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## DOCUMENTATION

### INDIGENIZATION

*East Asian Jesuit Secretariat Conference*, Hongkong, April 16—20. 1968. —  
To Our Foreign-Born Brothers in Asia:

A common statement from the native-born Asian participants of the conference, written in reply to a formal request made by the conference itself. The first section is a basic definition of position; the sections which follow list, in some detail, some concrete recommendations; there is finally, the conclusion. This common statement was pieced together from separate statements first prepared by groups and individuals from Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, South Vietnam, and the Philippines.

#### *Definition of Position*

a) In the context of our discussions on the indigenization of the Church in Asia you have asked us to tell you of our sentiments regarding the relationships that exist between us, and to speak to you of our aspirations. We believe that you have asked with sincerity that we speak with sincerity. We believe that what we say shall be heard and received in your mind and heart in the spirit in which we speak — a spirit of loyalty to the Society of Jesus which is our common mother, a spirit of mutual respect and esteem, a genuine love that binds us together in the brotherhood of a common hope.

b) We begin where both mind and heart tell us to begin, with the giving of thanks. You have come to our countries from many lands and many nations. You have come leaving father and mother, brothers and sisters, homeland and native air. You have come often at great personal sacrifice, sometimes bringing with you great resources which, like yourselves and your lives and your efforts, you have placed, in your surpassing love for Christ and His Church, at the service of our peoples, seeking to share in the building of God's reign and kingdom on our shores, on this "distant side" of the earth. For all this we are



grateful, sincerely, beyond the saying of our poor words. For all this we and our people shall ever remain indebted to you, and your names shall ever be found written on the tablets of our gratitude.

c) In these last few decades you have seen as we have seen, we think, the coming of a new hour in the individual histories of our countries, as well as in the history of all of Asia. We have been witnesses of the awakening of "new peoples", or the awakening within the older nations among us of a new spirit, a new consciousness, a new thrust into the future, as the age of colonialism moves into the past and the present moment confronts us, a moment when the nations of Asia are striving to come into their own, to find their place in the world of today and of tomorrow. This moment has been called the hour of the awakening of Asian and African man.

d) We, your brother Jesuits, are Asians. We are proud that we are Asians. We belong to the Catholic Church, we belong to the Society, but we belong to our peoples also. We wish to make ourselves more fully one with them, at this moment of history above all moments, sharing their longings and their aspirations, their fears and hesitations, their dreams for our lands and our peoples, and — in one and a hundred ways — their traditions, their way of life, their ways and their customs, their songs and their sorrows, their search for identity, their recovery (in some cases) of that personality which the colonial rule, with greater or less success, tried to substitute for another-one made to the image and likeness of a foreign model. If we are effectively to bring Christ and the Gospel to our people, at this moment of national and cultural reawakening above all, we cannot wish to be other than this, we cannot wish to be otherwise.

e) At this particular moment of history, too, our peoples seek with a certain passion to be masters within their own houses, to take the direction of their lives and their future into their own hands, to chart their own course, make their own choices, stumble through mistakes of their own making, accomplish well or poorly through their own powers: these are their aspirations at this hour. For some of our peoples, after centuries of domination and tutelage, this freedom to discover themselves anew, this freedom to be themselves and to direct themselves, is the prize most greatly sought after, the goal most earnestly pursued.

f) It is only natural that we, your Asian brothers, should share (sometimes with equal passion) in their aspirations also. Our foreign-born brothers, we ask you to understand this. We ask you to have sympathy with these desires, and we know that many of you truly share them with us. We ask you not to meet with suspicion and hostility what this involves: the thoughts and longings we must have, the words we must speak, the things we must do, and what all this may sometimes demand of you. We ask you to give us your cooperation as we too seek, within the Church and the Society, within the measure that reason and mutual love shall tell us, to realize these aspirations. If you not only could step into our shoes, but enter into our minds and our hearts, we believe you too would feel as we do — and truly, some among you whose hearts have learned to beat in unison with ours, do feel as we do in all these things. The Church and the Society in your own countries are making their own contribution to the life and fulness of the Church. Help us to make our own contribution also even if it be only a small one. Help us to lay the gifts of our own making at the Altar of Him who is our common Lord.



### *Some Recommendations*

a) That the principle of indigenization be acknowledged by all as making real the qualitative catholicity of the Church, and that thus the Jesuit Province in each country be truly indigenized, e.g., that the Indonesian Province be truly Indonesian, the Philippine Province truly Filipino, the Japanese Province truly Japanese, the Far East Province, in its various countries, truly native. That, for example, the native-born Jesuits be allowed, respecting the processes of dialogue, to determine what shall be their "Jesuit" language and customs, their way of life, their food, the manner they will deal with their countrymen, and the like. We realize this will not be easily accomplished, and there will be need of much understanding and patience, and often enough, a straining of the bonds that make us brothers. But let us allow this process of self-determination to begin; let us not keep postponing it indefinitely.

b) That each Jesuit in our provinces should consider it a primary duty, incumbent on each one no matter what his position, to foster native vocations to the Society and to welcome them, for here lies the way to the future.

c) That the formation of our scholastics should be in accordance with the living traditions and customs of their own people and their own country, that thus their education include a profound and generous study of their national and cultural heritage (for the "past is prologue" to the future):

— that the spirituality they are taught be one that takes them as they are and does not seek to change them into Jesuits (by process of inverse 'inculturation') alienated in character and psychology from their own people; that constantly the effort be made to relate their lives and their concerns more fully to those of their own land and people;

that throughout their training they may be reminded that they are missionaries sent to their own people, that they should foster missionary consciousness in themselves (even if in the future they become teachers and administrators), for their vocation and their commitment will remain alive in the measure that they keep vibrant in their own hearts a deep love, concern and compassion for their own people, especially the poor to whom above all Christ sends them as messengers of His mercy and redemption.

d) That every effort be made to narrow the great gap (economic, social, psychological) which in our countries so often exists between Jesuits and secular priests, between Jesuits and even people who are relatively better off — let alone the poor and uneducated. That thus, in our manner of life and standard of living, we keep in mind what both the Second Vatican Council and our 31st General Congregation have said regarding our witness of evangelical poverty and our solidarity and identification with our own people, especially the poor. (For so much that is ordinary and accepted as a matter of course in affluent societies in the West is difficult to justify within a society where the majority subsist on the most slender means and often do not have enough to sustain life itself.)

e) It is to be expected, then, that among us who work together in Asia, and who come from such diverse national and cultural backgrounds, that there will be (within an identity of basic objectives and a basic unity of action) different approaches with regard to activities pursued, different judgments on situations. We do not expect that our foreign brothers will always agree with us, but we ask that they at least open themselves to, and strive to respect, the differences



they find on our side, and help us to live and act in the ways that allow us to be most truly ourselves and one with our own people.

f) Our foreign-born Jesuits have come to our countries as disciples of Jesus Christ and messengers of his Word. We ask them to be this for our peoples, first and above all else, and we ask them not to speak and act in such a manner that they may seem to be appointed agents of their own nation and spokesmen of its policies and its interest.

g) We ask them to keep in mind also the historical background of today's relationship between the European and the American, and the men of Asia. There is a sensitiveness in a wound that is only now healing, a tenderness on the surface where a scar is only now beginning to form. In their dealings with their Asian brothers, whether as superiors or peers, we ask them to be conscious of this. What is thoughtlessly said or done may often seem to reveal a sense of superiority, a measure of paternalism, condescension and contempt. It is against this sort of thing Asian and African man today most passionately turns. We are Asians also, and even with us time has not yet speeded up the healing of the wound, nor wrought the more normal toughening of the skin.

h) In the conduct of the affairs of our provinces, we believe that we must learn increasingly to assume responsibilities if we as Asian Jesuits are to become what the Society and the Church expect us to be, and to contribute what we are expected to contribute to the harmony and richness of the whole. We would welcome, then, that native-born Jesuits be increasingly given service in responsible positions, provided of course that they have the competence for the functions and duties they must fulfill. (The evaluation of this competence, however, may perhaps not be so simple a matter as been supposed in the past and perhaps the range of qualities deserved may differ in different cultures according to different priorities of values sought.)

i) We ask foreign-born missionaries who come to the countries of Asia to foster within themselves certain fundamental "missionary virtues". What these are, the missionary decrees of the Church have enumerated in some detail. But we ask them to seek to develop above all the sensitivity of which we have spoken, the maturity of true men, the patience and courage and the good humor of the saints! For the Society of Jesus in Asia assumes the most difficult tasks at one of the most serious and crucial times in mankind's history, in one of the most critical, most explosive areas in the world. We believe the age of the giants of the Society's mission is far from over: the hour which is upon us calls for men as great as (if not greater than) the heroes and saints in past Jesuit mission history.

j) We seek modernization and rationalization, progress and development, science and technology, knowledge and skills; we look to the future — man's future as well as God's future — in this we too are Asian men. We seek the fullest development of our people and our society. And we know that we cannot do this without the aid of our Western brothers, and without the aid of our fellow Asians too.

But we believe all this can be accomplished without substantial damage and without destruction of those human and religious values which we in our separate cultures treasure most highly and identify most truly with our people and ourselves. We ask our brothers who assist us to share our desire to preserve



them, and to transpose them to the new age that is before us — knowing that their erosion or loss will be ultimately as much a loss to them as to ourselves, and to the richness of the richness of the human family.

k) Let the Society in each province then engage itself as actively as possible in the indigenization of the local Church. Let our universities and schools provide the forward thrust in the indigenization of the arts, of literature, of liturgy and worship, of philosophy and theology. (Let superiors look among their men for native Jesuits who can work towards a theology born from living contact with their own country, with their people's living relationship with the actual world). Let our educational institutions, where the need is present, pioneer in actively relating their curricula and courses to the culture and problems of their own countries. As the Society in the past often distinguished itself in this regard, let it come to the fore again, now that this is again called for by the Church.

l) We feel an increasing need and desire, as Asians, to come to know our Asian brothers and our Asian neighbors better. We would like to increase contacts between our provinces. We would like to see the Society of Jesus in Asia serve as an advance guard also of greater mutual knowledge and understanding among our peoples, of greater oneness among Asians in brotherhood and peace. Let us find ways and means by which we may serve this purpose, knowing that the cause of reconciliation and brotherhood is truly the cause of Him who on the Cross broke down all walls of hatred and separation, making men one in His blood and in His great and all-encompassing love.

*Conclusion:* If our differences are real and not to be minimized, if they are to be honestly confronted and seriously discussed, that we may learn mutually to accept them and turn them even into bonds of understanding, yet the things that make us one are many and real. These reach into our minds and hearts and our souls also; they are rooted and nourished in the life which is the gift of the Spirit, purchased for us by the blood of Christ our redeemer, Christ our common brother.

We rejoice in this Conference which has brought us together freely to speak our minds and hearts to each other. We thank all those who by God's graciousness have made it possible and have made possible also the coming of God's Spirit in our midst, for surely we have felt His presence in the joy that has been given us during these days.

Our brother Jesuits, you have come to give us of the best of yourselves and your people. In so doing you have taught us to want to give the best of ourselves also, to our peoples and to all the peoples of Asia. The millions await us, the poor and the unhoping to catch from our words and above all from our lives, a word of hope, the Word of hope which God has spoken to men, the Word of God has spoken to the world. Our brothers, together let us speak that Word; let us speak that Word in new languages, sing it with new melodies, echo it unendingly through the witness of our service and our love throughout this part of the world which is His inheritance also, rejoicing in the common companionship to which we have been called, the glad brotherhood which is ours in the Society, the joyous fellowship of His Son.

*The Asian Jesuits*

Hong Kong, 20 April 1968



## The Reply of the Non-Asian Jesuits

We wish, first, to congratulate our native-born brother Jesuits in Asia for the moving excellence of your letter to us.

But most of all we wish to thank our native-born brothers for a graciousness and charity which, as too much of our history together regretfully shows, is far more than we deserve. You have forgiven us our trespasses, and this should serve our prayer and reflection in the years to come.

You have asked us, with great gentleness, to respond to each of you and your requests. This, with God's help and yours, we promise you. And we desire and pray that each of us respond to you henceforth with the same sensitivity, generosity and Christ-like charity that filled and shaped your letter. May our service be marked with a new feeling of oneness in service for Christ, the Church, the Society and the peoples of Asia.

In gratitude  
*The foreign-born Jesuits*  
Hong Kong, 20 April 1968

## CHRONIK

1967

19. 3. Französisch Somaliland stimmt mit 22 523 Ja-Stimmen gegen 14 734 Nein-Stimmen für Frankreich.
13. 4. Die Apostolische Präfektur *De Aar* in Südafrika wird zum Rang eines Bistums erhoben.  
Errichtung des Bistums *Kupang* in Ost-Indonesien. Es umfaßt die Gebiete „Timor Tengah Selatan“ und Kupang, ferner die Inseln Semau, Roti und Sawu.  
Errichtung des Bistums *Ihosi* auf Madagaskar unter Leitung der Lazaristen.
10. 5. Mit der Aberkennung des Titels „Präsident der Republik Indonesien“ ist die Entmachtung Sukarnos vollendet.
25. 5. In Rom stirbt der langjährige Sekretär der *Propaganda* Erzbischof SIGISMONDI.
27. 5. In Nigeria erklärt sich die Ostregion als selbständiger Staat Biafra.
  1. 6. Alle 154 ausländischen Missionare müssen Guinea in Westafrika verlassen: 73 Priester, 10 Brüder, 55 Schwestern und 16 Missionshelferinnen.
  5. 6. Ausbruch des Krieges zwischen Israel und den arabischen Staaten Ägypten, Syrien und Jordanien.
- (10. 6.) Msgr. S. PIGNEDOLI wird zum Sekretär der *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* ernannt.
12. 6. In Nord-Sambia wird eine zweite Kirchenprovinz mit *Kasama* als Erzbistum und den beiden Suffraganbistümern *Abercorn* und *Fort Jameson* errichtet.  
Das bisherige Apostolische Vikariat Bermuda-Inseln in Westindien wird zum Rang eines Bistums mit dem Namen *Hamilton in Bermuda* erhoben.