

agents? How should one understand the relationship between missions and churches?

- How should theology be taught in the academic arena (be it in universities, seminaries, or Bible schools)? How should various Christian theological loci (e.g., God, Christ, Spirit, church, worship, spirituality, ethics, or pastoral ministry) be reformulated and taught in view of world Christianity or Christianities of the world, in dialogue with different cultures and different religions, or targeted toward particular ethnic or religious groups?
- How does the new reality of world Christianity affect research methods? How should courses on Christianity be taught? How should textbooks on Christianity as well as on world religions generally be structured? What should curricula, course work, required texts, faculty hiring, criteria for tenure and promotion, research, and publication look like in the academic world that is responding to the questions being raised by the Christianities of the world?

The issues are far-ranging and the questions transformational. We look forward to a lively series and a rewarding dialogue.

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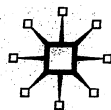
Edited by Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan

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Introduction: Migration and Christian Theology

Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan

Breaking news! On May 17, 2012, the US Census Bureau reported that minority babies outnumbered white newborns in 2011 for the first time in US history. The percentage of nonwhite newborns rose to 50.4 percent of children younger than a year old from April 2010 to July 2011, while non-Hispanic whites fell to 49.6 percent. The figures highlight the rapid growth in the Hispanic and Asian populations, both of which have surged by more than 40 percent since 2000. Hispanics were 16.7 percent of the population in July 2011 and Asians were 4.8 percent. This surge and change in the race and ethnicity of the immigrant population were made possible by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (the Hart-Celler Act), which abolished the national origins quota system. Since the 1920s, American immigration policy excluded Asians and Africans and preferred northern and western Europeans over southern and eastern ones. The Hart-Celler Act replaced it with a preference system that focused on immigrants' skills and family relationships with citizens or US residents.

The surge in migration is of course not only restricted to the United States but is also a global phenomenon. Migration has been an ever-present worldwide fact of life, but currently demographers are talking of it as a new global phenomenon. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs reported that there were an estimated 214 million migrants worldwide in 2008 (3.1 percent of the world population). Together the migrants would constitute the fifth largest country in the world.

Migration is a highly complex phenomenon, with significant economic, sociopolitical, cultural, and religious repercussions for the migrants, their native countries, and the host societies. It has recently been the "hot" subject of research in different disciplines, primarily sociology, anthropology, politics, and economics.

48. Engh, "Companion of the Immigrants," 45.
49. See Patrick Hayes, "Massachusetts Miracles: Controlling Catholic Cures in Boston, 1929–1930," in Cormack, *Saints and Their Cults in the Atlantic World*, 111–127, especially 114–115, and 119.
50. Bundang, "May You Storm Heaven," 89.
51. Silvano Tomasi, "The Prophetic Mission of the Churches: Theological Perspectives," in *The Prophetic Mission of the Churches in Response to Forced Displacement of Peoples*, report of a global ecumenical consultation, Addis Ababa, November 6–11 1995, 36–43 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1996), 40.
52. Tomasi, "The Prophetic Mission of the Churches," 41.
53. See Avery Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) as quoted in Robert J. Schreier, *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 128.
54. Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 51.
55. See Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Chapter 6

An Asian Theology of Migration and Its Interreligious Implications: Insights from the Documents of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)

Jonathan Y. Tan

The phenomenon of migration in Asia has a long, varied, and complex history stretching back to thousands of years. Beginning with the nomadic tribes that wandered the vast expanse of the Asian continent in search of water and grazing lands, the trade caravans that travelled on the famed Silk Route across vast stretches of Asia, and the invading armies that displaced peoples and communities from their ancestral lands, migration has always defined the Asian continent in every age. While nomadic tribes and trade caravans have come and gone, large-scale migration continues unabated in Asia. The principal difference between then and now is the fact that the pace of migration was much slower three thousand years ago, when the first caravans ventured far beyond familiar territory in search of new trading opportunities.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the beginning of massive migration patterns that was facilitated by the great steamships, propeller airplanes, and transcontinental railways. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the world is witnessing the growth of large-scale *internal* and *external* displacements that are made possible by affordable international travel, advanced telecommunications, and broadband internet. Today's migration patterns in Asia include internal migration from rural to urban centers (e.g., Chinese youth leaving rural farms to work in large, nondescript factories in the coastal regions of China), as well as external migration from economically depressed countries to economically booming countries (e.g., Filipinos leaving

their homeland to work as construction workers, nurses, engineers, etc., in oil-rich Arab nations), refugees fleeing violence and persecutions (e.g., Indochinese refugees). Migration can be voluntary (e.g., economic migrants in search of jobs) or forced (e.g., refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons who are fleeing persecution in their homelands).

At the same time, migration, whether voluntary or involuntary, is ambiguous: it is welcome by some and resented by others. On the one hand, the abundant array of ethnic restaurants, galleries, and festivals are often welcomed because they add spice and zesty variety to otherwise staid lives. On the other hand, complaints of cultural assault, cultural relativization, and cultural pollution are growing increasingly frequent and strident. Indeed, migration becomes the bogeyman that embodies the fear, uncertainty, and insecurity about a community's self-identity vis-à-vis others, leading to the absolutization of its ethnic and cultural identity against what it perceives as the threat of encroachment by others. In extreme cases, it can stir up feelings of xenophobia, ethnocentrism, racism, and nationalism.

Moreover, one also has to acknowledge the reality that today's large-scale, globalized migration patterns are fueled and abetted by immense poverty and extreme social-economic imbalances, violent ethnic and religious strife, as well as the insatiable demand for cheap labor and cheap products. The magnitude of this problem is especially dire in Asia. Many Asians are migrants, whether willingly or unwillingly. Voluntary migrations are often exemplified by the many Filipinos, Indonesians, Indians, Bangladeshis, Chinese, and others who seek better opportunities outside their homelands as construction workers, domestic helpers, factory workers, and so on. Involuntary migrants include not just refugees who are fleeing wars, social strife, economic upheavals, political instability, religious tensions and persecution, but also the many economic migrants, especially vulnerable women and children, who are exploited and trafficked by underworld gangs, smuggling networks, and secret societies for cheap labor and sex trafficking. The sheer violence and abject dehumanization that many of these women and children experience reveal the dark underbelly of migration and call for a concerted response on the part of everyone to redress these problems.

At the same time, migration, whether voluntary or involuntary, documented or undocumented, is more than transnational or global population mobility *simpliciter*. Migration results in the commodification and exploitation of the human person, and thus abuse and dehumanization. As the Indian theologian S. Arokiasamy explains, migration

"reveals the vulnerability of people's lives, their insecurity, exploitation, joblessness, uprootedness, political uncertainty and humiliating treatment as outsiders or foreigners."¹ Writing from both personal experience and academic research, the Vietnamese American Catholic theologian, Peter Phan draws attention to the "existential condition of a transnational immigrant and refugee," which includes "violent uprootedness, economic poverty, anxiety about the future, and the loss of national identity, political freedom, and personal dignity."²

In addition, the movement of peoples also brings about the movement of religions. As Muslims from Mindanao move into predominantly Christian Sabah, Filipinos work in predominantly Muslim nations in the Middle East, and so on, the implications of migration for interfaith relations can no longer be ignored. Indeed, migration leads to an increasing cultural diversity and religious pluralism in different parts of Asia. This raises difficult questions about the pastoral care of Christian migrants and refugees in predominantly non-Christian regions of Asia (e.g., the large influx of Filipino migrant workers in the Middle East), as well as non-Christian migrants and refugees in predominantly Christian regions (e.g., Indonesian Muslim undocumented migrant workers in the Sabah or the Philippines).

A theology of migration and its interreligious implications has been emerging in the official documents of the FABC,³ as it grapples with this complex issue. The FABC is a transnational body comprising 15 Asian Catholic Bishops' Conferences as full members, namely, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Laos-Cambodia, Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam, as well as 10 associate members, namely, Hong Kong, Kyrgyzstan, Macau, Mongolia, Nepal, Siberia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and East Timor.⁴ The foundation for the FABC was laid at an historic meeting of 180 Asian Catholic Bishops in Manila during the visit of Pope Paul VI to the Philippines in November 1970. From its inception, the FABC has sought to make a significant contribution to the development and growth of the spiritual and theological life of the Asian local churches through its Plenary Assemblies,⁵ as well as congresses, consultations, colloquia, conferences, and symposia that are organized by its various offices.⁶

Understanding the FABC's Theological Orientation

In its official documents, the FABC has proceeded on the basis that the Asian continent, with its teeming masses and their rich diversity

and plurality of religions, cultures, and philosophical worldviews require a distinctively threefold Asian theological response to the manifold socioeconomic challenges, that is, (1) undergirded by a commitment and service to life, (2) oriented toward a threefold dialogue with Asian cultures, religions, and the poor, and (3) with the goal of seeking to bring about the *reign of God* in Asia.⁷ Indeed, the FABC's emerging theology of migration can be understood as a natural outgrowth from this threefold theological framework.

It is true that the early documents of the FABC did not deal directly with the issue of migration and its challenges. A survey of the FABC documents in the 1970s and 1980s reveals only minor references to migrants in the *Syllabus of "Mission Concerns"* of the Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate (BIMA) III (1982) and the Final Statement of BIMA IV (1988). Specifically, article 11 of BIMA III's *Syllabus of "Missionary Concerns"* states: "Pastoral care for the great number of Asians who have emigrated from their homelands for economic reasons demands the serious missionary concern of the churches,"⁸ while BIMA IV encourages the bishops to "[u]se the mobility and migration of the faithful as an opportunity to spread the Gospel of Christ" and "inspire, educate, and organize... migrants to be witnesses of Christ wherever they may go."⁹ In the absence of any formal statement from the FABC during this period, individual episcopal conferences in Asia released their own statements on migration, that is, Philippines (1988), Taiwan (1989), and Japan (1993).¹⁰

FABC V: Journeying Together toward the Third Millennium

The major turning point came with the Fifth FABC Plenary Assembly, which was held in Bandung, Indonesia in 1990 with the theme, "Journeying Together toward the Third Millennium." In its Final Statement, the FABC Plenary Assembly acknowledged the injustice of both voluntary and involuntary migration in the Asian milieu:

We are deeply conscious, therefore, that within our context of change there is the unchanging reality of injustice. There remains in Asia massive poverty... Poverty likewise drives both men and women to become migrant workers, often destroying family life in the process. Political conflict and economic desperation have driven millions to become refugees, to living for years in camps that are sometimes in effect crowded prisons. (2.2.1)¹¹

In response, FABC V asserts that the Christian community "must live in *companionship*, as true *partners* with all Asians as they pray,

work, struggle and suffer for a better human life, and as they search for the meaning of human life and progress." The Asian Bishops insist that the church must walk in solidarity with the Asian peoples who are the "exploited women and workers, unwelcome refugees, victims of violations of human rights" in their quest for God and for a better human life. The church will also serve them in a spirit of compassion that also seeks to "denounce, in deeds, if it is not possible to do so in words, the injustices, oppressions, exploitations, and inequalities resulting in so much of the suffering that is evident in the Asian situation."¹²

FABC-OHD: Journeying Together in Faith with the Filipino Migrant Workers in Asia

Following in the footsteps of FABC V, which had included migration as one of the many issues facing the Asian Church as it journeys toward the third Christian millennium, the FABC Office of Human Development (FABC-OHD) continued the discussion by organizing a symposium on Filipino migrant workers in Asia (Hong Kong, 1993) that was attended by delegates of the episcopal conferences and diocesan commissions in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The Final Statement of this symposium entitled "Journeying Together in Faith with the Filipino Migrant Workers in Asia" began by acknowledging the contributions of millions of migrant workers from the Philippines to the growing global economy.¹³ While it acknowledges that migration does have "both positive and negative effects on the country of origin as well as the receiving country,"¹⁴ it points out those Filipino migrant workers, male and female alike, often experience serious human rights abuses. For example, Filipino women, who are often employed in the domestic and entertainment sectors, are "frequently submitted to humiliation, harassment and sexual abuse."¹⁵ Filipino men, who comprise the single largest national group in the seafarers and fish workers sector, not only "face physical and verbal abuse," but also experience difficulties in claiming compensation for disabilities.¹⁶ Moreover, the symposium participants also recognized the consequences of migration for the disintegration of the family unit with deleterious effects on children and their parents.¹⁷

On the theological aspects of migration, the symposium delegates viewed migration as a historical experience and reality that not only points to the birth of a new world order based on the growing interdependence among nations, but also confirms the fundamental right of every person to migrate freely because "the world belongs to

everyone."¹⁸ At the same time, they reiterated that the Asian Church has to

accompany the Migrant as a Human Person, following the example of Christ himself. This journeying of the Church together with the Migrant Worker, is the sign of solidarity within the universal Church and a sharing in the common evangelizing mission entrusted to all the followers of Christ. Growing in faith as a local Church, made up of people of different nationalities is a new sign of unity.¹⁹

In addition, the symposium delegates affirmed that migration should not be forced, as well as insisted that migrants' human rights must be respected and they should not be subject to inhumane working and living conditions.²⁰ At the same time, they also urged both the originating and receiving churches ought to address the root causes of migration and its negative impact on migrants. They emphasized that churches that are receiving migrants ought to commit to serving migrants, welcoming and assisting these migrants to "relate, participate and integrate themselves to the local Church in the various activities, and at the same time be able to share their faith and cultural heritage with the local Church and people," as well as constantly seeking to address the painful and dehumanizing situation in the lives of these migrants.²¹ This is because local receiving churches have the responsibility to protect the rights and promote the dignity of these migrant workers, working "closely with the local Government to make available services to the migrants who are a very important part of the labour force and contribute to the economy and society."²²

FABC VI: Christian Discipleship in Asia Today: Service to Life

The next plenary assembly, FABC VI (Manila, Philippines, 1995) briefly highlighted "the insecurity and vulnerability of migrants, refugees, the displaced ethnic and indigenous peoples, and the pain and agonies of exploited workers, especially the child laborers in our countries."²³ At this plenary assembly, the Asian Bishops characterized the plight of migrants as follows:

Special attention is given to the displaced in our societies: political and ecological refugees and migrant workers. They are marginalized and exploited by the system, denied of their place in society and must go elsewhere to seek a dignified life. In welcoming them we expose the causes of their displacement, work toward conditions for a more

human living in community, experience the universal dimension of the Kingdom (Gal 3:28) and appreciate new opportunities for evangelization and intercultural dialogue. (art. 15.5)²⁴

FABC's Colloquium on Church in Asia in the Twenty-First Century

Two years later, the topic of migration came up as one of the major issues that were discussed at the FABC's Colloquium on Church in Asia in the Twenty-First Century (Pattaya City, Thailand, 1997), which was organized by the FABC-OHD and focused on the theme of "Towards a Communion and Solidarity in the Context of Globalization." On the issue of migrants and their challenges, the colloquium participants suggested that dioceses intervene more actively to "take up the cause of migrant workers through the legal process of the host country by providing financial support and lawyers to fight for their rights."²⁵ The Final Statement of this Colloquium also outlines four practical steps that the Asian Bishops could implement to address the challenges and needs of migrants and their families:

1. Initiate bilateral meetings of the migrant commission of Episcopal conferences.
2. Elaborate formation programs for pastoral workers for migrants, first at the national level, and then perhaps also organizing regional initiatives for this.
3. Insert pastoral care of families of migrants within the diocesan pastoral programs, particularly where migrants are numerous, dialogue between sending and receiving churches.
4. Link the issue of migration with the issue of labour in general for a more comprehensive understanding and unified action on it.²⁶

FABC VII: A Renewed Church in Asia on a Mission of Love and Service

At the beginning of the third Christian millennium, the issue of migration was also discussed at the Seventh Plenary Assembly (Samphran, Thailand, 2000) of the FABC. At this plenary assembly, the Asian bishops expressed grave concern over the ever-growing migration and refugee movements and called for an urgent and adequate pastoral response to address the dehumanizing plight of these refugees:

In the light of the teaching of the Church, we affirm that migration and refugee movements, which result in depersonalization, loss of

human dignity and the break up of families, are moral issues confronting the conscience of the Church and that of our Asian nations. As for the Church in Asia, these pose urgent pastoral challenges to evolve life-giving, service-oriented programs of action within the pastoral mission of the Church. The Church should join hands with all who are concerned with the rights of the migrants and their situation, keeping in mind that the migrants themselves are to be the primary agents of change. (FABC VII, art. 5)²⁷

FABC VIII: The Asian Family toward a Culture of Integral Life

The Asian Bishops further developed their theology of migration at their Eighth Plenary Assembly (Daejeon, South Korea, 2004), which focused on Asian families and the challenges they face in their daily life struggles. In their final statement, they identified the twin forces of globalization and urbanization that account for the bulk of contemporary migration patterns in Asia.²⁸ After observing that millions of economic migrants in undeveloped regions of Asia often leaving their families behind to search for jobs in the economically more developed regions of Southeast Asia or the Middle East, the Asian Bishops expressed their grave concern over the terrible ruptures to healthy family bonds that are caused by these extreme migratory patterns as families are broken up and children deprived of one or both their parents (FABC VIII, art. 15).²⁹ They also warned of the cultural dislocations and breakdown in family and communal ties between these migrants and their families and communities back home³⁰ and concluded that "migrant workers and their families urgently need great pastoral care from the churches of sending and receiving countries" (FABC VIII, art. 17).³¹

FEISA V: Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees: A New Way of Being Church

It was the Faith Encounters in Social Action (FEISA) that took the FABC Plenary Statements one step further to make explicit the connection between migration and interreligious dialogue. Organized by the FABC-OHD, FEISA seeks to promote interreligious dialogue through social involvement, emphasizing that the Asian Church needs to ground its mission and outreach in a threefold dialogue with the Asian peoples in the fullness of their cultures, religious traditions, and their poverty.³² Specifically FEISA V, entitled "'From Distrust to Respect...Reject to Welcome': Study Days on Undocumented

Migrants and Refugees" met in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia in 2002. Its final statement, which is entitled "Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees: A New Way of Being Church," is a thorough discussion on the challenges faced by undocumented migrants and refugees and what the Asian Church could do in response to these challenges.

FEISA V takes as its starting point the insistence of Pope John Paul II that "a migrant's irregular legal status cannot allow him/her to lose his/her dignity, since he/she is endowed with inalienable rights, which can neither be violated nor ignored."³³ It goes on to insist that both undocumented migrants and asylum seekers "remain children of God" and "deserve Christian love and protection" to maintain their human dignity, notwithstanding that they often "have no legal right to remain in a given national territory."³⁴ While FEISA V reiterates "the inalienable dignity and rights of people on the move" and "acknowledges the right of sovereign nation-states to regulate the movement of people across their borders," it is equally insistent that "this right must be exercised at the service of the universal common good."³⁵ As it explains:

People on the move must not be reduced to instruments of economic or political strategies. All of their human rights must be respected. The freedom of people to move should be preserved and restrictions imposed only where this is necessary in order to protect the common good. People have a right to move in order to seek safety, freedom and a decent level of material welfare.³⁶

Hence, FEISA V insists that the Asian Church should treat all migrants alike in its pastoral outreach, whether they are documented or undocumented, and whatever their motivations may be for leaving their homelands:

Whatever the reason is, the Church that embodies the mission of Christ cannot remain indifferent to issues relating/affecting people on the move. The Church that is universal both in outlook and in its essence is duty bound to learn from the migrants and at the same time, respond to their needs.³⁷

It insists that the first thing Asian Church workers should do is "to listen to people in an irregular situation or in search of asylum, in order to know exactly what their situation is, and also provide them with their basic needs," which is "in accordance with the Church's preferential, although not exclusive, option for the poorest," because "even asylum-seekers and migrants in an illegal situation have the

right to be provided with the necessary means of subsistence."³⁸ As it explains:

Christian solidarity simply sees the need to take care of human beings, especially young people, minors and children who are incapable of defending themselves because they lack protection under the law and often do not know the language of the country in which they have been obliged to seek refuge due to natural catastrophes, wars, violence, persecution, even genocide in their own country or due to existing economic conditions such as to endanger their physical integrity or life itself.³⁹

FEISA V also makes explicit the connection between the FABC's threefold dialogue with the cultures, religions, and immense poverty of the Asian peoples, insisting that the Asian Church "seeks to defend the dignity and rights of people on the move regardless of their race, religion and legal status," and in particular, "paying attention not only to the practical and physical needs, but also to their social, psychological and spiritual needs."⁴⁰ On the issue of poverty and migration, FEISA V reiterates that the reality of poverty as the force behind much of the mass migrations in Asia, whether internal or external, voluntary or involuntary and insists that the Asian Church should stand in solidarity with the poor and marginalized.⁴¹

It is the dialogue with cultures and religions that gives FEISA V an avenue to break new ground. Although FEISA V acknowledges that the problems of migration are a legion,⁴² nonetheless, it is also "an opportunity, because in our globalised world, it gives concrete chances for people of different nationalities, cultures and creeds to come together, know each other and share with one another," thereby removing or at least reducing prejudice and indifference.⁴³ In particular, FEISA explains the theological basis for this outreach to migrants of other religions as follows:

Making the migrants/refugees the target of our pastoral care is our concrete way of witnessing to the people of Asia. Being a "little flock" in the midst of other ancient religions/beliefs, the Asian Church cannot remain "inward looking". The Good News is not only to be preached but it is to be lived/practised in concrete day-to-day circumstances of many faiths. Thus, efforts to provide pastoral care to migrants have to include inter-religious dimensions. The Church can and should take the initiative. By doing so, we are witnessing to the mission of Christ through our actions.⁴⁴

Hence, for FEISA V, "interreligious dialogue is imperative" and integral to the Asian Church's theology and praxis of migration: the Asian Church "dialogues with all regardless of creed, nationality, race, political stance, or other discriminatory factors especially undocumented or documented status of migrant workers."⁴⁵

But FEISA V goes one step further to insist that in addressing the needs of migrant, the Asian Church "must work together with people of other faiths or none," joining with "all people of good will to respond to other sisters and brothers affirming their full humanity and the inalienable rights that arise from their humanity."⁴⁶ Further, it points out that migration facilitates interreligious interactions and dialogue. This applies to Christians migrating to non-Christian countries, as well as non-Christian migrants coming into contact with Asian Christians. In the first instance, FEISA V brings up Christians who migrate to non-Christian countries, pointing out that they can be "living witnesses of Christ through Christian love of the members for one another and for the migrant, both Christian and non-Christian."⁴⁷ In particular, FEISA V encourages these Christian migrants "to invite their friends of other religions to the church where they may receive a warm reception."⁴⁸ In the second instance, FEISA V states that the Asian Church "can and should take the initiative of providing pastoral care to migrants with inter-religious dimensions,"⁴⁹ because it should not only "see and understand the dignity of other faiths," but also receive and assist these migrants in their moment of greatest need, taking the initiative to reach out and visit them because as non-Catholics, they "may not have the courage to visit Catholic churches."⁵⁰ In addition to meeting their basic needs, FEISA V suggests that local parishes could offer space and hospitality to these migrants who "need a place where they can gather together for prayers or to have their religious celebrations or just for a friendly gathering among themselves."⁵¹

Moreover, FEISA V emphasizes the need to give special attention to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) as an outgrowth of the Church's ministry to the poor, oppressed, and marginalized.⁵² Specifically, FEISA insists that the Asian Church needs to include ecumenism and interreligious dialogue in its outreach work with refugees because the Church

is most critical in this region where we belong to the minority and we work in the midst of rich, diverse, and important religious and cultural traditions. The spirit of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue should thus permeate our programming processes. While our faith spurs us to

serve the refugees it does not become the criteria for refugees to avail themselves of our services.⁵³

Finally, in recognition of the fact that highly skilled pastoral workers are needed to engage with migrants in their fullness of their cultures, religions, and poverty, FEISA V recommends:

To fully understand the needs of the migrants, the Church must equip herself with the knowledge and skills required for this minority. These include knowledge of the languages of migrants, the provision of possibilities for migrants to express their faith with their language and culture, if necessary, of missionaries capable to be with migrants or mediators of faith and cultural dialogue.⁵⁴

Conclusion

Any analysis of the FABC's theology of migration must begin with the fact that the FABC sees the phenomenon of ongoing migration in Asia within the broader framework of migration as "part and parcel of human civilization"⁵⁵ and "a natural phenomenon" that arises from "the inherent right of people to move."⁵⁶ At the same time, the FABC also acknowledges that not all migrations are freely and voluntarily undertaken. It insists that the Asian Church has to respond to the dilemma of Asians who migrate in a quest to ensure their survival because of physical or economic threats.⁵⁷

As far as the FABC is concerned, migration cannot be separated from the complex interplay of social, economic, class, religious, and political factors that interact to displace people from their homelands. Whether voluntary or forced, migration reveals the vulnerability, insecurity, uncertainty, and humiliation of millions of Asians who find themselves on the move, either internally or beyond their national borders, as they deal with survival, uprootedness, and exploitation in their quest for a better life for themselves and their families. While it is true that the FABC did not deal directly with the issue of migration in the first decade of its existence and initially focused on the practical economic and personal needs of migrants in its early pronouncements, nevertheless the FABC has come a long way since then to articulate a comprehensive theology of migration that is rooted in its broader threefold theological vision of commitment and service to life, triple dialogue with Asian cultures, religions and the poor, with the aim of advancing the *reign of God* in Asia.

The starting point of the FABC's theology of migration is its ecclesiological⁵⁸ and missiological⁵⁹ vision of bringing about the Good

News of the Reign of God in Asia. It is rooted in a "commitment and service to life" that has been the foundation and the hallmark of the FABC's theology since its articulation at the First FABC International Theological Colloquium (1994) and subsequently confirmed and expanded by the Sixth Plenary Assembly of the FABC.⁶⁰ Hence, migrants are not objects for conversion or proselytization, but rather opportunities for the church to reach out to, and walk in solidarity with the migrants who often face discrimination, exploitation, persecution, or human rights abuses.⁶¹ FABC VI puts it well when it states:

Our solidarity requires a resolve *to work with our Asian sisters and brothers in liberating our societies from whatever oppresses and degrades human life and creation, most especially from sin....* Serving life demands communion with every woman and man seeking and struggling for life in the way of Jesus' solidarity with humanity. With our Asian sisters and brothers, we will strive to foster communion among Asian peoples who are threatened by glaring economic, social, and political imbalances. With them we will explore ways of utilizing the gifts of our diverse religions, cultures, and languages to achieve a richer and deeper Asian unity. We build bridges of solidarity and reconciliation with peoples of other faiths and will join hands with everyone in Asia in forming a true community of creation. (FABC VI, art. 14.2, emphasis added)⁶²

In practical terms, the FABC's theology of migration involves social analysis⁶³ that questions the poverty, economic marginalization, racial, political and religious tensions, environmental degradation, as well as many Asian nations' heavy dependence on the remittances of their nationals as economic migrants, which lie at the heart of the ever-growing numbers of migrants, whether they are voluntarily or forcibly displaced.⁶⁴ Here, the FABC is adamant in its theology of migration that the Asian Church should defend the human dignity and rights of migrants regardless of race, religion, or legal status as part of its wider stance of advocating for the rights and aspirations of the poor and marginalized.⁶⁵ In particular, the FABC's insistence on defending the rights of the undocumented echoes the position adopted by Pope John Paul II in his message for World Migration Day, 1996, when he spoke of the need for the church to defend the rights of the undocumented migrants:

In the Church no one is a stranger, and the Church is not foreign to anyone, anywhere. As a sacrament of unity and thus a sign and a

binding force for the whole human race, the Church is the place where illegal immigrants should be recognized and accepted as brothers and sisters.... Solidarity means taking responsibility for those in trouble. For Christians, the migrant is not merely an individual to be respected in accordance with the norms established by law, but a person whose presence challenges them and whose needs become an obligation for their responsibility. "What have you done to your brother?" (cf. Gn 4:9). The answer should not be limited to what is imposed by law, but should be made in the manner of solidarity.⁶⁶

Finally, the FABC goes beyond mere social analysis of the dehumanizing conditions that are endured by migrants when it seeks to undergird its migration theology within its broader theological three-fold dialogue with the quintessentially Asian realities of diverse cultures, religions, and immense poverty. This can be seen in FEISA V's call on local churches to broaden their outreach by engaging with non-Christian migrants within the integrity of their own cultures and religions, providing interreligious pastoral care and assisting them with their all their needs, including their practice of their own religious faiths. Indeed, the FABC is convinced that its theology of migration needs to take the intercultural and interreligious implications of migration seriously and integrate the intercultural and interreligious dimension in its pastoral care of migrants. It insists that the "Good News is not only to be preached but it is to be lived and practised in concrete day-to-day circumstances among people of many faiths."⁶⁷ Clearly the call for pastoral workers to learn the languages, cultures, and traditions of these non-Christian migrants so as to be able to assist these migrants to retain and express their own languages, cultures, and religious faiths is a clear and unequivocal repudiation of the temptation to proselyte among non-Christian migrants in their most vulnerable state.

Notes

1. S. Arokiasamy, *Asia: The Struggle for Life in the Midst of Death and Destruction*. FABC Papers No. 70 (Hong Kong: FABC, 1995).
2. "The Experience of Migration as Source of Intercultural Theology in the United States," in *Christianity with an Asian Face: Asian American Theology in the Making*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 8.
3. All of the important documents of the FABC have been collected and published in a convenient four-volume collection: *For All The Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents From 1970-1991*, ed. Gaudencio B. Rosales and C. G. Arévalo (Maryknoll,

NY: Orbis Books, 1992, hereinafter referred to as *FAPA I*); *For All The Peoples of Asia Volume 2: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 1992 to 1996*, ed. Franz-Josef Eilers (Quezon City: Claretian, 1997, hereinafter referred to as *FAPA II*); *For All The Peoples of Asia Volume 3: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 1997-2001*, ed. Franz-Josef Eilers (Quezon City: Claretian, 2002, hereinafter referred to as *FAPA III*); and *For All The Peoples of Asia Volume 4: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 2002-2006*, ed. Franz-Josef Eilers (Quezon City: Claretian, 2007, hereinafter referred to as *FAPA IV*). Unless otherwise indicated, all references to the documents of the FABC are taken from this four-volume collection.

4. For an excellent overview of the FABC, its history and theological perspectives, see Edmund Chia, *Thirty Years of FABC: History, Foundation, Context and Theology*, FABC Papers No. 106 (Hong Kong: FABC, 2003). For a more popular presentation of the FABC's early beginnings and significant accomplishments, see Thomas C. Fox, *Pentecost in Asia: A New Way of Being Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002). See also Peter C. Phan, "Christian Mission in Asia: A New Way of Being Church," in *In Our Own Tongues: Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003) 13-31; Felix Wilfred et al., "Document: What the Spirit Says to the Churches. A Vademecum on the Pastoral and Theological Orientations of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)," *Vidyajyoti* 62 (1998): 124-133; Jacob Kavunkal, "Local Church in the FABC Statements," *Jeevadharma* 27 (1997): 260-271; L. Stanislaus, "The Responses of the Church to Human Development: An Overview from FABC Documents," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 31 (1994): 95-118; Petrus Maria Handoko, *Lay Ministries in the Mission and Ministry of the Church in Asia: A Critical Study of the FABC 1970-1991* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1993); Jacques Dupuis, "FABC Focus on the Church's Evangelising Mission in Asia Today," *Vidyajyoti* 56 (1992): 449-468; FABC Theological Advisory Commission, *Theses on the Local Church: A Theological Reflection in the Asian Context*, FABC Papers No. 60 (Hong Kong: FABC, 1991); and Felix Wilfred, "Fifth Plenary Assembly of FABC: An Interpretation of its Theological Orientation," *Vidyajyoti* 54 (1990): 583-592.
5. The FABC convenes in Plenary Assembly, the highest body, with the participation of all presidents and delegates of member conferences once in every four years. To-date nine plenary assemblies have been held, with the tenth plenary assembly scheduled for November 2012. The ten plenary assemblies are: FABC I: Evangelization in Modern Day Asia (Taipei, Taiwan, 1974), FABC II: Prayer-the Life of the Church in Asia (Calcutta, India, 1978), FABC III: The Church-A Community of Faith in Asia (Bangkok, Thailand, 1982), FABC IV:

- The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World of Asia (Tokyo, Japan, 1986), FABC V: Journeying Together Toward The Third Millennium (Bandung, Indonesia, 1990), FABC VI: Christian Discipleship in Asia Today: Service to Life (Manila, Philippines, 1995), FABC VII: A Renewed Church in Asia on a Mission of Love and Service (Samphran, Thailand, 2000), FABC VIII: The Asian Family Towards a Culture of Integral Life (Daejeon, South Korea, 2004), FABC IX: Living the Eucharist in Asia (Manila, Philippines, 2009), and FABC X: FABC at Forty: Responding to the Challenges of Asia (Xuan Loc, Vietnam, 2012).
6. These offices are the FABC Central Secretariat, Office of Human Development, Office of Social Communication, Office of Laity and Family, Office of Theological Concerns, Office of Education and Faith Formation, Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Office of Evangelization, Office of Clergy, and Office of Consecrated Life.
 7. For a more in-depth discussion, see my previously published essays on this topic: "A New Way of Being Church in Asia: The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) at the Service of Life in Pluralistic Asia," *Missiology* 33 no. 1 (2005): 71-94; "Missio Inter Gentes: Towards a New Paradigm in the Mission Theology of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)," *Mission Studies* 21 no. 1 (2004): 65-95; and "Theologizing at the Service of Life: The Contextual Theological Methodology of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)," *Gregorianum* 81 no. 3 (2000): 541-575.
 8. *FAPA I*, 108.
 9. *FAPA I*, 294.
 10. See discussion in Graziano Battistella, "For A More Abundant Life: Migrant Workers in Asia," in *Sixth Plenary Assembly Background Paper: Journeying Together In Faith With Migrant Workers In Asia*. FABC Papers No. 73 (Hong Kong: FABC, 1995).
 11. *FAPA I*, 276-277.
 12. FABC V, arts. 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4. In *FAPA I*, 283, 284. Italics in original.
 13. *FAPA II*, 47.
 14. *FAPA II*, 48-49.
 15. *FAPA II*, 50.
 16. *FAPA II*, 50.
 17. *FAPA II*, 50. See also 55, where the symposium delegates explored the implications of migration on families:
There is a very urgent need to take seriously the implications of migration on marriage and family life. The social, spiritual and moral implications need urgent assessment by all. Husbands separated from wives, and children from parents are a direct

consequences of contract labor migration, showing signs of breakdown of both marriages and families.

18. *FAPA II*, 51.
19. *FAPA II*, 53.
20. *FAPA II*, 52.
21. *FAPA II*, 53.
22. *FAPA II*, 54.
23. Art. 7, in *FAPA II*, 4.
24. *FAPA II*, 11.
25. *FAPA III*, 40.
26. *FAPA III*, 40.
27. *FAPA III*, 11.
28. *FAPA IV*, 6.
29. *FAPA IV*, 6.
30. FABC VIII, art. 16, in *FAPA Vol. IV*, 7.
31. *FAPA Vol. IV*, 7.
32. In this regard, FEISA goes beyond the FABC's earlier endeavors on social action through the Bishops' Institute for Social Action (BISA) and the Asian Institute for Social Action (AISA). In *FAPA IV*, 89.
33. Message of Pope John Paul-II on Undocumented Migrants for World Migration Day, 1996, cited in *FAPA IV*, 111.
34. *FAPA IV*, 111.
35. *FAPA IV*, 117.
36. *FAPA IV*, 117.
37. *FAPA IV*, 114.
38. *FAPA IV*, 115.
39. *FAPA IV*, 115.
40. *FAPA IV*, 118.
41. *FAPA IV*, 128-129.
42. According to FEISA V, migration is a "concern because of the terrible situation surrounding the migration phenomenon: of injustice, discrimination, violence, violation of rights, inhuman living and working conditions, and fear especially for those who are undocumented, etc." In *FAPA IV*, 113.
43. *FAPA IV*, 113.
44. *FAPA IV*, 122-123.
45. *FAPA IV*, 125.
46. *FAPA IV*, 118.
47. *FAPA IV*, 113.
48. *FAPA IV*, 120.
49. *FAPA IV*, 129.
50. *FAPA IV*, 119.
51. *FAPA IV*, 120, cf. 130.
52. *FAPA IV*, 114.
53. *FAPA IV*, 117.

54. *FAPA IV*, 130.
55. FEISA V, in *FAPA IV*, 112.
56. FEISA V, in *FAPA IV*, 114.
57. FEISA V, in *FAPA IV*, 114.
58. For more on the regnocentric orientation of the FABC's ecclesiology, see my essay "A New Way of Being Church in Asia," 87–89.
59. For more on the regnocentric orientation of the FABC's missiology, see my essay "Missio Inter Gentes," 77–81.
60. For more on the FABC's commitment and service to life, see my essays, "Theologizing at the Service of Life," 547–550, and "A New Way of Being Church in Asia," 77–79.
61. As FEISA V puts it, "Migration today, offers the Church all over the world an opportunity to reach out to the ones most discriminated by society today. Being in solidarity with them, offers us the opportunity to offer the Good News of the Gospel to them as individuals and as a community." In *FAPA IV*, 128.
62. *FAPA II*, 8.
63. For a discussion on the social analysis component of the FABC's theological methodology, see my essay "Theologizing at the Service of Life," 550–555.
64. See FABC VI, art. 15.5, in *FAPA II*, 11, as well as the discussion of FEISA V in *FAPA IV*, 93.
65. See discussion in FEISA V, in *FAPA IV*, 128–129.
66. Message of Pope John Paul II for World Migration Day on Undocumented Migrants, 1996. See http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_25071995_undocumented_migrants_en.html, accessed March 10, 2011.
67. FEISA V, in *FAPA IV*, 130.

Chapter 7

The Spirituality of Migrants: Mapping an Inner Geography*

Daniel G. Groody

Along the US-Mexico border in southern Arizona, a faith-based organization called The Samaritans offers humanitarian aid to undocumented immigrants making their way into the United States. They search for migrants amidst their dangerous trek across dry deserts and desolate mountains, looking for any who might be under duress or in distress. On one occasion at dusk, a volunteer from the Samaritans sat on a ledge and saw a group of 20 immigrants walking along a dry riverbed. He called out from a distance, "Is anybody injured?" "Do you need any food?" "Do you have any water?" Suddenly the group of immigrants stopped. Unsure of who was speaking to them, they did not know whether to run or to hide. After hearing the voice again, they paused, hesitated, and then looked at each other. Then they huddled together and deliberated for a few moments. Slowly the leader began walking toward the Samaritan volunteer and yelled back, "We don't have any more food. And we only have a little bit of water. But if you need it, we will share what we have with you."

This story reveals as much about the inner journey of these immigrants as it does about the outer one. It deals not only with leaving homes, crossing borders, or searching for jobs, but also with the values that are most important to them, the strength of their character, and their response to human need. In a word, it has to do with their spirituality. This chapter will look at the inner migration of undocumented migrants. It examines not only the hellish outer space they go through in their physical journey but also the complex inner space within their hearts that enables them to care for others and to speak about God amidst some of the seemingly godless moments of their difficult sojourn.

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