



B: Small Christian Communities

B\12 Introduction to New AsIPA Texts on Interreligious Dialogue

TOPICS OF AsIPA TEXTS:

- A: GOSPEL SHARING(7 Steps)**
- B: SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES**
- C: A PARTICIPATORY CHURCH**
- D: TRAINING FOR PARISH TEAMS**
- E: SPIRITIAL FORMATION**
- F: FORMATION AND TRAINING OF LEADERS**

AsIPA B: Small Christian Communities

Formation for the Christian Community

B\12

Introduction to New AsIPA Texts on Interreligious Dialogue

In our Asian context, almost all our Small Christian Communities find themselves situated within other faith communities. In today's conflict ridden world we need dialogue more than ever. The dialogue that was called for by the Second Vatican Council and reverberated by the FABC many plenary assemblies. One very important aspect of Dialogue is the dialogue that takes place between neighbours of different faiths. The new AsIPA texts presented below are a first attempt at producing materials for SCCs to use to train themselves to understand and practice Interreligious Dialogue.

Part of the 'B' Series (blue) on training for Small Christian Community members with their facilitator

B12A – A Common Ground for Interreligious Dialogue - Together we seek the One we long for.

In this first module we want to understand that no matter what our belief, the deep longing for God comes from the mysterious knowledge people have that only God provides the answers to the ultimate questions in our lives – the answers that we seek to the purpose of our lives and the meaning of our death.

B12B – Interreligious Dialogue and Small Christian Communities - An Integral part of the Evangelising Mission of the Church.

In this second module we would like to understand the place of Interreligious Dialogue in the evangelising mission of the Church and how it is distinct from Proclamation. This module is very long and can easily be divided into two or more sessions. Facilitators must give time for concepts to be fully explored and discussed.

B12C – What and Why Interreligious Dialogue.

In this third module we look more deeply into why we want to engage in Interreligious dialogue and the basic requirements for anyone engaging in IRD. This text is for a group of Catholics who want to enter into Interreligious Dialogue with their neighbours or colleagues. The session is a preparation for Interreligious dialogue. It is very important that we

understand what Interreligious dialogue is and that we develop the skills needed for meaningful dialogue. We are very clear that this is not an academic or theological level of dialogue but dialogue of ordinary people in their everyday circumstances of life.

B12D – Listening with the Heart - Dialogue is speaking and deep listening.

In this module we want to become more aware of the way we speak about our faith, the different layers of feeling and thinking that make up our beliefs and also become more aware of how well and deeply we listen when someone is speaking.

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."