

Asia Pacific Mission Studies

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The Vision and Mission of EAPI

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Our Vision

The local churches in Asia and the Pacific are called to be ‘leaven in the dough’ of a region characterized by a rich variety of ancient cultures and religious traditions, and by very complex processes of socio-political and economic transformation.

As a multicultural community of disciples EAPI is committed to serve the churches in Asia and the Pacific by forming, animating and empowering pastoral leaders and missionaries (lay, religious and ordained) to become instruments in transforming societies and cultures towards the values of God's Reign, and the local churches towards new ways of being Church.

The Church we envision is one that is incarnational (kenotic), contextual, participatory and inclusive, in which lay, religious and ordained disciples collaborate in a spirit of equality and reciprocity.

Incarnational (kenotic), that is, in discerning God's presence in the events and peoples of the world. **Contextual**, in reflecting theologically and acting pastorally in the context of society, culture, church and other religious traditions. **Inclusive**, in being open to dialogue and work with those within and beyond the Church for spiritual and human values, respecting the rights of minorities and women. **Participatory**, that is, encouraging full participation of all (especially the voiceless: poor, women, minorities, etc.) in our own community, in the church and with other peoples of goodwill.

Our Mission Statement

In order to realize this vision, EAPI as a witnessing and learning institution and community strives to provide integral formation, with equal opportunity, for church leaders and missionaries drawn from the local churches in Asia and the Pacific.

We try to help participants to be a) in-touch with themselves, b) competent in theological understanding and skills and c) rooted in their social and ecclesial contexts

The EAPI thereby aims to design programs and courses that a) respond to the multiple needs of the local churches in the region, b) offer scriptural and theological insights, c) develop practical pastorals skills, strengthen the apostolic motivation, and deepen the spirituality of the participants.

In addition, EAPI aspires to enhance the creativity and critical thinking of the participants in view of their transformative role in their churches, societies, cultures and religious contexts. It also strives to further a spirit of communion, equality and openness among the participants and staff members in view of experiencing a new way of being Church. Further, it takes steps to foster the exchange of personal, experiential and cultural riches between the participants, while being attentive to the integration of the programs by the participants and to their spiritual needs.

Goals for the First Cycle (3 Years)

In order to realize the vision laid out above, and fulfil our mission, EAPI intends to provide a system of opportunities to the present staff to become of one heart and one mind in sharing the mission of EAPI. It aims to ensure significant increase in the number of lay participants and resource persons by reaching out to lay organizations from which to draw them. It will align academic, animation, and administrative departments to the EAPI vision with regard to staff and faculty recruitment and program design, with preferred target participants. It will continue in informing and motivating stakeholders, and will devise strategies for marketing.

EAPI will continue in its efforts to remodel the programs to address the needs of local churches taking into account the multi-cultural and multi-religious contexts of Asia and the Pacific, and include more Asian resource persons in the program. We will develop appropriate teaching and learning methods towards integration of acquired academic knowledge with personal attitudes and spirituality. To ensure that the legacy of EAPI continues on and becomes known in wider circles, we will encourage EAPI alumni to build “satellite communities” throughout Asia and the Pacific where they participate creatively in the dialogue of life and faith.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JEYARAJ RASIAH, SJ, served as Director of EAPI from 2006 until 2010, when he was appointed to assume the task of Provincial Superior of the Jesuit Province of Sri Lanka. During his tenure at EAPI, he conducted modules on Interreligious Dialogue (March 2008), and Contextualized Christology (September 2008). Fr. Jeya, as he was fondly called by peers and colleagues, was

active in taking initiatives of the Catholic Biblical Federation of Southeast Asia, among which was to organize and implement a Biblical Pastoral Training program, offering EAPI as a venue. He is author of “Jesuit Schools in Lahore, Pakistan: In the Service of the Poor,” published in *International Catholic Education* (2020), among others. Presently, he is in Sri Lanka actively involved in Lecturing in Philosophy and Theology in Institutes of Higher Studies including The National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka.