

# MISSION EXAMEN

A Mission Effectiveness Resource  
for Jesuit Ministries



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*JCAP thanks the Provinces of the United States who first designed the Mission Examen.*

*August 2021*



## **COVER**

Seven Fountains Spirituality Centre  
Chiang Mai, Thailand

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# INTRODUCTION

The Ignatian Year 2021-2022 is an opportune time for us “to be renewed” by the Lord himself. The Jesuit Conference of Asia-Pacific (JCAP) has conducted spiritual conversations and communal discernment on the implementation of the Universal Apostolic Preferences promulgated by Father General Arturo Sosa in 2019. Learning from this synodal journey, we feel a renewed sense of concern and commitment to the call of poverty and reconciliation with creation. We feel God calling to us to be closer with the poor, the most vulnerable, and the excluded. JCAP incarnates these concerns in its five-year apostolic plan.

The plan recalls to us the poverty which Ignatius began to practice after his conversion, his personal friendship and direct contact with the poor, and the service he offered them. It was a sign of great changes in his life. Father General Arturo Sosa, in his letter to the whole Society on the Ignatian Year 2021-2022, calls us to “come closer to the Lord’s own way of life”. He reminds us that the Ignatian year is “a privileged occasion to hear the cry of the poor, the excluded, and those whose dignity has not been respected, in all diverse social and cultural circumstances in which we live and work. It is listening which moves our hearts and compels us to draw closer to the poor, to walk with them in seeking justice and reconciliation. A dimension of our conversion that the Spirit invites us to live this year is to discern in common how we can deepen our vow of poverty.”

The Mission Examen process is designed to help us claim and foster the specific charism of our ministry, our unique contribution to our Church and the world. The time is ripe for individuals and communities to affirm together what elements of their ministry are most reflective of their mission and where they feel a call to grow. Know that we do this together, as ministries and as a Conference.

The Examen is a prayer. Like all prayer, we hope this process deepens your sense of who you are before God who gazes at us lovingly. We look forward to sharing in the fruit of that prayer as we discover together with whom and for whom we might be of even greater service for the greater glory of God.



## WHY A MISSION EXAMEN?

*What do we seek through this Examen?*

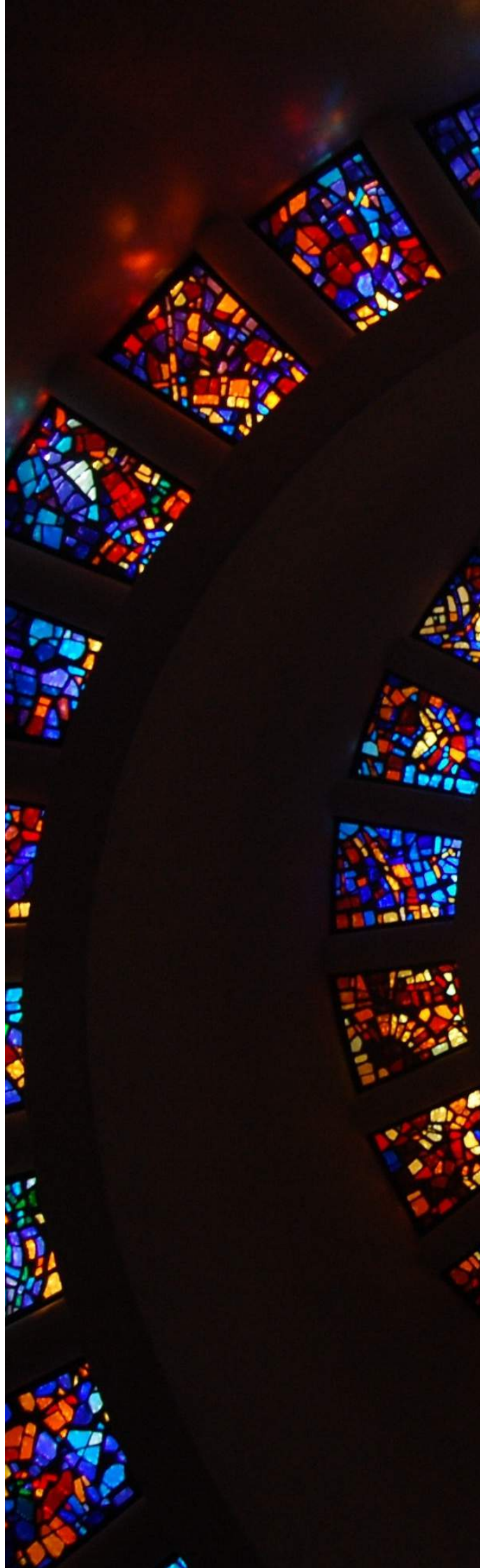
“The question that confronts the Society today is why the Exercises do not change us as deeply as we would hope. What elements in our lives, works, or lifestyles hinder our ability to let God’s gracious mercy transform us? This Congregation is deeply convinced that God is calling the entire Society to a profound spiritual renewal. Ignatius reminds us that each Jesuit must ‘take care, as long as he lives, first of all to keep before his eyes God.’ Thus, all the means that unite us directly with God should be more than ever prized and practiced: The Spiritual Exercises, daily prayer, the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, spiritual direction, and the Examen. We need to appropriate ever more fully the gift of the Exercises that we share with so many, especially the Ignatian family, and the Constitutions that animate our Society. In a world losing its sense of God, we should seek to be more deeply united with Christ in the mysteries of his life. Through the Exercises, we acquire the style of Jesus, his feelings, his choices.” (General Congregation 36, Decree 1, #18)

*Why does the Society of Jesus choose to support ministries of the Exercises today?*

“A special gift Jesuits and the Ignatian family have to offer to the Church and the mission of evangelization is Ignatian Spirituality, which facilitates the experience of God and can therefore greatly help the process of personal and communal conversion.” (General Congregation 36, Decree 1, #23)

## WHO IS THE EXAMEN FOR?

This Examen anticipates individuals and communities dedicated to Ignatian ministries. The Examen can also welcome recipients of ministry, broadening reflection to bring multiple perspectives into view.









## THE PROCESS

A time of individual **reflection** that draws out the content of your experience.

A time of **Examen** that brings to light interior movements of consolation and desolation, and seeks to notice how God is laboring within experience.

A time of **commitment** to name and choose the call to growth God is addressing to me or to us.

A time of **spiritual conversation** and **communal discernment** that can help your ministry team or institutional leadership better identify communal movements and calls.



The purpose of the Mission Examen is to reflect upon your unique CHARISM<sup>1</sup> as an individual, as a sponsored ministry, or as an affiliated program. While this may further your reflection upon praxis, operational details, or the merits of one program versus another, the Mission Examen is primarily intended to help you reflect upon how you engage with the essential characteristics of an Ignatian ministry, and to give apostolates a common language and markers of mission effectiveness that promote dialogue with each other.



As always, you are welcome to adapt and utilize this material as needed to help advance mission effectiveness. The bibliography at the end provides readings that help to illuminate each characteristic. You likely have good references from your experience.

The process begins with personal REFLECTION that proceeds in three steps: a prayerful reading of the relevant characteristics, followed by some short readings to orient your reflection, and then a series of questions to help draw out your experience. This is intended to help you notice and become aware of what is occurring (or not) in your ministry. This individual session is intended to generate content.

Reflection is deepened by means of the EXAMEN. The examen questions engage your heart. They ask you to explore the

content generated in reflection to uncover interior movements. You are invited to describe feelings and to notice consolations and desolations revealed by these feelings. This will help you sense any indication of a call from God. After being exceptionally intentional with this stage by yourself, perhaps with the help of a colleague, you might want to articulate personal CALLS AND COMMITMENTS.

The next step is to bring the fruits of the Examen to spiritual conversation as a group; the work of the group is to sift through all these movements, especially the ones held in common. From this we hope to discover our collective CALL and the COMMITMENTS that flow from it. Our COMMITMENTS to each other, and the commitment of our ministry's leadership to us, will help deepen our charism and strengthen our contribution to the Church.

<sup>1</sup> Charism comes from the Latin word "gift". Every spirituality offers a distinctive "way" to God. The Ignatian Charism is embodied in the practices, methods, emphases, and ways of proceeding gifted to us, from God, through Ignatius Loyola and his companions.

## PART A. EXAMEN PREPARATION

“That is why I recommend that you take some time every day before going to bed or at noon when you want to and ask yourself: what has happened in my heart today? What did I want to do, to think? What is the spirit that has moved in my heart? The Spirit of God, the gift of God, the Holy Spirit who always brings me forward to the encounter with the Lord or the spirit of the world who gently, slowly moves me away from the Lord; it is a slow, slow, slow slide.

(Pope Francis, Homily, Santa Marta, Rome, 07.01.20)





# Characteristics of a Jesuit Ministry

- ✓ A Jesuit Ministry understands itself primarily and operationally as an apostolic instrument at the service of the mission of the Society of Jesus and the Church.
- ✓ A Jesuit Ministry embraces a faith that does justice and reconciliation, believing that Ignatian prayer is a privileged instrument for encountering the transformative love of Jesus Christ.
- ✓ A Jesuit Ministry acts with the recognition that collaboration is at the heart of mission.
- ✓ A Jesuit Ministry is governed by a director of the work who exercises the primary fiduciary responsibility for the ministry and hold in trust its Jesuit and Catholic mission and identity.
- ✓ A Jesuit Ministry commits to effectiveness, excellence, and safety in ministry.



## Universal Apostolic Preferences

The letter of Father General Adolfo Nicolás on reconciliation and the teaching of Pope Francis have given this vision [of reconciliation] greater depth, placing faith, justice, and solidarity with the poor and the excluded as central elements of the mission of reconciliation (Decree 1, No 3, GC 36).

In our world that knows too much division, we ask God to help our communities become “homes” for the Reign of God. We hear the call to overcome what can separate us from one another. Simplicity of life and openness of heart foster such mutual concern (Decree 1, No. 13, GC 36).

The decrees of GC 36 are an invitation to enter into this phase of making choices in relation to our identity as Jesuits and our way of proceeding in mission. They are an invitation to choose this path, putting ourselves unconditionally at the disposition of the One who calls us.

The success of the Congregation lies in the fruit of our personal conversion, in the necessary changes in the lifestyle of our communities, and in the willingness to be sent to the peripheries or frontiers of the contemporary world to share the joy of the gospel (Fr General’s letter of promulgation of the Decrees of GC 36).

The Universal Apostolic Preferences are the fruit of an election. In his letter promulgating the preferences, Father General Arturo Sosa says: “Our desire has been to find the best way to collaborate in the Lord’s mission, the best way to serve the Church at this time, the best contribution we can make with what we are and have, seeking to do what is for the greater divine service and the more universal good.”



**PART B.  
REFLECTION QUESTIONS**



# 1. Universal Apostolic Preferences

**SHOWING THE WAY TO GOD.** Show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and Discernment.

Does the ministry promote the Spiritual Exercises? What form of the Exercises is used [18th,19th or 20th Annotation] or other ways?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry involve staff and volunteers in regular prayer?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry value retreats and spiritual direction for the staff and volunteers?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Has the ministry a commitment to Ignatian discernment as a way of making decisions?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry collaborate with other ministries in Ignatian Formation and Spiritual Exercises programs?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry have an annual retreat or prayer days?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Have ministers spoken of getting "stuck" in spreading the Good News?

**WEAK**



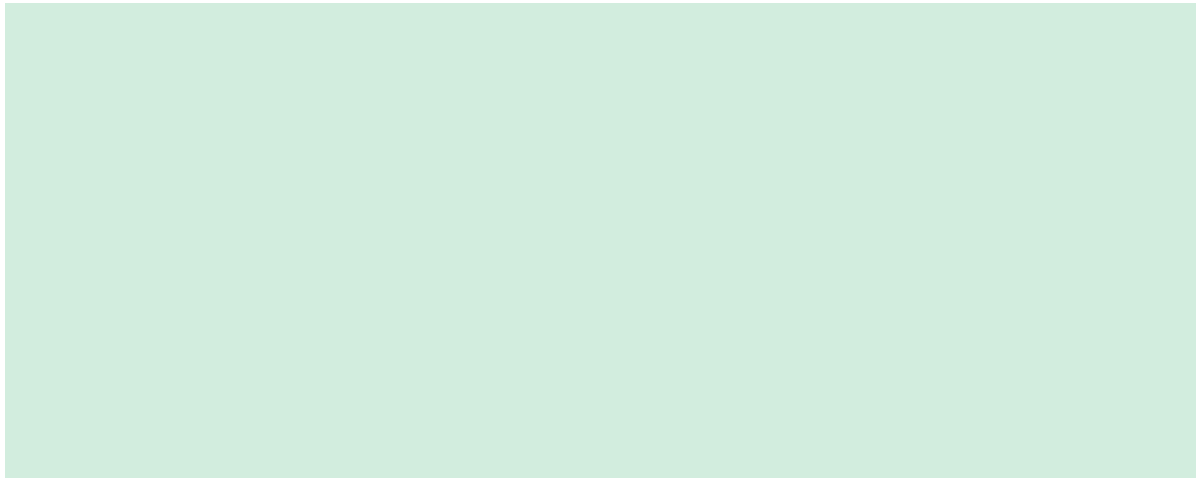
**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



# COMMENTS



**WALKING WITH THE EXCLUDED.** Walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice.

Does the ministry help newcomers and visitors feel welcome and included?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry have a clear safeguarding policy for children, women, and the vulnerable people?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Has the ministry directly encountered and walked with the poor and the excluded?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Has the ministry embraced the call to be a companion of reconciliation and justice?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**





Does the ministry allocate a portion of its services for the poor and the excluded?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**




Does the ministry experience solidarity with persons experiencing poverty or marginalization?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**




Has the ministry used wisdom texts such as Scripture or Catholic social teaching to promote the dignity of peoples?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**




Does the ministry celebrate together as an inclusive community?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**




Does the lifestyle of the staff of the ministry express their simplicity and compassion for the poor and the excluded?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**




## COMMENTS

**JOURNEYING WITH YOUTH.** Accompany young people in the creation of a hoped-filled future.

Does the ministry work with the young?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Are the young involved in delivering the ministry's programs?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry accompany the young to deepen their relationship with Jesus?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry listen to the aspirations of the young in developing and implementing its services?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



## COMMENTS



**CARING FOR OUR COMMON HOME.** Collaboration with Gospel depth for the protection and renewal of God's creation.

Does the ministry show concern for the environment?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**

Has the ministry adopted energy saving practices?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**

Is the ministry developing a cultural awareness of protecting the environment?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**

Does the ministry have ongoing educational programs for staff and volunteers?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**

## COMMENTS







## 2. Mission

Does the ministry have a Mission Statement with 'poverty and reconciliation with creation' as a pillar for actions? If so, is it used to animate team members?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry foster collaboration in working towards a common goal?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Is the ministry outward-focused or does administration and maintenance occupy too much time?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Do staff have a rich concept of "mission"?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Is there excitement about the ministry? For what are the staff most grateful?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Is the mission supported by the Society of Jesus? [financial, staff, professional development, legal etc.]

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the mission promote collaborative work with other sectors inside and outside the Society?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**

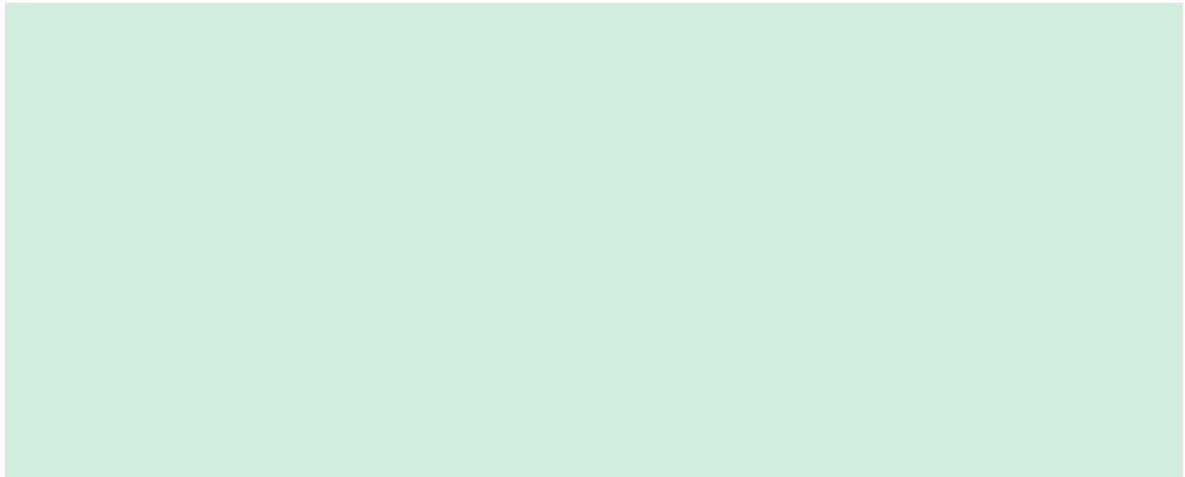


**STRONG**





# COMMENTS



## 3. Formation

Does the ministry offer regular formation programs on Ignatian Spirituality and the Spiritual Exercises for leaders?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Is there a shared sense to be 'on mission with Jesus' in the ministry?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry run formation programs for those it accompanies and serves?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry offer formation programs for the young?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**





Does the ministry evaluate its formation programs?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry offer other formation opportunities to the wider community?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



## COMMENTS

## 4. Effectiveness, Excellence, and Accountability

How well has the ministry communicated the qualities expected of those who work in the ministry?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry have a code of conduct or professional standards document?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



How well has the ministry communicated the code of conduct and professional standards?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry have a clear line of accountability? [Provincial, Board, Delegate, Head of Ministry or CEO]

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry regularly undertake a review of the ministry programs, practice, and staff?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



### COMMENTS



## 5. Safety in Ministry

Does the ministry have privacy protocols in place?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**

Does the ministry have cyber security protocols in place?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**

Has the ministry undertaken a risk audit?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**

Does the ministry have procedures in place to deal with professional misconduct?

**WEAK**

**MEDIUM**

**STRONG**

## COMMENTS



## 6. Vocations

Does your ministry promote discernment of vocations to the Society of Jesus?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



Does the ministry nurture a sense of vocation with lay colleagues?

**WEAK**



**MEDIUM**



**STRONG**



## COMMENTS

# PART C. EXAMEN







Isaiah Crisanto

Prayerfully consider with God the content of your reflection. You might want to do this after every section. Or you may choose to do it just once. Note what is helpful

What insights or ideas remain with me as the most engaging?

To which thoughts or reflections do I feel the greatest resistance?

What sorts of feelings are stirred in me by these reflections?

Looking back, on the whole what sort of feeling or energy do I notice?

Where do I sense a call from God in any of this?

What might our ministry look like in 5-10 years?

Notes: Examen for Jesuit communities. Suggested reflection questions:

1. Before a community meeting, watch this 15-minute video, "Introduction to Spiritual Conversation" by Fr. John Dardis: <https://discerningleadership.org/blog/video-guide-spiritual-conversation/>. Begin your next community meeting using the tool of spiritual conversation.
2. For your next spiritual conversation, focus on the poor and the excluded with whom you have ministered. How can you more closely walk with those in poverty?
3. As a community, welcome a group of young people to join you. Introduce them to spiritual conversation. Listen to their reflections.
4. As you engage in an Ecological Examen (<http://www.ecologicalexamen.org/>), follow the Ecological Examen with a spiritual conversation.

# PART D.

## CALLS AND COMMITMENTS

What am I most grateful for?

a)

b)

c)

As a ministry, I/we feel CALLED to grow in these three specific ways:

a)

b)

c)

As a ministry, I/we make a COMMITMENT to the following:

a)

b)

c)



# APPENDIX AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

## For Furthering

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 JESUIT  
CONFERENCE  
of ASIA PACIFIC