KEY CONTRIBUTIONS
OF THE FABC TO
THE CHURCHES IN ASIA

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OFFICE OF THEOLOGICAL CONCERNS
1. The Role of FABC
2. The Significance of Plenary Assemblies
3. Plenary Assembly Highlights
4. FABC Theology: Characteristics & Emphases
5. FABC Theology: Methodology
6. FABC Milestones
7. Future Directions
THE ROLE OF FABC
THE ROLE OF FABC

FABC wanted to build a truly local Church “incarnate in a people, a Church indigenous and inculturated, a Church in continuous and loving dialogue with the living traditions, cultures and religions.

- FABC Plenary #1, 1974
  Taipei, Taiwan
THE ROLE OF FABC

The FABC is an effective instrument for quickening a sense of pastoral concern and solidarity in the Christian community in the whole of Asia... towards the bringing in the hearts of all of the Church as communion.

- Cardinal Lourdesamy
FABC Plenary #2, 1978
Calcutta, India
THE ROLE OF FABC

The FABC provides the bishops the opportunity to “search together, act together and bear collective responsibility” for the mission of the Church.

- Felix Wilfred
FABC Plenary #5, 1995
Manila, Philippines
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PLENARY ASSEMBLIES
The FABC Plenary Assemblies have been an effective instrument and the *locus* for searching and discerning together the “direction” for the Churches in Asia.
FABC PLENARY ASSEMBLY

The role of the Plenary Assembly is to seek new meanings & endeavours, overcome destructive forces, shape a new integration, read the signs of the times and discern what needs to foster, and that which is to be rejected & refused.

- FABC Plenary #1, 1974
Taipei, Taiwan
FABC PLENARY ASSEMBLY

“The Plenary Assemblies are really occasions for living as Church together and with Church peoples from different ministerial sectors and from different geographical locations.”

- Edmund Chia
FABC PLENARY ASSEMBLY

Methodology:

• Exchanging stories, sharing successes and challenges, discerning the movement of the Spirit in the life of Asia’s people.
FABC PLENARY ASSEMBLY

Methodology:

• Other avenues beyond the assemblies.... Bishops’ Institutes, Seminars, Conferences, etc.
FABC has been for us a very concrete and effective forum for sharing our Asian way of thinking and implications of the Gospel of Jesus for all the peoples of Asia.

- Archbishop Michael Rozario
FABC 25th Anniversary, 1995
Manila, Philippines
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Evangelization in Modern Day Asia.</td>
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## FABC PLENARY ASSEMBLIES

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Theme</th>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>The Vocation &amp; Mission of the Laity in the Church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Bandung</td>
<td>Journeying Together Towards the Third Millennium.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Manila</td>
<td>Christian Discipleship in Asia: Service to Life.</td>
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<td>Daejeon</td>
<td>The Asian Family: Towards a Culture of Integral Life.</td>
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<td>Colombo</td>
<td>The Catholic Family in Asia: Domestic Church of the Poor on a Mission of Mercy.</td>
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PLENARY ASSEMBLIES
(1974 - 2016)
HIGHLIGHTS
The realisation and the enfleshment of the Body of Christ in a given people, at a given place and time through dialogue (culture, religion, poor).

Evangelization in Modern Day Asia.
Christian prayer is at the very heart of developing the Church in Asia... moving towards a deeply praying community whose contemplation is inserted in the context of our time and culture.

Prayer: The Life of the Church in Asia.
Communion of faith as the distinguishing mark of the Church among other other communities in Asia. The local church gives witness in public spheres and moves forward in mission.

The Church: A Community of Faith in Asia.
The Church needs lay people in the various sectors of human life so as to make a difference. They must be joyful and active collaborators.

The Vocation & Mission of the Laity in the Church.
There needs to be a ‘new way of being and becoming Church’ in Asia, and also the spirituality which must inform it.

Journeying Together Towards the Third Millennium.
Five pastoral priorities were identified (family, women & girl-child, youth, ecology, displaced persons)... particular pastoral focus needed.
At the dawn of a new millennium, the most effective means of evangelization and service... continues to be the witness of life. Therefore, an integral approach to mission is needed.

A Renewed Church in Asia: A Mission of Love & Service.
Family is at the centre of the Asian life and they must be empowered to become evangelizers. Holistic family ministry much needed.

A Renewed Church in Asia: A Mission of Love & Service.
The characteristic mode of the Church’s existence in Asia is that of dialogue – of life and love. The presence of Christ must also be seen in the poor, in creation, and in history.

Living the Eucharist in Asia.
The Church in Asia has a daunting mission of proclaiming Jesus Christ in the midst of the rapid changes in Asia. We need to be Christ-experiencing & Christ-witnessing community... renewed evangelizers for a New Evangelization.

FABC at 40 years: Responding to the Challenges in Asia.
The changing face of Asia is affecting families and therefore the Church needs to work towards a ‘spirituality of the family’ that is founded on the encounter with Jesus.

The Catholic Family in Asia: Domestic Church of the Poor on a Mission of Mercy.
1. INDUCTIVE APPROACH & PASTORAL SPIRAL METHODOLOGY

• FABC theologizing begins in the concrete context, exploring the realities of life as the locus of doing theology.

• The Asian Integral Pastoral Approach (AsIPA).
2. JESUS’ VISION OF THE REIGN OF GOD WITHIN AN ASIAN CONTEXT

• Seeking the KOG in the concrete experiences of the social, political, economic, religious and cultural landscape of Asia.

• To make known the message of Jesus that is acceptable to Asians... Asian face, concepts, terms, symbols, etc.
3. LOCAL CHURCH AS PRIMARY ACTOR

- The primary task of evangelization is the building up of a local Church... incarnated and inculturated.
- To assist the local Churches to be living and acting in communion with the universal Church.
4. DIALOGUE AS THE MODE OF PRESENCE IN ASIAN CONTEXT

• Dialogue is the true expression of the Church’s evangelizing action.

• Fostering a dialogue of life as a mode of existence for the Churches in Asia.
5. INTERIORITY AND MOTIVATION FOR MISSION

- There is a deep spirituality in the Asian Church.
- The motivation for mission is grounded on gratitude, mandate, faith, baptism, and leaven for liberation.
6. ANNOUNCING THE PERSON AND PROMISES OF CHRIST

• The proclamation of Jesus Christ is the center of all evangelization.

• In Asia, to proclaim Christ above all else is to live like Him.

• Proclamation in a “dialogical manner”.
7. ROLE OF LAITY IN A NEW WAY OF BEING CHURCH

- The vocation and mission of the laity towards a Church that is made up of a communion of committed disciples.
- The discernment of the “signs of the times” involves the people of God.
8. ENGAGEMENT WITH AND THE EVANGELIZATION OF CULTURES

• The inculturation of the life and message of the Gospel calls for a deep respect for cultures and traditions of our peoples.

• Faith-Culture dialogue is pivotal for the New Evangelization.
9. FAITH-MOTIVATED LIBERATING ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIETY

• The Asian Church must be the Church for the “poor”... to attend to the social needs of the majority of the Asian peoples.

• Those in the margins of society requires special attention.
10. PROMOTION OF INNOVATIVE PASTORAL MINISTRIES

- The Church need “innovation” in some specialized ministries’.
- An ongoing conversation about helping Asian churches to “become truly Asian in all things”.
FABC THEOLOGY: METHODOLOGY
“ASIANNES” IN THE ASIAN CHURCH

- The FABC from its inception has endeavoured to foster inculturation in order to make the Asian Churches truly rooted in the Asian soil.

- The Church to be an embodiment of the Asian vision and values of life.
FINDING HARMONY WITH OTHER ASIAN REALITIES

- The Asian holistic approach demands the virtue of harmony in the diverse realities of Asia’s traditions and cultures.

- The virtue of co-existence is founded on relationships and interactions.
ASIA’S WAYS OF EVANGELISING

- The Asian approach to evangelising (proclamation) is through dialogue and deeds.

- By lives of prayer, service and example, the Church witnesses to Jesus Christ.
ASIA’S TRIPLE DIALOGUE

- The dialogue with religions, cultures and the poor as the Asian way of building the Kingdom of God.
THE KINGDOM IS WIDER THAN THE CHURCH

- The kingdom-centered way of being Church in Asia reaches out to the socio-political, cultural and religious contexts of Asia.
- The starting point for theological reflection has been the pastoral contexts.
- Context, Asian resources, magisterial teachings, pastoral application.
FABC MILESTONES
KEY “MILESTONES”

1. 1974 (Taipei, Taiwan): First Plenary Assembly
   • The “Three-fold Dialogue” :
     • Dialogue with religions.
     • Dialogue with cultures.
     • Dialogue with the poor.
“For the Church in Asia to truly discover its own identity it must continually engage in a “three-fold dialogue” with the peoples (especially the poor), the cultures, and the religions of Asia. This programmatic vision... forges bonds of unity and builds community in the Asian context.”

- Fr James Kroeger, MM
KEY “MILESTONES”

2. 1982 (Bangkok, Thailand)  
Third Plenary Assembly

• The Church is a community realizing its communion and mission in its own being and life, and in relation to other communities.
KEY “MILESTONES”

“The Church in Asia must listen to the Spirit at work in communities of believers who live and experience their own faith; who share and celebrate it in their own social, cultural and religious history... the communities of the Gospel must accompany these in a common pilgrimage.”

- FABC III, art. 8.2
3. 1990 (Bandung, Indonesia)
Fifth Plenary Assembly

• The “New Way of Being Church” calls for an integral and holistic approach to evangelization.
• The “Bandung Assembly” can be regarded as the “transition point” / “coming of age”.
KEY “MILESTONES”

“It was perhaps the Fifth Plenary Assembly which put into perspective the FABC’s approach to mission and evangelization in Asia. It synthesized all the previous Assemblies’ concerns and called for a totally “new way of being Church.”

- Edmund Chia
KEY “MILESTONES”

4. **2012 (Xuan Loc, Vietnam)**
   Tenth Plenary Assembly

• To be renewed as evangelizers, we have to respond to the Spirit active in the world, in the depths of our being...we need to live a spirituality of New Evangelization.
KEY “MILESTONES”

“The mission of New Evangelization, new in its ardour, its methods and its expressions, is urgent. It calls for renewed evangelizers with a renewed spirituality, the spirituality of communion, of mission, of new evangelization... [in] conformity with the attitude & mind of Christ”

- Message of X Plenary Assembly
FUTURE DIRECTIONS
Local Church.
Dialogue.
Communion.
Mission (Evangelization).
Harmony.
FEDERATION OF ASIAN BISHOPS’ CONFERENCES
OUR FUTURE DIRECTIONS?

• Three-fold dialogue → four-fold dialogue?

• Mission → missionary disciple?

• Pastoral priorities → missionary priorities?
• FABC Paper 139: A Brief History of FABC (Vimal Tirimana (Ed), 2013).


• A New Way of Being Church in Asia: The FABC at the Service of Life in Pluralistic Asia (Jonathan Yun-Ka Tan, 2005).

Thank you for your kind attention :)