 84; Art. 3.3.3, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 183.
118. Art. 3.3.4, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 183.
119. Art. 3.4.1, *Ibid.*, 184.
120. Art. 3.4.8-3.4.9, *Ibid.*, 185.
121. Art. 3.4.9, *Ibid.*
122. Art. 3.4.10, *Ibid.*
123. Art. 3.5.1, *Ibid.*
124. Art. 3.5.3, *Ibid.*
125. Art. 3.5.2, *Ibid.*
126. Art. 3.5.5, *Ibid.*, 186.
127. Art. 3.6.3, *Ibid.*, 187.
128. Art. 3.6.1, *Ibid.*, 186.
129. Art. 3.6.6, *Ibid.*, 187.
130. Art. 3.7.1, *Ibid.*
131. Art. 3.7.4, *Ibid.*, 188.
132. Arts. 3.7.8, 3.8.1, *Ibid.*, 189.
133. Art. 3.8.5, *Ibid.*, 190.
134. *Ibid.*
135. Art. 3.9.1, *Ibid.*
136. Art. 3.9.3, *Ibid.*; see also BILA II, art. 7, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 240.
137. Art. 3.9.7, *Ibid.*, 191.

138. For E. Sellner, "Christian spirituality has taken many forms throughout the centuries. One important form, consistently overlooked and unappreciated, is lay spirituality." Quoted by Kees Waaijman, in "Lay Spirituality," *Studies in Spirituality* 10 (2000): 5.
139. Art. 4.8.8, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 197.
140. Art. 4.8.3, *Ibid.*, 195.
141. Art. 9.1, *Ibid.*, 288; Art. 4.8.3, 195.
142. Art. 4.8.4, *Ibid.*, 196.
143. Art. 4.8.5, *Ibid.*
144. Art. 4.8.6, *Ibid.*
145. Art. 4.8.7, *Ibid.* Peter C. Phan shares this view noting that, as a way of living, Christian spirituality has four characteristics: "theocentric (relationship with God), Christic (mediated by and modeled after Christ), pneumatological (empowered by the Spirit) and ecclesial (realized in and through the Church)." See "Christian Social Spirituality: A Global Perspective," in *Catholic Social Justice: Theological and Practical Explorations*, ed. Philomena Cullen, Bernard House and Gerard Mannion (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 22.
146. BISA VI, art. 18, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 226; Art. 4.8.8, 197.
147. Art. 9.3, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 288; Art. 4.8.7, 197. We suggest that, to some extent, the spirituality presented by the FABC can be described as a "Christian social spirituality," a rich concept that was helpfully explicated by Peter C. Phan in "Christian Social Spirituality," 22. It is also worth recalling Adolfo Nicolás' observation that "the crisis of Christianity in Asia is global," and "at the root and at the core of this global crisis lies *spirituality*." See "Christianity in Crisis: Asia. Which Asia? Which Christianity? Which Crisis?" *Concilium* 3 (2005): 66, 68. For the current Superior General of the Society of Jesus, "this crisis is *a crisis of credibility* that touches the whole evangelization enterprise: words do not match action; the received teachings do not change the life of the believers; rituals do not energize life; Christian professionals, politicians, public servants or even husbands do not seem to perform with greater honesty, fidelity or compassion than their Buddhist or Hindu counterparts.... In Asia we are in crisis because our message is not made visible in our life." *Ibid.*, 66. Father Nicolás, who spent more than forty years in Japan, believes that "'real theology' comes from 'life experience' of the laity." See Robert Mickens, "In the Steps of Ignatius—and Arrupe," *The Tablet* (26 January 2008): 6. He was no doubt influenced by the "non-monastically lay apostolic spirituality" developed by Ignatius when he was still "a layman with absolutely no idea of seeking priestly ordination." Aloysius Pieris, "Vatican II: Glimpses into Six Centuries of Its Prehistory," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 44, no. 4 (2007): 311-2.
148. For Keith J. Egan, "A spirituality of discipleship is the lived experience of following Jesus under the influence of the Holy Spirit." "The Call of the Laity to a Spirituality of Discipleship," *The Jurist* 47 (1987): 75.
149. Art. 4.8.8, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 197.
150. Art. 27, *Ibid.*, 34. For Peter C. Phan, the Asian Christian spirituality involves an ecclesial task of realizing the Church's mission. See "Asian Christian Spirituality: Context and Contour," *Spiritus* 6 (2006): 225. In this inspiring paper, Phan provides an adroit and penetrating exploration of the links between the Asian Christian spirituality and the FABC's triple dialogue, namely, interreligious dialogue, liberation, and inculturation. *Ibid.*, 221-7.
151. Art. 4.8.10, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 197; BILA II, art. 6, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 240.
152. For a detailed treatment of the FABC's theological methodologies see Peter N. V. Hai, "*Fides Quaerens Dialogum*: Theological Methodologies of the Federation of Asian Bishops'

- Conferences," Australian E-Journal of Theology 8 (2006), http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/ejournal/aejt_8/hai.htm (accessed 1 November 2006).
153. Art. 3.0, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 179-91.
 154. Art. 15, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 10-2.
 155. Part III, A, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 9-11.
 156. BISA VII, arts. 8-13, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 231-2; Art. 7.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 284; Office of Human Development (OHD), "The Prophetic Path to the New Millennium through Social Advocacy," art. 3.14, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 50; see also Art. A.3, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 2.
 157. OL, "Second Asian Laity Meeting: Final Statement," art. 4.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 115; Office of Theological Concerns (OTC), "Methodology: Asian Christian Theology," art 3.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 356.
 158. Arts. 4.2.2-4.3.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 192.
 159. BILA III, art. 7, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 244.
 160. Art. 4.4.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 192.
 161. *FAPA*, Vol. 3.
 162. Art. 4.3.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 192.
 163. ACMC, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 67-92.
 164. Art. 4.6.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 194.
 165. BILA V, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 78.
 166. Art. 6, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 4; see also "The Role of the Laity in Human Development," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 134.
 167. Arts. 1.7, 4.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 275, 282.
 168. BILA I, art. 6, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 236; BILA II, art. 9, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 241.
 169. BILA III, art. 7, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 244.
 170. OL, "The Commitment of the Laity," 119-25; OL, "Second Asian Laity Meeting: Final Statement," art. 4.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 113-6.
 171. OL, "Participation of the Laity in the Life of the Church: Third East Asian Regional Meeting," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 97.
 172. *Ibid.*, 97-100; "The Role of the Laity in Human Development," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 133-5; "Fifth East Asian Regional Meeting: Final Statement," *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 93-6.
 173. OL, "Second South Asian Regional Laity Meeting (SARLM II)," *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 83-7.
 174. "Christian Response to the Phenomenon of Violence in South Asia: South Asia Bishops' Meeting (SABIM)," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 13-8.
 175. OL, "The Role of the Laity in Church Mission in South East Asia with Special Emphasis on Implementing the Church' Social Teachings," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 127-31; "Second Southeast Asian Regional Laity Meeting," *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 89-92.
 176. Art. Part 1, A.6, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 4. Here the FABC might have in mind the collaborative model of ministry of the early Church, a theme that was investigated by Daniel J. Harrington who convincingly argues that "from the earliest times ministry in the Church was collaborative." "Paul and His Co-Workers," *Priests and People* (August-September 2003): 325. See also "The Collaborative Nature of the Pauline Mission," *The Bible Today* 42, no. 4 (July 2004): 200-6.
 177. BILA IV, art. 3, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 295; Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy (OESC), "A Renewed Catechesis for Asia towards Year 2000 and Beyond," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 29; see also OTC, "Being Church in Asia: Journeying in the Spirit into Fuller Life," art. 52, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 227.

178. Art. 5.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 283; OE, "Evangelization among the Indigenous Peoples of Asia," art. 8, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 213.
179. Arts. 5.1-5.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 283.
180. OL and OHD, "Realities and Experiences of Women in Asia," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 114-5.
181. OL, "Participation of the Laity in the Life of the Church," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 98.
182. BILA on Women [I], "Role of Women in Church and Society toward 2000," art. 1.6, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 92.
183. Art. 3.7, *Ibid.*, 94.
184. BILA on Women [II], *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 75; BILA on Women [I], art. 5.4, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 95.
185. OHD, "Colloquium on Church in Asia in the 21st Century," arts. 4.1.2-3, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 37.
186. BILA on Women [II], *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 76; OL and OHD, "Realities and Experiences of Women in Asia," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 118.
187. BILA on Women [I], *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 91-6; BILA on Women [II], *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 73-7; BILA on Women [III], *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 79-82.
188. OL and OHD, "Realities and Experiences of Women in Asia," 116; OHD, "Colloquium on Church in Asia in the 21st Century," arts. 4.1.18-19, 39.
189. OL and OHD, "Realities and Experiences of Women in Asia," 117; OHD, "Colloquium on Church in Asia in the 21st Century," arts. 4.1.15, 39; OL and OHD, "The Youth of Asia Envisioning the Fullness of Life and Human Dignity in the Church," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 104; OL, "Asian Youth Ministers' Meeting: A Consolidated Report," *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 104.
190. BILA on Youth, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 65-71.
191. OHD, "Colloquium on Church in Asia in the 21st Century," arts. 4.1.15, 39.
192. OE, "Consultation on 'Missionary Animation of Children,'" *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 214.
193. Art. III.A, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 9.
194. Art. 4.7.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 194.
195. BILA V, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 77-80; BILA VI, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 81-85; BILA VII, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 87-90.
196. Art. 4.7.2.0, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 194.
197. Art. 4.7.2.1, *Ibid.*
198. Art. 4.7.2.2, *Ibid.*, 194-5.
199. Art. 4.7.2.3, *Ibid.*, 195.
200. OL, "The Commitment of the Laity," 121; BILA IV, art. 11, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 297-8.
201. BILA VI, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 77; BILA V, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 77.
202. Art. 5.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 283.
203. BILA VI, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 82.
204. OL, "The Commitment of the Laity," 123; see also "The Role of the Laity in Human Development," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 134.
205. OTC, "The Spirit at Work in Asia Today," art. 4.3.1.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 312; BILA IV, art. 9, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 297.
206. Art. C.2, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 13.
207. OL, "Asian Integral Pastoral Approach towards a New Way of Being Church in Asia (AsIPA)," *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 107-11.
208. OL, "Asian Integral Pastoral Approach (AsIPA) Message to the Churches of Asia," art. 10, *Ibid.*, 139; Art. III.C.7, *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 15.
209. Art. 9.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 288; OTC, "The Spirit at Work in Asia Today," art. 4.2.2.6, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 308.
210. OTC, "The Spirit at Work in Asia Today," 308.
211. Arts. 9.1, 9.5, *FAPA*, Vol. 1, 288.

212. Art. 9.3, Ibid.
213. Art. 9.5, Ibid.
214. Arts. 9.5, 10.1, Ibid., 288-9.
215. Art. 9.7, Ibid., 289.
216. Art. 9.6, Ibid.
217. Arts. 3, 14.1, *FAPA*, Vol. 2, 2, 8.
218. OHD, "Colloquium on Church in Asia in the 21st Century," art. 8.1., *FAPA*, Vol. 3, 45.
219. Our observation is inspired by the three selective principles highlighted by Gerard Vincent Hall in his work, *Raimon Panikkar's Hermeneutics of Religious Pluralism* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1994): first, the *principle of continuity* implies a "fundamental consistency of the themes, methods and approaches"; secondly, the *principle of growth* involves a "transformation and even rupture" of the interpretations and procedures; finally, the *principle of integration* is "more than the summation of these first two principles," and "recognizes a certain *telos*" in the works produced over a period of time. Ibid., 3.
220. Gideon Goosen reminds us that "both priesthoods are analogical of the priesthood of Christ. Both mediate; both offer sacrifice; both are go-betweens." "A New Relationship between the Ministerial and Baptismal Priesthoods," *Compass* (Winter 1997): 21. For David N. Power, "the use of the word 'priesthood' in the conciliar documents lacks precision. Apart from associating it with the Church's sacramental ministry and eucharistic sacrifice, the council offered no precise definition of Christ's own priesthood, but seemed to take this as a given." See "Priesthood Revisited: Mission and Ministries in the Royal Priesthood," in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, ed. Susan K. Wood (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 91.