

## **E: Spiritual Formation**

**E\7**

**““Be what you preach”**

Adapted from Lumko No. 15M&P

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

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



# AsIPA E: Community Training Series

## Spiritual Formation of Leaders

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### E\7

## “Be what you preach”

### *Prepare beforehand:*

*Newsprint*

*Bibles for all participants*

*Copies of this text*

### **Introduction**

In this session we would like to become more aware of the reasons why the life style of leaders must bear out their words. We are all familiar with this theme called “Be what you Preach” however today we wish to deepen our understanding of this call which touches all of us – bishops, priests and all other leaders.

Following Christ is wonderful, but it can also be like a burden. The lifestyle which Christ expects of all Christians is often highly demanding and we experience it like a burden. The task of transforming this world in the spirit of Christ can be like a burden which we carry for years. Not only the leaders of the church carry this burden, but each Christian.

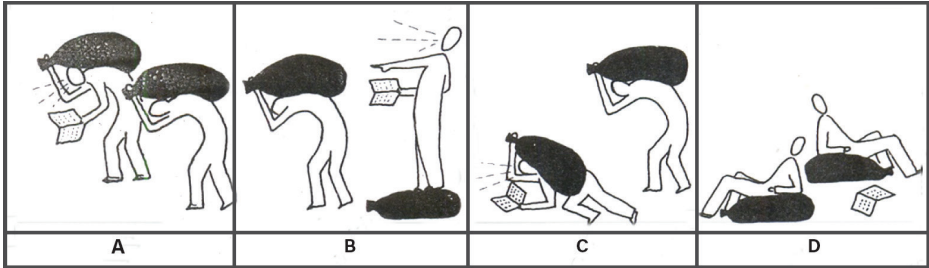
As Jesus says: “Shoulder my yoke and learn from me” Mat 11:29

The leaders of the Church carry this burden side by side with all members of the Church. How does the word which they announce compare with their own way of carrying the burden?

### **Step 1 PREACHING THE WORD AND DOING THE WORD**

- *Form small groups of 2 – 3 persons*
- *Study the scripture passages listed below and consider to which of the four pictures A to D each text belongs.*
- *All groups should study the first four texts.*

- If there is time take the rest of the texts
- Be prepared to report back
- Complete in the whole group any incomplete texts.

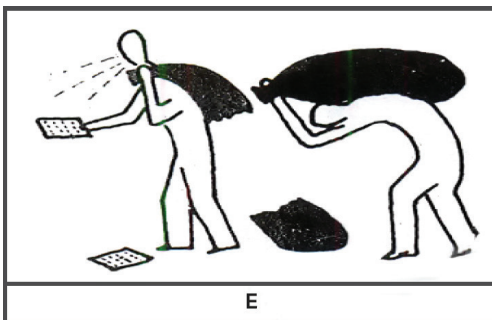


**BIBLE PASSAGES:**

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Mat 23:1-5;   | 7. Heb 4:15;    |
| 2. Mat 26:69-75; | 8. Heb 5:7-8;   |
| 3. Heb 2:10-18;  | 9. Phil 4:9;    |
| 4. 1Cor 9:16;    | 10. 2 Tess 3:7; |
| 5. Mat 23:13-15; | 11. Jo 8:46.    |
| 6. Mat 23:23-28; |                 |

*Note to facilitator:*

*In the report-back it is not wise to let all groups give a full report. It is better to call out one after the other of the bible passages and ask all groups how they allocated it. It is important to ask for the reasons why they did so. Ask for comments on those reasons. Give an opportunity to ask questions.*



What does the Word of God say about one who preaches only certain parts of God's message and consistently leaves out those which would be a challenge to his own way of life? Can this happen today?

**Step 2 PREACHING THE WORD SELECTIVELY**

*Discuss the following questions in the whole group.*

1. *Do you think these four pictures represent the main options with which we are confronted in our work in the Christian community?*

2. *Are there other possibilities of how our life-style and the word we preach are inter-related?*

### **PICTURE D**

1. Let us consider picture D more closely. What does it mean?... It is not easy to find scripture passages for it. But does it really occur only rarely?...
2. Could you try to invent a story of a Christian community where this is happening?...
3. The picture shows a leader who stopped preaching altogether. But others would be similar to him, who stopped preaching a certain part of the gospel.

### **PICTURE E**

- While picture D showed a leader who stopped preaching altogether, E shows one who stopped preaching a certain part of the gospel. Usually there is a reason for leaving out a certain truth. It is not forgetfulness, but a fear of a certain truth. Could we think of such a temptation. Let us try to describe it....
- While this can happen with one person, can it also happen with a whole group of leaders, or a whole community? Could it happen that the whole community finds a certain type of truth too challenging and too threatening, and so they become silent about it? Can you think of examples?...

### **PICTURE C**

- Let us also consider picture C more closely (unless this came up already during the report-back).
- What do we see happening?
- We only quoted one scripture passage relating to this picture: the denial of Peter. Are there any other bible passages relating to this picture of a leader who fell? (Eg. the pride of the apostles; their disbelief; their running away when Jesus was taken prisoner; the quarrel between Paul and Mark; and the many faults reported in the letters of the Apostles).

*Reflect on the following questions in the plenary or in small groups.*

1. How can leaders of Christian community help each other to be what they preach?
2. Christ was very strict towards certain religious leaders, but very merciful toward others. To whom was he strict and to whom merciful? And why did he react differently?
3. What must a leader do if he has committed a serious offence?...What should his colleagues do? What should the community do? What should the priest do?

### Step 3 GOSPEL SHARING.

Scripture text Rev 1:1-20 or another suitable one.

Follow the 7 steps of gospel sharing.



*Yahweh, you examine me and know me,  
You know if I am standing or sitting,  
You read my thoughts from far away,  
Whether I walk or lie down, you are watching,  
You know every detail of my conduct.*

**Ps 139**

## 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."