



## **B: SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES**

### **B/6A**

## **WHAT IS EVANGELIZATION?**

### **TOPICS OF AsIPA TEXTS:**

**A : GOSPEL SHARING**

**B : SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES**

**C : A PARTICIPATORY CHURCH**

**D : TRAINING FOR PARISH TEAMS**

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feeling was all about. He treasured this experience and wanted to share it with others.

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5. Rose was a poor widow who had been rejected by her people. She had such a hard time bringing up her children and was always hurt by the look she got from the other women. One day a woman came out of the crowd in the market to help her when she dropped her little bag of vegetables. She saw such love in her eyes and she felt the touch of her warmth in her voice. She invited Rose to have a little glass of tea from the nearby stall and she told Rose about the group they have where they share their problems and joys and listen to the word of God. Rose went to meet the group and gradually she met Jesus in these people and asked to join the group.

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*When all groups have reported and main points have been written on newsprint or on the board, add to the reports with the supplement below.*

### **Supplement**

- Raj experienced the love of God through the brother who listened to him.
- Mei Ling heard the Good News preached and wanted to know more about this person called Jesus. Probably the monk was a holy man too and that impressed her.
- Roger was influenced through his own mind by the ideas he found in books. This made him open to learning more and he entered a church where the experience of peace led him further.
- Al was influenced by beauty that brought him into contact with the Creator-God.
- Rose met Christ in the love of someone who accepted her and showed her love. She also heard the word of God and met Christ in the group and in the word.
- The many ways that each character journeys towards God tells us that we need to be open to all the ways in which God wants to touch people.

*Questions for reflection*

*1. What happened to the person in your story that drew him or her towards God?*

*2. What does this tell us about sharing the 'Good News' with others?*

1. Raj had been in a Catholic School and had always admired the discipline of the religious brothers who ran the school but one brother in particular took care of him one day when he had a problem at home. This brother gave him a hot meal and then sat down and listened to Raj's problems late into the night. He never forgot that. It kept coming back to him.

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2. Mei Ling was invited by her work colleague to attend a talk given by a very famous, holy, monk on prayer. Her colleague and herself often shared on their different faiths. She never had any idea of Christianity but what she heard that day helped her to understand better that God is loving and was inviting her into a relationship of love. That day she started searching earnestly and asked many questions of her colleague.

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3. Roger was always a seeker. From his youth he read a lot about the various religions, he was often very inspired by what he read. He prayed that he would find what he was looking for to calm his restless spirit. One day he walked into a church and he felt a calm and peace he had never experienced before. What he experienced in that quiet church made him decide that he wanted to know the God who dwelt in this place.

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4. Al worked on a ship. One morning when he was scrubbing the top deck in the early morning he looked out at the horizon and he saw the sun rising like a ball of fire. The clouds all turned various shades of pink and orange. As he stood there, he was filled with a sense of wonder of the one who could make such beauty. He felt something deep down inside him drawing him into a loving embrace. He wanted to understand what this

## B/6A

### WHAT IS EVANGELIZATION?

#### **Prepare beforehand**

Newsprint or a board with pens or chalk

Bibles for everyone

*This session requires at least 2 hours. Omit section C if you have less time. It is important but can be done by the members at home.*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Pope Paul VI in his 1975 instruction called 'Evangelization in the World Today' (EN), stresses that evangelization is not only preaching, catechesis, conferring of Baptism and other Sacraments (EN17). He says that evangelization is 'a complex process with varied elements' (EN24).

Pope John Paul II teaches us that SCCs are instruments of evangelization. (RM51)

Today we will try to understand the meaning of evangelization and the different aspects of evangelization.

#### **A. Understanding evangelization as 'A complex process'.**

- Divide up into small groups of 3-4.
- Read one story in each small group and answer the questions below. Report to the whole group after 10 minutes. Make sure all the stories are covered.

- We also learn that there are many small things we can do to reveal who God is to our brothers and sisters around us.

## **B. THE AIM OF EVANGELIZATION**

- *Group work in groups of 3/4*
- *Discuss two of the scripture texts given to you and find out the aim of evangelization in it?*
- *Report to the whole group after 10 minutes. Write your answers on another sheet of newsprint or on the other half of the board.*

1Peter 3,15

1Peter 2,12

2 Corinthians 1, 3-4

Romans 10, 14

Matthew 5, 16

Matthew 28, 16-20

Mark 1, 14-18

Luke 10, 1-2

### **Supplement**

- Explaining the hope that we have – so that others may have hope.
- That people should praise God when they see our good deeds.
- Helping / Comforting others – using the same help we have received from God.
- Proclaiming the message that others may believe.
- To be light for others, to share the light of Christ.
- To make disciples of Christ.
- To baptize – to share the life and love of God in the Church.
- To teach them the ways of God.
- To allow people to experience the presence of Christ.
- To work in pairs, to heal, to bring peace and to proclaim the nearness of the Kingdom of God. To witness that the disciples of Christ are people who can live together peacefully and be at the service of others.

### C. THE MANY WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING EVANGELIZATION

- *Group work in groups of 4/6.*
- *Do not attempt this section if time is short or people have difficulties with the written word or language.*
- *Discuss one or two of the texts given to you and discover the message or Good News in it.*
- *Report the result of your discussion about the questions related to the texts to the whole group after 15 minutes.*
- *Someone can write the key words on newsprint during the reports if this is possible.*

*Question for texts 1 & 2.*

***What is the good news (evangel) that we have to share with others?  
Why is it Good News?***

1. "In Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we come to know that God is not distant, above and apart from us, but is very near, indeed united to every person and all humanity in all of life's situations. This is the message which Christianity offers to the world, and it is the source of incomparable comfort and hope to all believers." (*Church in Asia, EA.12.*)
2. "Beyond all divisions, Jesus makes it possible for people to live as brothers and sisters, recognizing a single Father who is in heaven (Mt.23: 9)." "Jesus is our peace,... who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph.2:14). In all that he said and did, Jesus was the Father's voice, hands and arms, gathering all God's children into one family of love."(*EA. 13.*)

*Question for texts 3 & 4*

***Becoming a new creation and personal conversion. What has this to do with evangelization?***

3. For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: "Now I am making the whole of creation new." But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by Baptism and by lives lived according to the Gospel. (EN 18)
4. The Church considers it to be undoubtedly important to build up structures which are more human, more just, more respectful of the rights of the person and less oppressive and less enslaving, but she is conscious that the best structures and the most idealized systems soon become inhuman if the inhuman inclinations of the human heart are not made wholesome, if those who live in these structures or who rule them do not undergo a conversion of heart and of outlook. (EN36)

*Question for texts 5, 6, 7 & 8*

***What does evangelization mean in these texts? What witness is expected of each of us and of the whole church?***

5. "Blatant disrespect for the environment will continue as long as the earth and its potential are seen merely as objects of immediate use and consumption, to be manipulated by an unbridled desire for profit. It is the duty of Christians and of all who look to God as the creator to protect the environment by restoring a sense of reverence for the whole of God's creation." (EA.41)
6. ...For the Church it is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting through the power of the Gospel, mankind's criteria of judgment, determining values, points



of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation. (EN19).

7. ...Evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man's concrete life, both personal and social. This is why evangelization involves an explicit message adapted to the different situations constantly being realized about the rights and duties of every human being, about family life without which personal growth and development is hardly possible, about life in society, about international life, peace, justice and development – a message especially energetic today about liberation. (EN29)
8. With regard to the liberation which evangelization proclaims and strives to put into practice one should rather say this:
  - a. It cannot be contained in the simple and restricted dimension of economics, politics, social or cultural life; it must envisage the whole person, in all his or her aspects, right up to and including his or her openness to the absolute, even the divine Absolute;
  - b. It is therefore attached to a view of the human person which it can never sacrifice to the needs of any strategy, practice or short-term efficiency. (EN33)

### **Supplement**

- The message of hope we carry is that God offers in Jesus, his forgiveness and love. He is very near to us and cares for us.
- The Good News needs to be shared by the loving and just actions of our lives. People can experience hope and the love of God by our actions.
- Conversion of heart is the result of evangelization. If the human heart is not affected nothing can be truly changed for the better.
- The Good News we believe is that God is a loving and concerned creator. By our relationship with creation, we show reverence and

respect for the creator. Mindless use of the environment will destroy nature and endanger life on earth.

- The Good News is that the human person is not destined to live just a few years here on earth; there is a more wonderful existence with God that gives us hope and meaning in life.

## CONCLUSION

1. *Work in pairs. Try to formulate for yourself now what you understand by the word 'Evangelization'. Refer to the newsprint or board for the points raised in sections A, B & C. Share your sentence with the whole group after five minutes.*
2. *In your Small Christian Community you have been carrying out various activities and programmes. From what you have learnt today, what are some of the improvements you can make to become a more evangelizing community as well as becoming more evangelized yourselves.*
  - *Take the points from the stories, scripture texts and church documents that you raised and see which may apply to your situation.*
  - *Try to use one or two points and say what you can do to become a more evangelizing community.*

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*Some documents referred to:*

*Pope John Paul II in his Post-Synodal Exhortation to the Church in Asia (EA)*

*Pope Paul VI in his Post-Synodal Exhortation to the whole Church on 'Evangelization in the world today' Evangelii Nuntiandi (EN)*

*Pope John Paul II apostolic exhortation to the whole church on the Missionary Mandate (RM)*

# METHOD OF ASIPA TEXTS

ASIPA TEXTS are compiled for Christian men and women at grass root level of the parish. They can be conducted most fruitfully in Small Christian Communities, Neighbourhood Communities, Parish Pastoral Councils or any other small groups in the parish.

ASIPA TEXTS can also be used with larger groups, e.g. in the parish hall - provided the “participatory method” is maintained in smaller working groups.

## **Features of the “ASIPA approach”**

1. ASIPA TEXTS adopt a “**participatory approach**” in which all participants of a group search and discover for themselves as far as they are able to.
2. The texts are compiled in such a way that the facilitator can use them with a **minimum of preparation**.
3. The facilitator is requested to **follow the text** as closely as possible and allow the participants to contribute when indicated in the text.
4. The facilitator is not content with one answer to a question but he/she encourages as many participants as possible to search for an answer. “**Buzz groups**” of 2/3 are helpful to achieve maximum participation.
5. The **SUPPLEMENT** can help add to the findings of the participants and summarize them.
6. The **SUMMARY** is meant to be used as ‘input’.

# **ASIPA:**

**As-ian -I-ntegral -P-astoral -A-pproach**

The Asian Bishops declared in the Final Statement of their Fifth Plenary Session in Bandung: The Church of 1990s has to be a "Participatory Church", a "Communion of Communities", a Church that "witnesses to the Risen Lord" (*FABC5,#8*).

The question was, how to promote this "new way of being Church". Therefore, late in 1993, jointly sponsored by the FABC Offices of Human Development and of Laity, a consultation meeting was held in Malaysia. It was during this consultation that the pastoral process for promoting a "Participatory Church" in Asia was termed ASIPA: Asian Integral Pastoral Approach.

ASIPA TEXTS (training programmes) follow this directive:

## **ASIAN**

They want to implement the vision of the Asian Bishops and help Asian Christians face Asian life in the light of the gospel.

## **INTEGRAL**

They aim at achieving a balance between the "spiritual" and the "social", between the individual and the community, between hierarchical leadership and the co-responsibility of the laity.

## **PASTORAL**

They train the laity in their pastoral mission in Church and world.

## **APPROACH**

The process of ASIPA TEXTS can be described as a pastoral approach which is "Christ- and Community centred". It involves the participants of workshops to search for themselves and allows them to experience a "New Way of Being Church."

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