

HISTORY OF AsIPA

BILA on AsIPA

Pattaya, 19 October, 2010

*“Becoming a Church of
Communion”*

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What is AsIPA?

- The AsIPA an approach that it crafted with so much care and concern, with a conviction to move towards the realization of a vision.
- AsIPA is a different way of having an FABC event because we do not listen to theories and theological reflections. FABC has many of those and yet, the basic question is HOW DO WE MOVE TO REACH THOSE IDEALS, THE VISION SO WELL ARTICULATED IN THEORY? AsIPA is a method, a pastoral approach to move towards the new vision.

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1970

- Visit of Pope Paul VI – after Vatican II, challenge to be Church in Asia, to make visible the Asian face Jesus, the Christian faith rooted in Asian soil; to implement the Vatican II vision.
- Start of the study to set up an Office for the Laity within the FABC with background of the document on Laity, the “Apostolicam Actuositatem”

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1974

- The first FABC Plenary Assembly in Taipei “The Mission of the Church in Asia” – continue the efforts to carry out the evangelization tasks with the Asian culture, context and the people in the heart of the process.

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1982

- FABC 3 - the Committee for the Laity was officially started as a concrete step to become a full Office of Laity (which later became Office of Laity and Family after FABC 8).
- Arch. Joseph TiKang (Taiwan) was the first Chairman
Fr. Jess Breña as Executive Secretary

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1984 and 1986

- the first BILAs - a search for a formation program to awaken the laity to their vocation to holiness and to be co-responsible for the mission of the Church.
- We started to give training courses in Asia using the Lumko method (first at BILA 1)

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1986

- The FABC 4 on "The vocation and mission of the Laity in the Church and Society of Asia" declared OL as a full-fledged Office of the Laity
- Fr. Tommy Murphy (Taiwan) Executive Secretary
- More training using Lumko method

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1990

- FABC 5 in Bandung, Indonesia, the Bishops declared that the **Church in Asia be "A Church of Communion,... a participatory Church, ...witnessing to the Risen Lord...where the gifts of the Holy Spirit to all: priests, religious, lay people be recognized and put to use..."**
- They requested that formation courses be started to move towards this "new way of being Church" responding the challenges of the new millennium. A mandate was given to FABC OLF to start these courses, first using Lumko method.

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1991

- First international courses in Chinese (Taiwan) and in English (Thailand)
- Bishop Oswald Hirmer who was with us from the start, was 6 months based in Asia, living in Singapore and accompanying our processes in different countries in the next 5 years.

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1993

- An evaluation of the courses and AsiIPA was coined to mean **Asian, Integral Pastoral Approach**, in a joint meeting of FABC OSC and FABC OLF, AsiIPA texts were gradually coming out to light in the format as they are now, more contextualized, easy to translate.
- Arch. Angel Lagdameo (Philippines) was 2nd Chairman
- Ms. Cora Mateo (Taiwan) as Exec. Secretary
- International Courses continued, encouraging efforts at the local level.

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1996

- First AsiIPA Gen. Assembly which made decisions to organize national courses for basic training and international courses for the advanced training.
- An **AsiIPA Editorial Board** was formed with Ms. Wendy Louis, Fr. Thomas Vijay, Ms. Estela Padilla and the Exec. Secretary to continue producing texts and to give courses.
- A period when we went to several countries in Asia to conduct training courses: India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, and Indonesia, where we were invited, to run national courses and later to assist the local teams. In other meetings of the FABC OLF we introduced the 7 steps Gospel sharing and used some of the texts.
- Translation of the materials also started during this period. (At present in more than 30 Asian languages).

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1999

- 1999 - 2nd AsiIPA General Assembly (Thailand) – an exchange locally produced materials coming from different countries, responding to local needs. This is an important effort to contextualize further. The Editorial Board grew in number and tasks, and was the final team to make the different modules into AsiIPA text: with basic criteria of an awareness program that raises an issue through a code, has a Biblical passage and moves the people into action and renewal. They are simple steps that encourage participation, Christ and community-centered that carry out the mission in a co-responsible way.

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2003

- 3rd ASIIPA General Assembly – became more and more an exchange among national and diocesan teams, and the Editorial Board became **ART = ASIIPA Resource Team** with 9 members from 6 countries: India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, and still expanding.

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2006

- 4th ASIIPA GA in India, with a good immersion experience in their SCCs. ASIIPA was given a chance to see a different method to form SCCs which is able to help the people go beyond their church-intra and be concerned about social issues, about inter-religious dialogue... in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum with almost 2,000 SCCs.

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2009

- 2009 – 5th ASIIPA GA in Davao City, Philippines, and it was a herald for a new stage with Ms. Wendy Louis as the Executive Secretary and after 27 years, the FABC OLF office in Taiwan was closed and the ASIIPA Desk, moved to Singapore.
- GA5 was also an experience to be with participants using different methods to build SCCs. We were almost 250 participants a growth from the 26 that gathered for GA i in Bangkok in 1996.

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- And the rest, is not history (as the saying may go) but a future of becoming a “Church of Communion,” with its efforts to reach the base to encourage people to participate. Success is not a one moment event (like the Chilean miners), but success expressed in many events in different instances of an on-going process of renewal, big and small, in the neighborhood, in the parish, in the diocese...
- Our incoming Exec. Secretary is Ms. Bibiana Ro from Korea and the ASIIPA Desk will be soon moving to Seoul.

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Conclusion

- What ASIIPA is today was not achieved by one person, nor in one event, but by a team who were conscious from the start that the process itself is the message, witnessing to the Risen Lord, in communion in what ever program it undertakes. It is not anymore international, but contextualized in several Asian cultures.
- Perhaps the future will be a challenge, as Bishop Tirona says, not just to be content with ASIIPA as a methodology, but as a way of life to make us pray and act together as sisters and brothers, making communion a reality and all becoming truly co-responsible for Church mission.