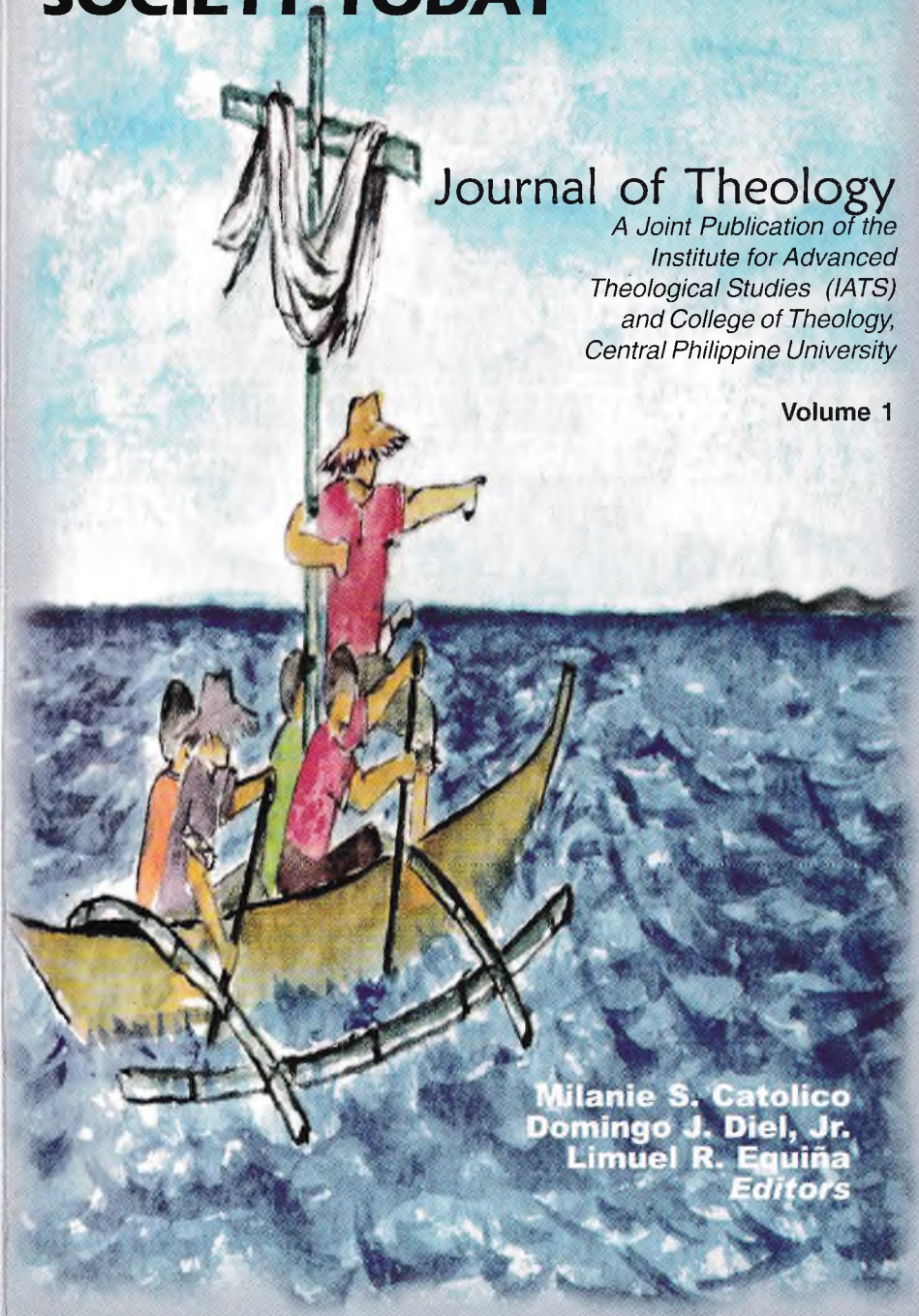
CHRISTIAN FAITH AND SOCIETY TODAY



Journal of Theology

A Joint Publication of the Institute for Advanced Theological Studies (IATS) and College of Theology, Central Philippine University

Volume 1

Milanie S. Catolico
Domingo J. Diel, Jr.
Limuel R. Equiña
Editors

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Foreword

Domingo J. Diel, Jr.

This is the maiden Issue of the Journal of Theology, a Joint Publication of the College of Theology, Central Philippine University and the Institute for Advanced Theological Studies, CPU. Since this is a journal of theology, a certain and definite expectation is normally attached to it – an expectation based on a long tradition of understanding what theology is, and how it should be properly expressed and systematically formulated. This journal may not fully meet that particular expectation – that is not necessary. And besides, theology, that is, an explanation, translation and exposition of the Christian faith; and the act of theologizing itself, while it must have the fundamental core – the Gospel, the Good News – on one hand; it must have a context, on the other. Since the act of theologizing does not simply happen in a vacuum, neither the meaning/significance of the Christian faith becomes easily evident by merely repeating age-old religious clichés and slogans, thus, an attempt has been made, namely, letting the Christian faith wrestle with its context, in order to be tested for its meaning and veracity.

The contents of this initial Issue are mainly selected special papers of the Master of Divinity students in the College of Theology, CPU. The Articles, written by two Professors of the College have been included. The Special Papers are results of M. Div. seminars on "Contemporary Issues and Church," hence, the topics are obviously current or contemporary; they are associated with or integral to the present global situation (e.g. Information Technology and Genetic Engineering). A few subjects, however, refer specifically to the Philippine situation (e.g. Corruption, Church and State, Propaganda and Lies in Body Politics). The Articles of the Professors – Dean Dr.

Limuel R. Equiña and Dr. Nestor D. Bunda – deal with the subjects on Religion and Pluralism and Theological Perspectives on Socio-Political situation today, respectively. Included also in this initial Volume is the result of a research on the subject “Local Governance vs. Centralization: The Case of Pastors in the CPBC” by the CBBC-CREED Team. The result is presented in graphic form, hence hopefully, readily understandable by the general readership in the churches and the public.

It must be evident, hopefully, to readers whether clergy or the laity that here are attempts of Theology students to explain and translate the Christian faith, i.e. theologizing in light of the present-day situation, as frame of reference, thus, success is the last consideration. Statements or opinions of authors expressed herein are solely their own, and do not represent those of the College of Theology and the Institute’s. It is hoped, however, that the contents of this particular Issue could help enlighten, challenge and/or inspire those Christians in the churches and outside and all others who are serious in the search for the truth that liberates, gives meaning in daily living here and now, and opens the future in hope for life, that is worth living in its dignity and fullness.

Preface

Limuel R. Equiña

This volume presents works of several contributors on varieties of themes that have contextual significance. While the themes may be familiar, they are not just products of library research but are born out of experiences. This is where the theological value of the essays in this volume lies. The essays attempt to articulate not just the link between the Christian faith and historical context but what Wolfhart Pannerberg also calls, their "continuity of meaning."

What is interesting in the pursuit to bridge the relationship between the Christian faith and context is the claim that each realm or context of event is a God-event or context. In the sense, the relationship is not an "on-off" matter but more importantly, it is a matter of continuity, hence decisive.

What the main content of the volume contains are hard works of Master of Divinity students. They engage themselves in a serious reflection in the study of faith, truth and reason in relation to a given situation, namely the Philippines. Such an effort is commendable, for it demonstrates a positive sign of enlargement of knowledge and world-view.

This publication also shows how a theological institution that is located in the environment of the academic community engages itself in an honest conversation with other fields of knowledge. Indeed where else can the content of *fides* be tested apart from the context of *scientia*? Yet, we do not assume an immediate synthesis of the two, but a gradual endeavor to bring the two realms into a respectful intersection. This is already an important achievement in the agenda of theology.

With the appearance of the first joint publication of the College of Theology and the Institute for Advance Theological Studies, we trust that this work has aroused you to a further examination of the themes discussed so that you will be able to see a broader spectrum of knowledge within and beyond us.

Reflection on the Role of the Church on the Present Philippine Society

Excelyn C. Landero

I. Introduction

On January 19, 2000, College of Theology Students and Faculty/Staff members participated in the Central Philippine University Indignation Rally; and in the afternoon, they marched from Central Philippine University to Amphitheater, Iloilo City to force President Estrada to resign. Along the way they shouted: "*Sobra na ang Pahirap – Palitan si Erap*." "*Singgit sang Central Philippine University – Erap Resign!*" "*Pastor ng Bayan Lumalaban*." The Convention Baptist Bible College (CBBC) teachers and students also participated in the March-Rally of January 19 at Bacolod City. The Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC) officials issued statements encouraging Baptist Churches to pray and rally against President Estrada. These events seem to signal a shift in the level of understanding among the Baptists. In contrast to the Martial Law struggles that led to "People Power II," the struggle and protest against President Estrada became institutional. In a great sense, there is a shift of understanding among Baptists on the Separation of Church and State and religious liberty among others. Obviously, "People Power II" signalizes that the church will be there to criticize, protest, and force

corrupt government officials to perform well otherwise they will be forced to resign or to be ousted by the people including the church.

This paper will attempt to find out the Role of the Church in the present Philippine Society specifically on the concept of the church, on the principles relating to the separation of the Church and society on the response of church's own understanding of its existence, and the writer's Theological Reflection.

II. Definition of Terms

1. The Meaning of the Church

The Greek New Testament word for church (*ekklesia*) literally meant "*those called out."* It was borrowed from the language of the Greek city state, in which the voting citizens who had the privilege of participating in civic debate were called the *ekklesia* – they were "*called out*" from the rest of the populace to decide matters affecting them all.[1]

The church is like a precious jewel with many complex faces.[2] Yet it has two distinct characters –divine and human. It is a *divine institution* because it is mandated by Christ, the Logos, sent by God to participate in history (John 1:14). The church is likened to "the bride of Christ" (II Cor. 11:2); it is also compared to a body in which Christ is the head (Eph. 5:23). It is a *human institution* representing Christ in the world. It is likened to the *salt of the earth* (Matt. 5:13). It is a visible structure in this world "to represent *meaning* where there is no meaning, to represent *order* where there is chaos, to represent *hope* where there is despair, to represent *peace* where there is destructive conflict, to represent *life*

[1] Robert E. Webber, *The Church in the World* (Grand Rapids Michigan:Zondervan Publishing House, 1986, p. 283.
[2] Elza M. Hawkins, *A Many Faceted Jewel* (New York: Carlton Press Inc., 1978), p. 9f.

where there is death. In the neighborhood, in business, in the arts, in social relations, in the state, in international affairs, the church's presence witnesses to the challenge of what God intended for the world. Living in the world under the Lordship of Christ beckons those about it to recognize His Lordship over the world, over all creation.[1] The church is a *koinonia of the Spirit.*[2] It is a fellowship of all members of the community in which the Spirit dwells. It is sharing life together in Christ. It is participation together in the life of the Spirit. It is investment of self in the life of the community of faith in the enterprise of fulfilling the will of God. The church is the instrument of God's universal purpose and the focus of history.[3]

The ultimate goal of the church in this world is to follow the mission of Jesus Christ, i.e., Luke 4:18- "… *to preach good news to the poor … proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor*." The mission of the church therefore is to participate in the quest for a meaningful and abundant life (John 10:10).Christ's mission is not a quest for the "ideal" but for the "real. It can be fulfilled, as Jesus himself had fulfilled it: *"The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them,"(Matthew 11:5).*

2. The Meaning of Society

Society is people living together in an organized manner. Society maintains peace and order along its varied and complex features. The significant aspects of society include political, economic, social, cultural and

[1] E. Hawkins, p. 17-18.
[2] E. Hawkins, p.15.
[3] R. Webber, p. 130.

religious. In this study, these aspects are generally defined as follows:

2.1 Political – a question of decision making – a society through its leaders and/or with participation of its citizens makes decision for the benefit of its constituents.

2.2 Economic – a society maintains productivity and production. Products are supposed to be equally distributed to its constituents.

2.3 Social – a society develops its social norms for collective and individual benefits.

2.4 Cultural – a society develops a way of life which is preserved and propagated by its constituents.

2.5 Religious – a society develops its own religiosity and forms of religion.

The ultimate goal of society is to provide a better life or abundant life of its citizens.

Societies are less concerned with the "heavenly aspects of life." Societies are more concerned with the material well being of the citizens. In some cases, however, the society is formed in the context of the religious belief of its people like in Islam and Judaism. A society, therefore, is composed of people within a certain territory and who share a common culture and history.[1]

To summarize, the *church* in general is concerned with human and divine aspect of collective and individual life, while the *society* is concerned mainly with the human aspect of life. The goals of both, however, are quite similar. They aspire to achieve a meaningful and abundant life for their constituents.

[1] cf. John J. Macionis, *Sociology*, 2nd ed., 1989, p. 91f.; Venancio B. Ardales, *Introductory Text to Philosophy*, 1987, p. 6f; 111.

III. Development of the Church and State Relationship

1. Historical Background

Throughout the two thousand years of the history of Christianity, the church and state were one. Starting from Constantine until the eve of the reformation, the church and the Western Empire shaped the organizational forms of Christianity. In fact, the church was called the "Imperial Church."[1] It was admitted by competent Catholic historians that the epoch-making conflict between the Pope and the Emperor between the 11th and 13th century was followed by untoward and unholy consequences. The papacy became involved in the highly volatile arena of power politics. There was excessive claims for absolute control in both the spiritual and temporal realms by the ruling pontiffs. However, shortly before the Reformation, the prestige of the papacy sank to its lowest. Voices all over Christendom were clamoring for a universal council to set the church in order. It was only after the Reformation led by Luther and Calvin that the separation of the church and the state started to take its shape.[2]

The Reformation Era finally led to the emergence of the modern idea of democracy in which U.S. Americans adhere so much. There is now that "clear" and "finally realized" dream of full religious liberty and the separation of Church and State.

This is also true in the history of Philippine Christianity. Spanish colonialism (1521-1898) insured the "marriage" of the Catholic Church and Spanish colonial rulers. It was the coming of the American Protestantism that broke the unity of the church and state.[3]

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[1] Justo L. Gonzales, *The Story of Christianity*, Vol. 1. (San Francisco:Harper Collins Publishers, 1984), p. 113f.

[2] William A. Mueller, *Church and State in Luther and Calvin*, Vol. 1 (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1954), p. 9.

[3] Nestor D. Bunda, *A Mission History of the Philippine Baptist Churches 1898-1998 from a Philippine Perspective* (Germany:

2. The Principle of Separation of Church and State

The text of the provision of the separation of Church and State was affirmed in the 1935 Philippine Constitution (Art. IV. Section 7), and reaffirmed in the 1973 Constitution (Art. IV, Sec. 8). It is retained in the "Freedom Constitution" of 1986, Article III – Bill of Rights, Section 5: "No Law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship without discrimination or preference shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights."[1]

The separation of the Church and State historically emerged as a corrective of two general tendencies which in the experience of democratically conceived societies have been destructive to the maintenance of a democratic social order. The first tendency is the dominance of one religious tradition over the political order and the processes of political and decision making. The second tendency is the dominance of the established political order over the religious bodies and organizations of society. Both tendencies lead inevitably to authoritarianism. First to a *"religious*" authoritarianism, and second, to a "*secula*r" authoritarianism. Both are anti-democratic.

The provision on the Separation of Church and State affirms the following basic principles:

1. The inviolability of the separation of Church and State and of the freedom of religious belief.
2. The non-support and non-preferential treatment of any religious group by the state.

University of Hamburg, 1999), p. 42f.

[1] NBSI Editorial Staff, *The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines* (Philippines: National Book Store, 1986), p.5.

3. The non-compulsory and non-discriminatory character of the state or any public organization or individual with regard to religious belief or to people of religious faith or no faith.
4. The freedom of religious activity and the expression of religious faith in social and political life.
5. The freedom of religious organizations and bodies from foreign control and domination.[1]

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines upholds the separation principle based on the following reasons:

First, Church and State are distinct institutions, Each has its own basic reason for being. Each has its own goals to achieve. Each is organized on the basis of its nature and role. Each may express its reason for being and pursue its own objectives according to methods consonant with its own nature and authority without infringing upon or injuring the other. This distinction must be given legal recognition and status, and this is achieved by maintaining them as legally separate.

Second, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines believes that the separation is for the mutual benefit of both Church and State. Where there is mutual recognition of, and respect for each other's integrity, prerogatives, and limitations, there are less possibilities of conflict and more opportunities for cooperating together.

Third, both Church and State can serve the human community in the Philippines if each is allowed to contribute its distinctive service to the human community out of its own unique traditions and resources. The NCCP believes that its member-churches can be of best service to the human community in the Philippines by

[1] Liberato C. Bautista, ed., *Church and State & Other Public Issues and Concerns*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Phil. Graphic Arts, Inc.,1986), p. 19.

bringing to bear the resources of faith and love and hope upon the problems of the nation, for they exist as churches precisely for the sharing of these resources. And the human community in the Philippines has need of these resources.

Fourth, the principle of separation of Church and State acknowledges the fact of religious pluralism in the Philippines.

Having affirmed the rightness of the separation, it is believed that NCCP's member-churches are not prohibited from some measure of involvement in matters affecting the life of the community in the Philippines, especially if that involvement is for the benefit of the community like promoting the worship of God, practice of freedom, peace, love, justice and brotherhood. In view of their conviction that no form and initiative of the State is so perfect as to beyond criticism and improvement, they may express their cooperation with the State through rational criticism and prophetic judgment.[1]

The Roman Catholic Church advocates also the separation principle. Cardinal Sin himself in his address before the Integrated Bar of the Philippines on 11 November l978 said:

> "Union of the Church and State invariably ends in the church being absorbed, manipulated or dominated by the State, or in the State being dominated by the Church. Both alternatives, it is obvious are undesirable. When the Church is dominated by the State, she becomes a tool for the furtherance of worldly aims. And when the State is dominated by the Church then the Church tends to get confused as to her nature, identity, role and mission."[2]

[1] L. Bautista, p.21f.
[2] L. Bautista, p. 23.

The American Baptists and Philippine Baptists believe in the principle of the separation of Church and State. For them this principle stresses that the allegiance of the church is only to God through Jesus Christ. The state should not give favor to any religion or church bodies. The state is supposed to rule only the political affairs of the country and not the church. Similarly, the church should not meddle in politics and run the government.[1]

However, the separation of Church and State is often misunderstood by many. There is a growing tension when the church participates or gets involved in the affairs of the government for they immediately think of the word "separation." When the church denounces the evils of society or speaks against the government's leadership, surely some would react especially Baptist congregations. They would say such matters are of the state and for the state to resolve. It must be noted very well that to a large extent the separation principle has emerged or was created in a *legal sense*[2] for the church and the state to work harmoniously and perform tasks according to their own interests. There can be *no absolute separation* between the two since the members of the church are also citizens of the state. The legal basis was created to keep the church from the control or rule of the state and the state from the control or rule of the church. Involvement or participation of the church in the government does not mean leading, controlling, and ruling the government; nor the government's involvement in the church.

[1] N. Bunda, p. 99.
[2] L. Bautista, p. 28.

IV. The Role of the Church in the Society

1. Present Philippine Situation

The colonial history of the Philippines has formed a kind of society where the few elite runs the country and the majority people, who are poor, are the subjects of the few elite. In such a situation, the elite controls the political and economic life of the population. Yet the outcome of such an unjust system is detrimental. The present majority of the people are suffering from the crisis brought about by the oppressive system. Symptoms of the crisis include mass poverty, mass unemployment, criminality, prostitution, drug abuse, migration and environmental degradation.

It cannot be denied that even if the corrupt President Estrada left his office recently, economic, political and social dislocations among our people remain. A rapidly growing globalization had the effect of increasing the cost of living while at the same time decreasing the value of human labor. Few are only able to amass large fortunes while the masses are burdened with an increasing poverty.

The past leadership economically over-empowered business interest milking the life of the Filipino people by unjust methods. President Estrada made life even more miserable for the already impoverished people.[1] There was an installation of his cronies, relatives and wives to positions of power and influence and allowed them to plunder the resources of the country. There was a series of oil price made by callused and greedy oil cartels who indiscriminately raised oil prices seventeen times during the year 2000 alone. Estrada drained the moral and spiritual fiber of the Filipino people, sold the country to gambling syndicates and lords, and established a gambling culture in our land. Thus, he was called the

[1] Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdes, *National Council of Churches in the Philippines Letter to the President*, Issued Nov. 9, 2000.

"lord of all gambling lords" and most powerful protector of illegal gambling syndicates who amassed millions of pesos every month for such purpose. He carelessly declared a "total war policy against MILF rebel forces and the bandit Abu Sayaff spending billions of pesos for air and naval bombings and ground attacks which barely touched the rebel forces and bandits, but displaced hundreds of thousands of poor Christians, Muslims and Lumads in those areas, including the loss of lives.[1] The weakening of Philippine peso brought discomfort and made life more difficult to our people.

Moreover, we face a crisis of power politically. Just like what happened last January 20, 2001. Negotiations to install Vice President Gloria Macapagal -Arroyo to Presidency had already been done even though decision has not been confirmed regarding the resignation of President Joseph Estrada. Seen among the people is the thirst of power. Many are interested to become leaders based on their vested interests. We have a newly installed President in our Republic brought about by "People Power 2" in Edsa, however, tensions are still going on because of the reactions made by the Estrada's supporters. Senators, Congressmen and many other political leaders were divided in their convictions to support the new leadership.

Releasing government leaders from their positions and appointing new ones has always been problematic. In our lifetime we have repeatedly seen excessive power which was used only for insignificant and questionable ends. There was no collective effort to protect human life. Our government officials misuse power.

Our country is not only expressing political and economic crisis but also a crisis of morals or the lack of it. The past womanizing presidency displayed unashamedly a moral laxity. Perhaps Estrada is a womanizer. But

[1] Rudy Bernal, *Statement to the President*, CPBC Committee on Social Issues and Environmental Concerns.

many of our leaders are womanizers, too, although it is not much revealing and scandalous.

Today, we are still faced with a battle – for the souls of our nation and the spirit of the church. We are still struggling. We stand not only to be free but to be. As created being of God, we may be asking who we are, what we stand for, what we believe in as Christians, and as a church people - both *citizen of the State and of the Kingdom of God.*

2. Response of the Church

Various churches are responding or even forced to respond to the crisis situation in the Philippines. Church responses vary according to a church's understanding of its existence.

2.1. From the Enlightened Catholicism

The Roman Catholic Church is actively involved in political and social issues obtaining in the Philippine society. Vatican II was convened by Pope John XXIII to enable the church to "update" with the rapid pace of development in the modern world. The church, Pope John said, should not remain relegated to its sanctuaries and isolated from the affairs of everyday life. This concern colored the teachings of the council and continue to influence Catholic thinking on the church's relation with politics and society 35 years later. Vatican II sought to open the doors of the church once again to society. During the close of the Middle Ages, the church was badly bruised and beaten. Criticized by modern thinkers, the church closed itself from the world. This completed the separation of the spiritual and temporal domains. Yet there is also a conviction that the church should be in the middle ground. While involvement in society and politics could threaten its integrity, non-involvement would just be as damaging to its evangelizing work. Basic to its self-understanding is its belief to be commissioned by Christ to transform the world through its values. Vatican Council

II stressed that none of the concerns of the modern world must be regarded as alien to the life of the church. What is wrong is not the simple involvement of the church in politics but the way the involvement in the society is being carried out. Where the church went wrong in ages past was not the church's involvement in temporal powers but in the way it pursued particular aspects of relationship as well as forgetting the moral purpose of its political movement to the life of the church. The bottom line of the "updating" process of Vatican II is that the church cannot but involve itself deeply in the life of the society. This requires caution that while the church is not strictly political, its concern is within people who are both members of the church and civil society. This idea must never be overlooked. To do so would be to misunderstand much of the perceived church involvement in politics and to keep harping on the idea of the 'separation of Church and State' every time the church says something about politics or the life of society.

The enlarge idea of the church has resulted in three developments that are important in comprehending the church's political activism such as, lay empowerment within the church, lay movements in politics and a shift from the limited view of religion as worship, to the idea of religion including a moral code. There was a time when the priest was at the top of the parish ladder and the most educated one while the members were treated as sheep. Vatican II reformed this and what exists today is the active collaboration between laity and clergy in matters concerning church and society.

In the area of social consciousness brought about by the Vatican Council II, a fundamental tenet of the new tradition of social teaching in the church is that *"spirituality and charity are not enough. Justice and concern for the disadvantaged are the hallmarks of authentic religion..."* It is said that the very vehemence of those who insist that the church should leave temporal affairs alone betrays an outmoded view that isolates the

spiritual dimension of religion from its more concrete moral demands. For the church to pray and provide spiritual guidance alone as some would insist is not enough. There is no need then to justify the church's moral pronouncements on society and politics. There is only a need for the church to be moral itself.[1] It is clear that the Catholic Church has an obligation in the society rooted in the covenant love of God for all persons and in the fulfillment of this love is the death and resurrection of Christ…"[2]

2.2. From the Baptists Perspectives

In the world today, 37 million Baptists are generally divided into three kinds of orientation in responding to the situation; namely,

a. Ecumenical Baptist Churches are open to cooperation with other churches. It is participating in the struggle for justice and peace and involve themselves in social issues.[3] For them sin is not only personal but also structural. WCC leader W. Ariarajah said that:

> "Ecumenism is at its best when it brings healing, reconciliation, justice, peace, and wholeness into the lives of people and communities. Therefore, the search for peace with justice, the struggle to uphold the rights and dignity of people, the concern for the oppressed, marginalized and rejected as well as the search for a just and righteous ordering of social, economic, and political life of communities and nations has also been at the center of theological understanding of what ecumenism is all about."[4]

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[1] Ideas of Dr. Santos published in PDI, "Vatican II and the Church in Politics", December 24, 2000, p.8.

[2] Wilfredo Fabros, *The Church and its Social Involvement in the Philippines*., 1930-1972, 1988, p. 2.

[3] Elbert W. Wardin, editor, B*aptist Around the World*, 1995, p. 1f.

[4] Ronald Paz Caraig, ed., *NCCP Newsmagazine*, Jan- April 2000, p. 27.

b. Conservative Evangelical Churches contain the main bulk of Baptists. They operate within a conservative theological framework, maintain confessional norms, advocate traditional personal morality in both private and public sphere, and tend to be conservative on social issues. They look at sin as very personal and not structural compared to Ecumenical Baptists.

c. Fundamental Separatist Baptists are closing their doors to any cooperation or ecumenical endeavor with other churches. The emphasis is more on the "heavenly Life." They pray and just wait for the Kingdom of God to come.[1]

CPBC churches in particular are divided in their understanding of the relationship between the church and society. There are those who believe that Baptist churches should not be concerned with the "*secular*" or "*worldly*" matters including the state. They are more concerned with personal salvation and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Pre-Millennial thinkers).However, there are those whose concerns go beyond personal salvation. Sin is structural and personal. Therefore salvation should be personal and structural taking into consideration the realities obtained in the Bible and the context today. Context here includes the situation in the church and society.[2]

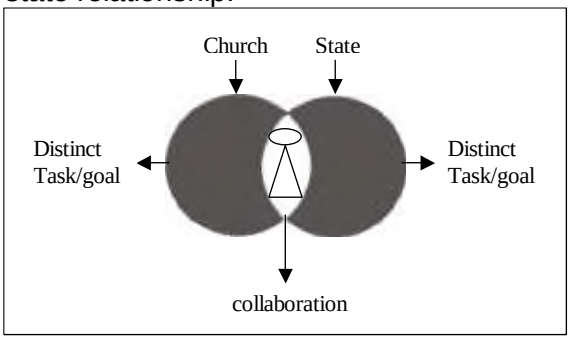
V. Theological Reflection

The discussant believes in the separation of the church and state principle. However, this separation should not be totally absolute since the members of the church are also citizens of the state and many state members are church people, too! This is to advocate Rev. Cirilo A. Rigos' message when he said that: "Our

[1] E. Wardin, p. 3.
[2] N. Bunda, p. 361f.

religious beliefs do influence our political activities and our political convictions can grow out of our theological convictions."[1]

The figure illustrates how the writer perceives the church-state relationship:



The figure above shows that both the church and state have their own distinct task to perform and goal to accomplish. The shaded part are areas of both the church and state concerns and basic reason for being. It is from those areas where both may express and pursue their own objectives in consonance with their own nature and authority without intervening each other. The church and state serve the citizens according to their own basic functions. In their boundaries, both gained status that they are legally separated.

The concept that both the church and state are not totally separated is the area represented at the center. The church and state collaborate with each other. Both aspire that every citizen will achieve a meaningful and abundant life expressed in Jesus' mission. The center area represents the church and state working relationship. Both will work interdependently like that of a brother and sister relationship helping each other for the common good of their constituents. Both acknowledge the presence of each other.

[1] L. Bautista, p. 28.

The figure also reflects that man has a double citizenship and a double duty: citizen of the church/kingdom of God and citizen of the state, and has an obligation to render services to both. Matthew 22:21 says, "*Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give back to God what belongs to God*." This principle of Jesus believes that man has a duty to serve both the church and the state. There are matters and principle in which the responsibility of man is to God and there are also matters that he can be accountable to the state.

The collaboration area expresses greatly the church involvement and participation in the society: First, the church people should respect and obey leaders of the state. It is said that, "No plea of religion can hold good against obedience to lawful authority."[1] It is affirmed in the Bible that leaders of our country are ordained and commissioned by God. They are accountable for their deeds and are expected to act what is proper and right. Second, the church has the right to subdue whenever the state misleads. According to Bautista,[2] when the state overstepped its limitations and ceases to be the servant of God and no longer serves the common good, the church has the right and the duty to do something about the situation. If the state performs beyond the will of God then the church must take its part. There are times when Christians have the right and duty to resist the state. Whenever the state demands something that opposes the will of God, the church has the right to resist compliance. In Revelation 13 there is a picture of the state that misuses its power. The state becomes totalitarian and claims unreserved loyalty. It discredits the Sovereignty and honor of God. The state described in Romans 13 as a servant of God and instruments of

[1] H.D.M. Spence and Joseph Exell, *The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 15 (Grand Rapids Michigan: WMB Eerdsmans Publishing Company, 1958), p. 361.
[2] L. Bautista, p.28.

justice has in Revelation gone beyond its proper bounds. When they cry to God for deliverance God did not hear them.

Third, the church must serve as a model to the state. It means that the church must transcend truth, love, holiness that provide meaning in the society. It is the church that should provide sphere of values to the community. The state on the other hand must recognize the values that the church bears. Fourth, the state must acknowledge the presence of God in the world. The best citizen acknowledges God and bring his whole life unto his presence.

Lastly, the collaboration would mean that the church and state's reason for being are under God's Almighty hands. God preserves the church and state's working relationship. They are all subject to the Sovereign will of God. If God is Sovereign over His entire creation, then there can be no absolute separation of religion from the state's affairs. As what Mawe de la Fuente said: "Our secular life is not separate from our religious life."[1] All of life and human actions bear a religious character because God is sovereign in every aspect of life. The authority of the church and state inheres in the will and purpose of the living God who decreeds them into existence. According to Webber there are three earthly reasons for state's existence: First, *is the fact of sin*. Because sin expresses itself in a human's desire to develop culture away from the will of God, the state as an institution that holds the sin in check has been instituted by God. Second, *the goodness of God*. The creation of the state may be seen as an act of God's goodness toward people. Sin unchecked by some external restraint would destroy humanity. Hence, the third reason, *the preservation of human life.* Therefore the purpose of the state in this thought points to the necessity of church

[1] Mawe de la Fuente, Centralian on the Web, College of Theology, November 10, 2000.

involvement in the affairs of the state. The effect of the involvement of the church in the government is obvious. If the church submits to what he or she understands the will of God to be in the state, the order of society will be stable and sin will be held in check.[1]

This is to quote Atty. Perfecto Yasay when he said that:

> "Christianity is never a way of life for the fence sitters or of the uncommitted spectator. God's call toward discipleship is a call for involvement and a summon for engagement in a world of choices that demand a decision. In a period of tension or division, God's people are called upon to follow Jesus and what he stands for. Since Jesus stands for justice, his disciples should choose to be just and oppose everything that is unjust. Since Jesus stands for righteousness, his disciples should choose to be true to the prophetic role of Christianity – to oppose evil and immorality, denounce corruption, and fight dishonesty wherever it rears its ugly head."[2]

In order that the relation between the church and state may work properly, Christians must be obedient to the state. Obedience to the rulers is willed by God, for God has instituted the state. Furthermore, obedience is pleasing to God and maintains the order of society which brings glory to God. The Kingdom of Society should provide an atmosphere of peace in which the Kingdom of Church is able to carry out its function. The preaching of the gospel results in good works, and this helps to stabilize society and reduce evil in the world. The Kingdom of God outlasts the Kingdom of the World. Secular government serves only the world which passes away, but the spiritual government of God serves eternal life and God's ultimate purpose.

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[1] R. Webber, p. 133.
[2] R. Caraig, p. 29.

VI. Conclusion

This paper attempts to find out the Role of the Church in the present Philippine Society focusing on the separation of Church and State. At the onset, definitions of the Church and State were laid down. The Church concerns itself with the spiritual and temporal, while the state concerns itself mainly with temporal. It is in the temporal aspect that the Church and State have either united or separated throughout the history of Christendom.

A special focus on the relation between Church and State in the Philippine setting was discussed. The Roman Catholic Church, the NCCP and CPBC have different conceptions on the role of the Church in the Philippine Society. Yet there seems to be a common understanding that the Christian Churches cannot neglect their responsibility in the society. This is theologically and biblically sound. In the theological reflection, it was affirmed that the separation of church and state was not totally absolute. Both can function separately and on the other hand, can work interdependently.

The Role of the Church in the present Society is to initiate developmental change in line with its goal of participating in the realization of the Kingdom of God (abundant life) on Earth.

Philippine Christianity and Corruption

Mona Lisa P. Siacor

"But let those who have never sinned throw the fist stones!" (John 8:7b NLT)

There is not a day when I am not conscious of having to decide whether to be corrupt or not. I have in my possession a 300-watt heater of which my landlady doesn't know about. I also have a 295-watt personal computer and monitor with which I take note the number of hours I've had it plugged on. So I figured that I would not really be deceiving my landlady if I'd add the number of hours I've used both plus a little extra. It is an arrangement which you can see isn't really quite honest, though the tally on kilowatt-hours has been very exactly done.

Why the secrecy then when I was prepared all along to pay the expenses? Well, since I badly needed a heater for my tea and coffee, I was not prepared for a possible denial to my request. Therefore I circumspect the conventions, hope not to get caught, compensate for the misdemeanor so that the victim here, my landlady, will not be disadvantaged.

My conduct is only one of the faces of graft-corruption here in the Philippines. Petty things and big things, they all still come under the same label: dishonesty. Fortunately I know my conscience hasn't yet gone

numb to these bothersome occasions of immorality. Every time that there is an opportunity to participate in it I could still pause and ruminate on the possible consequences, and make my decisions from there.

I still manage to react with a sincere gesture of shocked awe whenever I hear instances of gross dishonesty, especially when the person allegedly guilty is a leader of my immediate community. My initial reaction to such stories is still one of disbelief, even if it is a given fact that "it is everywhere and everybody does it."

There are many instances when I have seen corruption to pay, the culprits getting away with their conduct and somehow gaining by it. No matter that they have committed an immorality, just as long as some cost has been cut, time has been saved, or labor has been conserved, then it's all worth it. It is the consequences that are exactly the big issue here.

Is it a given fact that corruption goes round in a vicious cycle with poverty and illiteracy? Or does it start somewhere among the three? Is there an argument running here that sounds like: "People are corrupt because they are mal-educated," or "People are corrupt because they are hungry?"

Well, my late Lolo formally studied until Grade 1 only and I have known him to be corrupt at times. Lolo was very good at cheating at card games. I cannot recall all the street-smart antics he's participated in as he told them to us, but I can very clearly see in my mind's eye the quirk of his smile and the twitch of his eyebrows as he relates some anecdote or another. He enjoyed telling quips on how somebody has put one on another, telling them like they're just among those given games in life.

Sure Lolo's family wasn't among the rich of folks. Whatever little ancestral lands they had began to be somehow transferred from one hand to another until all of it was lost to them. Yet Lolo was among the greatest haters of sloth and spendthrifts. That is, Lolo was poor but he valued hard honest work and the monetary com-

pensation that goes with it. Still for me he was the best Lolo in the world.

And so we ask now, how could my beloved country the Philippines be Christian and at the same time corrupt? Lolo was a Roman Catholic, by which many in my immediate circle today would consequently pass him as an "unbeliever." Is it that, therefore? That the Philippines is corrupt because she is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic? Or is it that she is corrupt despite her being predominantly Roman Catholic?

Who gave her Christianity? Was the Christianity that first came to her the Christianity we are talking about in our classes in the College of Theology? Was it the Christianity of Christ? Of the apostles? Has this Christianity changed with the times at all? If 'no" to the last question, then why?

A 'Superintendent of Sea Trade' of Fo-kien (China) named Chao Ju-kua, wrote in the 1200s about the people of Ma-i (how the Philippines or part of the Philippines was called by them) in his 'A Description of Barbarian Peoples':

> "The custom of the trade is for the savage traders (*that's supposed to be us*) to assemble in crowds and carry the goods away with them in baskets; and, even if one cannot at first know them, and can but slowly distinguish the men who remove the goods, there will yet be no loss. The savage traders (*that is, my ancestors*) will after this carry these goods on to other islands for barter, and, as a rule, it takes them as much as eight or nine months till they return, when they repay the traders on shipboard with what they have obtained (*for the goods*)."[1]

[1] Harry J. Benda and John A. Larkin. *The World of Southeast Asia: Selected Historical Readings* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p.8. Italics enclosed in parentheses are mine.

Again, though I have heard of this other story from other sources still I feel like entertaining it here. Who among those living in sophisticated medieval Spain and Portugal would find it appealing at all to transport roots and start a new life in some obscure primitive far away land where 'natives' may have not even heard of clothes voluminous enough to smother its wearer? The missionaries you may say, but this was the field then of the all-assuming Dark Ages clergy of the pomp and power of Rome, however sincere their intentions may have been. In what sense that sincerity was, it is open for debate. The artists you may say, in search for new inspirations and new avenues for expression. But did their genre exist then, the ones restless for 'unexplored possibilities?' Besides, artists are ideally sensitive people and therefore averse to inflicting senseless cruelty, excepting maybe the 'cruelty' their forms and media of expression inflict on our ingrained sense of what's beautiful and harmonious. Were there "social workers" then, concerned of the living conditions of the peoples of the new colony? Were there educators willing to risk status among peers for the sake of educating primitive minds? Or say that there were business, or otherwise, entrepreneurs excited of stories of pliant and subservient laborers who did not have sophisticated weaponry for a successful redress of grievances with the use of them? Yes, we may have these latter kinds going for us. They would be of those types who seek adventure by their cunning and brawns, and for what they could get from it. This, I think, is exactly how it all started for us. We were colonized by *pale hairy smelly barbarians* who sought 'a place under the sun' for themselves when they did not think it could be found in their motherland. We were colonized by opportunists who thought the newly found land was theirs for the taking, and that they were God-given gifts to its inhabitants.

Let's say you are with a wealthy benefactor. You see him and his family, his wife, children and all, lead an ostentatiously extravagant life. Rather than let good food be

wasted to the dogs, you take them home to your family without your benefactor knowing. Otherwise, how can you say that you're taking home waste food for your family to eat? Would the excuse rather be given that it is your dogs, too, that will benefit from them? The benefactor would hardly notice anyway, such concerns that belong to the working sub-class, so why bother to tell of it at all? Then, what else could be 'excusably' brought home without the benefactor noticing also? Why not take advantage of the situation when no one's getting hurt at all, and your family benefiting from it besides? No one's getting hurt, except your increasing 'burden', if it could be called that, of furtiveness.

Exactly if it could be called a burden. This issue is related to that big issue on consequences. For I am aware that I live in a society of the Us-or-Them positions. If someone is not for Us, then he is for Them. Only the most adept can legitimately exist in both these worlds, in my society. So that if you are for Us, how can you take sides with Them? If you-are-one-of-Us, you-will-not-tell-on-Me. You are ethically bound to take my side on issues such as this, when my 'face' is at stake.

This facet of group belongingness is very strong in my society. This has allowed 'petty' corruption against the wealthy benefactor of the Them group, to proliferate until it has become so ingrained into the culture that it has ceased to become an urgent matter of consequence.

I will come across difficulty if I would have to sort out here the processes that have contributed in the cessation of its being a paramount concern as a facet of our culture --- as to causes, vehicles, transformations over a long period of time. I will just have to accept the fact, and have it restated here explicitly this time, that corruption in the Philippines is so pervasive that it has become part of the norm.

If this is therefore the case, then what about our identity as the only Christian nation in Asia – is this identity a gross mistake, a misnomer? Is it possible for both

tags to go together – being Christian and being corrupt? The first question above concerns Biblical jargon, and therefore a question of linguistics. The second question concerns anthropology vis-à-vis the Biblical perspective. The answer to both questions is "yes."

The term "Christian" as Acts 11:26 says is the term used to call the group of people who have come to follow the teachings of Jesus' apostles. Now if one was to follow what Jesus taught, one was assured of a safe 'position' relative to The Supreme Being, who is the Personality to whom these "Christians" (as well as their precursor Judaists) attribute all the ideals the human being has been found to be incapable of having all at once: integrity, impartiality, wisdom, gentleness, forgiveness, justice, power, majesty, and might. By consequence therefore Christians were, as implied by the Biblical narratives, those who, as much as possible, adhered to these ideal characteristics. That is, they were those who agreed to *"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow-man has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor."* This is a passage from Romans 13, verses 8 thru 10, which scholars unanimously attribute to Paul of Tarsus. Only him or her who believes in, adhere to, and practice these tenets at least is called a Christian. From this perspective therefore the Philippines is not a Christian nation since not everyone in his or her jurisdiction answers to the description above of being a Christian. This, of course, is equally true even if there were no Muslims, Hindus, and all others who belong to 'minority' religions living in the land.

The "yes" to the second question can be approached in two ways. The first way takes into consideration the argument that has just been placed above. That is, if the Philippines is labeled a Christian nation despite a non-

strictly “Christian” population, then there is no inconsistency at all. (It must be added here that the latter statement is made in view of the consideration that “Non-Christian” adherents may not be so finicky about not coveting and not stealing, and in this sense not being judgmental about a “Non-Christian” value system. Again, without suggesting that coveting and stealing may be fine, and that the “Christian” set of values is relative. The emphasis is on trying to present the case without assigning “Christianity” as the norm against which all other value systems are evaluated.) There is no inconsistency in the sense that “The Only Christian Nation in Asia” label does not particularly mean that the country is made up of people from the Romans 13:8-10 perspective, who courageously condemn stealing.

The second way has in view the consideration that, in the Pauline sense for instance, man is corrupt: *“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. … I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. …,”* Romans 7 verses 15 and 18, among others. In this sense as well as in Romans 13:8-10, it is possible to be a Christian and be corrupt.

The rejoinder to the last paragraph is the timely introduction to the next segment of thoughts. Yes it is possible to be a Romans 13:8-10 Christian, but the story must not end there. For Paul urges that the correct sense is that *“…we have an obligation --- but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. …be transformed by the renewing of your mind. … Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.”* Romans 8:12; 12:2,9.

If my *savage* ancestors of the old Ma-i knew how to be honest, if the demand be that, then so could I. So could my contemporaries. For if my Ma-i ancestors knew Romans 13:8-10 decency without having heard of it, how much more those of us now who expressly profess belief in it.

The issue now is in the manner of gravity we as a nation look at the consequences of dishonest acts, both big and small. (The collective “us” does not imply a literal 100% involvement with corruption among the Filipino citizenry.) Just as the consciousness of our forefathers shifted from non-practice to tolerance, so we must now return to that period of trustworthiness. The biggest contributor to this endeavor must be the institutionalized education system.

In my experience alone as a teacher I am overcome by the lack of discipline I encounter among my students. Lack of discipline in terms of substandard compliance to the academic demands of a particular course. In College Algebra, for instance, I can sweepingly say that most of the time less than half of my classes rightfully deserve passing marks. Lack of discipline in terms of attempts at cheating at various degrees during scheduled exams if the proctor’s vigilance is just so. Irresponsibility in terms of absences and tardiness. Moreover, my co-teachers have collectively concluded that the overall decorum of the university students nowadays is despicable. Of course there are always exceptions, but that’s just it: the rule has become the exception. The lamentations of instructors gathered in my faculty room any day is just heartbreaking. There always is a never-ending string of anecdotes all around to be shared, condemned, analyzed, or just helplessly be laughed at when the extremely serious could not but must be seen as downright hilarious, or there will be nothing left at all but raw frustration.

How much of my concern I am willing to make manifest for these young citizens is a separate topic. For now I would just like to express this big question hanging over my head: WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THESE RASCALS IN TERMS OF DISCIPLINE THROUGH ALL THE 10 YEARS, AT THE LEAST, PRIOR TO ENTERING UNIVERSITY? And now that they are here, is the system enough to either reinforce discipline or redirect those who

have been misguided? The question rightfully applies to any post-secondary school in the country.

We must have an overall drive towards the raising of sensitivity to minor misdemeanors, that must start with teachers themselves. The drive must be consistent, if not as strongly imposed as in the manner of my elementary school teachers, who were the minor gods and the bane of my childhood existence. Though I must confess that it is their doing that a preference for a high standard of performance has been ingrained into my system despite my overwhelming tendency to take things easy, just as they come. Perhaps we can best start from here, gradually working our way towards countering our culture for glossing over misconducts even when they are glaringly gargantuan, as in the Them-or-Us syndrome. The moral fiber of the country must be the thing to work on. Whip up more and more of our historical heroes' ideal characteristics from time to time. Redefine who we are, incorporating the good and the bad that our national consciousness has gone through, throughout all the colonizations and the maltreatments. Get reacquainted with ourselves, try to figure out why we are so adept at adapting to whatever has come to us, and if indeed they have irreversibly changed our values from the Ma-i era, or if we're still the same.

The name "Christian Nation" is stuck to us. This is not to say that we have to work things out so as to live up to the label. We have to work things out because we as a people are suffering, with or without this added burden of an identity.

Of course we are averse to corruption. Whoever says otherwise must be crazy. But we just can't get away from it. It's gone under our national skin. It has become a sort of a prison for us. This is where that vicious cycle of corruption, mal-education, and poverty is made manifest.

Next to educators are leaders who have a great accountability in this thing. If momentum has to come from somewhere then it must be with them. Filipinos are great

adulators of those who are in the limelight. This trait must be taken advantaged of, in the positive way.

Alas, strong leaders come from, where else, but the people. As the people are, so is the leadership. Now, where do those who profess Romans 13:8-10 come in?

RP Christianity: Between "Being Christian" and "Being Corrupt"

Earl Jasper A. Urbien

When we entered the month of September 2003 almost all Filipinos around the world were shocked by the international news that the Philippines ranked 11th in the list of the most corrupt countries in the world and 3rd in Asia.[1] Some were saddened by the condition of our country because the integrity and identity of the Philippines were exposed to shame in the eyes of the world. Of course that exposition was an evidence that corruption has really been a part of the Philippine culture. This is not to exclude our justice system that serves the vested interest of those who have the power and the influence.

Corruption in the Philippine politics has been embedded in our culture even before the Philippine liberation from the Japanese occupation of the country. I am glad that the news about the Philippine corruption was broadcasted around the world. My delight was not because I hate Filipinos. Rather it is my hope that the international news might serve as a critic to our government and remind us of our failures.

The most harmful thing to me after hearing that bad news was the paradox that exists in the Philippine culture, namely a country that is known as the only Christian nation in the Far East on the one hand, and corrupt on

[1] Last January 2005, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) ranked the Philippines as the 2nd most corrupt country in the world. *Eds.*

the other hand. The common thinking about the term "Christian" is associated with the believer of God and Jesus Christ, the savior. The Bible is the authority (or one of the many for Roman Catholics) of faith and living. As believers of the Bible, Christians are expected to live out the sacred principles that promote wholeness and call everyone to submit to the authority of God. That is, that the "understood expectation" of the people around the world who know our country is for us to live the ideals of the Christian faith. That same expectation from a Christian nation implies that the Christian culture and are tradition supposedly characterized as a God-conscious and God-fearing culture and tradition. As such, ideally a Christian nation like the Philippines is not expected to be in the list of the top corrupt nations in the world. Obviously, such an image contradicts the characteristics of being Christian.

Because corruption has been a part of our culture, in my view, Filipino Christianity has never been successful in maintaining the Christian tenets of faith. Does this mean that Filipino religiosity in this generation is inadequate to impede because corruption is a part of life? Does this suggest that the desire for survival takes priority over Christian values when one is compelled to make a choice? Must Christian morality then be located in the periphery because after all it becomes dysfunctional in a system and culture of corruption?

The above questions disturb me much. However, chronologically, there is a reason to argue that in the Philippines, Christianity came and was developed long before the birth of graft and corruption in the government system.[1] In other words, the current Christian practices of going to church every Sunday, celebrating fiesta, and ob-

[1] I am convinced that this is true because our history suggests that the foreigners had dominated us in the name of Christian religion and that corruption was impossible to conceive in the motive of our beloved ancestors for they were so much compassionate with their fellow citizens and were longing for freedom from the oppressions of the foreigners.

serving rituals such as the seven sacraments for the Roman Catholics to name a few are ahead than the culture of corruption. Unfortunately, this kind of religiosity has not been successful in conquering self-serving motives.

It seems that to be corrupt is not only a tactic used in order to survive the economic crisis that threatens life in the present but also a strategy that is employed for future security. In this sense corruption is a means to an end. The end is described as a release from all forms of struggles for survival like poverty, sickness, if not martyrdom.

I am personally convinced that corruption is a kind of shared mentality that is conditioned by the instinct to survive, hence considered as a standard practice, a habit, a pattern or a system. However, this system stands in contradiction to the Christian ideals The cultural value of *pakikisama* plays a crucial role in the proliferation of the culture of corruption. To be accepted in a group or community takes center stage in the context of present and future survival or security. This explains why Filipinos would generally compromise their Christian beliefs so as not to break one's self from the group.

Maybe somebody who reads this essay will think that I am too judgmental and prejudice reliant. Well, my assumption is simply triggered by the reality that our country is one of the most corrupt nations of the world.

Corruption is a negative word. It is a form of dishonesty and exploitation aimed at achieving personal gain. As mentioned above, I think one reason why our country is corrupt is due to compromise that is inseparable from personal interest. The practice of compromise sustains the government officials and employees in their desire to render services and loyalty to our country.

Ti, maano kamo da kay amo gid na iya! (What else can you do? This is the practice). This Ilonggo expression articulates what I mean when one enters into compromise. Regardless of the wrong practice one has no other choice but to follow or conform in order to maintain the ecology of human relations.

In our class, I have argued that honesty in the context of survival does not work in the end. People would rather think of their security and survival rather than believe in the virtue of honesty. What is of greater value to them is self-preservation and interest rather than the general welfare. Hence greediness has shaped the Filipino value not only personally but politically as well.

It is in this context that to practice the Christian idealism in a corrupt setting and culture is a difficult if not a risky task. To be a part of this system is like joining a game called *"let's pretend."* The mechanics of this game is secrecy and confidentiality between persons who share the same motive. The hidden motive must be kept confidential. And so pretending that everything is okay and "there's nothing wrong", one works out his hidden agenda with a great deal of skill and ability in order to hide the truth of the matter. This is the rule of the game. This is also the kind of game and rule that "Christian" government officials play.

Where have all the Christian virtues gone? This is the serious question that I am now struggling with.

In my own view, the Christian's sacred Scripture is pro-justice and pro-life. Its message is about a God-centered life. God calls his people to be a living testimony by demonstrating the "God-processed" life. The people of God should, by faith, live out the meaning of their beliefs in God. To be a Christian is not simply a matter of name and title. More importantly it is a matter of practice, a lifestyle.

The problem here in the Philippines I think is the separation of political life from religious life. More often than not we associate religion with pietism, spiritual, sacred tradition, mysticism, other-worldly, and pharisaic attitude to the non-religious or the so-called secular world. We see that kind of religious outlook in the Philippines. Actually Filipino Christians have collective practices that mediate between the Christian life and the community life or day-to-day life characterized by *sacred stories, sacred*

rituals, sacred time, sacred seasons, sacred sounds, sacred music, sacred speech, sacred silence, sacred images, sacred space, sacred journey, sacred laws, and *sacred worship*. The separation of the sacred from the ordinary is somehow a mentality that justifies corruption since this act is being done outside the realm of the sacred and the holy.[1] This idea has penetrated Christianity in the Philippines. Public service or duty is understood as a secular function, hence, corruption in the government has nothing to do with one's spirituality.

In view of this dualistic understanding of Christian and secular life which I believe to be very detrimental to the preservation of Christian values, there is a need to re-examine the Filipino's understanding of the purpose and meaning of life. In doing this, Christians should be vigilant in introducing a new culture or a counter culture to a culture of corruption. This new culture prioritizes life and social justice which can only be realized through concerted efforts and determination to introduce radical changes when one is in power.

I would like to suggest two possible expressions of counter-culture to address if not change the evil system or the culture of corruption. These ways are epistemological and practical. Epistemologically, Christians should change their world-view of the sacred and the secular. In the notion of God's Reign, God rules in all realms of life be they human or animals or plants. Every space, time, journey is not an isolated location and space.

Practically, Christians who possess this concern should not hesitate to extend the Christian vision of godly character (whatever it is) to every part of the nation. The church is not the only place for Sunday School classes. These classes take place even in political affairs when one is able to extend the power of Christian influence in the preservation of justice and promotion of quality life. It

[1] I only remember the time during the Hellenization period when the material world was regarded as separate from the spirit world.

is in these ways where community life is formed and myopic world-views are challenged. For me. it is in the emergence of this new culture or counter-culture of godly vision where the birth of a new system starts.
I believe this was what happened to the first century Christians. The life that Jesus had demonstrated formed a community, and then this community became influential, organized and powerful. It is without surprise that the first century world was turned up side down. That event shows that changes can be possible. However they only take place in the hands of the people who share the same vision and concern. The vision they share gave them the courage to transcend the old dysfunctional corrupt system and world-view they used to live by to a culture of pro-justice and pro-life.

There is hope for change. I believe that society can be changed only by corporate action. And this corporate action must not only be within the ecclesiastical structure, but also in all systems of both government and non-government. This vision of God proclaimed by Jesus should be taken seriously in all aspects of human life and situation even in human dreams.

The message of the Christian is "eschatological."[1] This means that the awaited future-hope has already begun, namely, that the relationship between God and people is clearly realized and not simply a future event. This eschatological message has something to do with the Christian attitude towards life in the present. Such realization must abolish the boundary that creates a schizophrenia between spiritual things and material things. Since all situations and places are of God, then it must be understood that all are subjects of God's vision. Those who claim to be Christians should seriously express this holistic vision. I suggest that this vision be grasped by our

[1] A term from the Greek root word "eschaton" which means "end times."

fellow citizens and make this vision the foundation of organization and system.

May this vision fill them with a passion to preserve life and uphold justice. May the power of the *eschaton* dominate their acts and be the soul of the organization. Only then can one be a Christian in a culture of corruption.

On Truth, Propaganda, and Lies in Philippine Political Life

Modesto B. Molinos, Jr.

Introductory Question

Is there any biblico-theological frame of reference wherein the issues prompted by the title above could be assessed of its value?

Definition of Terms

This essay tells the following definitions as guide provided in the Webster Dictionary except for the phrase "Political Life":

Political life may be understood in either technical or general sense. In technical sense, Political Life is the conduct of leadership, administration, governance, policy-making and implementation involving logistics, maintenance, and sustainability for national, regional, or local governments; and in general sense, it is governance for the common good that penetrates the various departments of Filipino way of life.

Truth "is the state of being the case: FACT. The body of real things, events and facts: ACTUALITY."

Lie is "an assertion of something known or believed by the speaker to be untrue with intent to deceive: an untrue or inaccurate statement that may or may not be believed true by the speaker."

Propaganda is “the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person.”

The Truth

Politics as governance is of itself a positive way of life. For a community life to survive there is the need of style or form or administration that should balance, guide, dispose, protect, and control the various societal conditions especially what is good for the greater populace.

Running for an elective post is a healthy enterprise. The need and choice for a political party has its important role in the systematic handling and team-playing in the vast network of services on the national, regional, and local government units.

Platform of government addressing relevant issues and conditions is as relevant as a framework where both politicians and the voting constituents offer and see the priorities involved, the schema that should be tried and the implementation to take effect.

Campaigning for the government post is equally important so that the electorate would know the platform as well as the people running for the particular government post. This practice enables the people to meet and consider the personalities and issues involved.

Election time gives the opportunity for the electorate to choose the candidates of their own choosing. This is the fundamental tenet of a democratic society when the majority of people are being heard; who and what their choices are that should run their government. Public service is the very essence of public trust given to those who win the elections. Elected public officials and the electorate are bonded by the constitution and whose faithfulness is expected to be expressed. Paramount than anything else is the aim to serve the people, work on their common good and well-being in terms of socio-economic, religious, educational, cultural, commercial, business,

and all departments of living which address the totality of human needs.

Providing for the basic needs, opening other opportunities for progress and advancement, addressing the juridical, moral, spiritual concerns of people, protecting their human rights, and giving them equal opportunity to better their lives are areas encompassing what a healthy political exercise must primarily take care of as primary concerns.

The Right to Correct Information

It is a human right to have the access to right and accurate information. It is an inalienable right to be rightly informed of conditions that could affect every citizen in his/her need to know the events surrounding his/her circumstance. The political system must prove these avenues to correct information and protect that this right is not violated, distorted, taken away, or that its privacy be intruded.

Correct and accurate information held the citizen to locate him/herself in the wide order of things and events around him/her and the world. Through this he/she could make necessary adjustments of his/her life, actions, and struggles in relation to diverse conditions that demand continues adjustments, reforms, or changes from time to time.

The Lie

The fact of living, however, does not have the monopoly to just one aspect. There can be lies lurking every other side of the truth.

Negative things are just as real as the positive ones. Politics also carries with it the other side of the coin.

Embedded in the human psyche is the desire to be comfortable and be abundant than the previous. While the human democratic society proves everyone equal

opportunity, there are imbalances in the course of the struggle to advance.

Competition places a toll in the struggle to improve one's condition in life. Along with this is the greed for power and wealth, the pride to be looked up, to become popular and respected, or to desire to be perpetuated in power to enjoy the comfort and abundance provided by the status quo. One avenue in achieving this end is politics.

No wonder why in the Philippine political history, the landlords have the easy access to political leadership due to their logistical capabilities. Many of these politicians launched their political career with hope to remain in power so as to protect their selfish interests, or advance their exclusive agenda in the guise of "serving the people and country."

The strong insistence to hold oneself active in the political arena could be motivated by the promise to enjoy the greater opportunity in the accessing of funds, whether or not these come in form of taxes, the good opportunity to benefit out of probable business investments, or have a good chance of sharing funds from international sources amounting to millions.

Business profitability could also be the motive behind what may look as a sound political agenda. Many bills in Congress have been passed designed to either promote or protect business interests. One could just imagine the lobbying for or against a draft resolution to promote or deter these bills. Both money and prominence are used in order to influence these draft resolutions so that these either would take off or not in the second and final reading, or win approval in plenary sessions.

For certain, whether for money, popularity, power, or sexual motives, the true political agenda is hidden behind a sound party platform carried by a misleading propaganda.

Propaganda in Philippine Politics

As our definition above suggests, “propaganda” has the elements of either “helping or injuring.”

For our political language, propaganda is launched to “help” those who belong to the same party affiliation. The effort to promote each other’s partisan interest is made in the campaign trail. Quite naturally one could validate this: it should be so, provided that the said information is placed within the parameters of truth who and at what capacity the person running for a public post is really qualified.

Yet, propaganda is injurious when the distortion of truth comes to play injudiciously. This type of propaganda does not merely injure the sound political exercise founded on truth, but most importantly, false or irresponsible propagandizing violates the right of every voter to right and sound information.

False promises carried by propaganda makes an immoral means of information. This is especially when the other party is morally injured and the voting population is denied the true picture of things where they will base their judgment. Propaganda bearing scandalous information, maybe out of polemics or out of “hate,” also deceives the electorate once these information do not bear substantial evidences already proven as true or facts established out of jurisprudence.

Although in some ways propaganda helps people in identifying important features as situationers, giving them the proper insight or reliable perspective in making decisions. Irresponsible propaganda on the other hand hurts the moral, ethical, spiritual, even the sociological principles respecting the individual’s right to correct and correct information.

Relevance of Pauline Sin-Death Configuration

In the introductory part of this essay we raise the question "Is there any biblico-theological reference wherein 'Truth, Propaganda, and Lies in Philippine Political Life" could be assessed of its values?"

Yes, there is. In Romans 7:15-25 the two conflicting principles are subjecting Paul to difficulty. He said: "When I want to do good, evil is right there with me…For in my inner being I delight in God's law but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members" (7:21-22).

Human sinfulness is inherent in man's personality. Nothing that man does, even if it is well-intentioned, is without the presence of evil. For Paul, human condition "is a prisoner of the law of sin at work within…" their body parts.

So that, even in the Philippine political scenario there is the presence of the seemingly "true side" of this issue or that yet falsity just lurk behind. Thus, the seemingly "good" appearances the Philippine politics were showing have been proven for their "bad" effects later.

Conclusion

As a whole, "Truth, propaganda, and lies" in the Philippine body politics, if viewed from the Pauline sin-death configuration – doesn't amount to anything but a perpetual repetition of the vicious cycle of selfishness, misery, and death.

Paul's prescriptive answer to his rhetorical question "Who could deliver me from this body of death?" is this: "Thanks be to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Jesus Christ is the key, the answer – with whom assurance of deliverance is made available through His death sealed by His resurrection – the eschatological reality.

National Situationer: Roots of Conflict and Unpeace in the Philippines[1]

Nestor D. Bunda

Local Values: Starting Point of Development

As I was reflecting on the topic assigned to me, I remember the book of Thiery G. Verhelst entitled *No Life Without Roots Culture and Development*, 1987 (Translated by Bob Cumming, 1990). The book emphasizes the significance of culture in any meaningful effort towards self-reliance. It claims that the Western development project has not only failed to save the poor countries from poverty but also dangerously increased their economic, political and cultural dependence, and in certain cases has accelerated the depletion of their natural resources and quality of life. Personally, I agree with the book's assertion that local values and knowledge should be the point of departure for a people-oriented alternative path of development. The assertion of Verhelst was made 15 years ago, but I think it is still relevant today. I, therefore, commend the organizers of this seminar and HEAVEN

[1]An input for the Regional Seminar in Values Education, Higher Education Association for Values Education – National (HEAVEN), Theme: "Values Education: Integration of PEACE Culture Across the Curriculum," Conference Room, University of San Agustin, Iloilo City, February 11, 2002. (Note: Recent data and reflection are added in the last footnote)

for taking another serious step towards integrating culture, especially peace culture across the curriculum on values education.

Our topic, National Situationer: Roots of Conflict and Unpeace in the Philippines clearly asserts in itself (which I hope all of us can agree) the presence of conflict and unpeace (and it is not saying directly whether there is or there can be harmony and peace in the Philippines sooner or later). What we wish to find out then are the sources of conflict and unpeace. If we are able to discover them, hopefully we will become more aware of the strategic causes of conflict and unpeace we are experiencing as a people. At the outset let us briefly survey our national situation, with the understanding that there are different perspectives in interpreting it, and then explore its significant roots manifested in history. Hopefully this could help us in trying to strengthen our strategic understanding of our situation; and enable us to incorporate such an understanding in our curriculum in teaching values education.

National Issues of Concern

In our *Ukay Baluskay*[1] TV program on January 8, 2002, we surveyed the opinion of our televiewers on the question, "What is the most pressing issue in our country that needs immediate attention?" The first four issues (by rank) were the following: 1) poverty, 2) corruption, 3) unemployment, and 4) overpopulation.[2]

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[1] *Ukay Baluskay* is a TV Program aired live everyday from Monday to Friday 8-9 pm (7-9 pm every Wednesday) over CPU Alumni Channel 25 of Cable Star, Inc.

[2] In 1990 a nationwide survey was conducted and the people declared that the seven issues that most affect their lives (by rank) were the following: ecology, graft and corruption, a weak economy, criminality, the population explosion, lack of spirituality, and injustice. See, Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, Manila, 1992, p.275f.

Indeed, in spite of the pronouncements of our national leadership that there is an improvement in our national economy, poverty is growing because of insufficient income, decreasing purchasing power of the peso and joblessness. Consider the following data as reported in January 2002: 367 workers were retrenched daily from January to October 2001 as establishments continue to downsize or shutdown due to worsening economic situation; 2,400 Filipinos every day left the country to work abroad from January to October 2001, an indicator of domestic joblessness; Only 6% of Filipino families control 60% of total agricultural land. Our foreign debt is 52.43 billion dollars (as of 3rd quarter of 2001); As of November 2001 our government's revenues reached 508.9 billion pesos but its expenditures came to 653.5 billion pesos, which means a deficit of about 144.6 billion pesos.

Around 30 million Filipinos are in acute poverty. As of November 2001 the daily cost of living was 430 pesos (and in NCR 519.00, in agricultural areas 376.00 and non-agricultural areas 396.00). There was a drastic fall in foreign investments. The reason for this was the low investors' confidence in our economy. 6 out of 10 Transnational Corporations in the Philippines thought that our country is not a good location for investment. This is why the government is pushing for reforms to make the country more competitive in cornering foreign investments. The Trade and Industry Department is proposing to allow foreign corporations with $500 million capital to enjoy tax holidays for 12 years. Favoring foreign capital slowly but surely displaced local investment. [1]

[1] See Arnold Padilla, "The Economy Under Arroyo: No Glory after EDSA," in, IBON Economic and Political Briefing, IBON Foundation, Inc., Manila, 15 January, 2002, pp. 3-20.

Roots of Conflict and Unpeace

The data presented above are alarming. More and more people will be disenfranchised economically. This predicament is quite similar to the situation in the 1990s: "Viewed from the perspective of the great majority of God's 'anawim,' life is full of 'kahirapan' (*kapit-os, karigatan*), of suffering. This state of affairs comes from having nothing or too little and results in an utter lack of stability and certainty in life. 'Walang kaayusan ang bayan,' the people say. Even for many of the very rich, life is empty, 'walang kabuluhan.' There is no order, no harmony in our society. Life is obstructed."[1]

The majority of the population – landless peasants, fisherfolks, and the labor force could not cope with the impact of liberalization and globalization policy. Poverty and alienation breeds social problems. It is said that graft and corruption is rampant at all levels of public institutions. Anti-social behaviour such as child abuse and paedophilia, rape, male and female prostitution, drug addiction and widespread gambling are prevalent. The search for "greener pasture" is on a large scale that traditional family values are rapidly breaking down. The trend to go abroad for economic reason means captivity and foreign bondage. "The impoverishment of the Philippines extends to its waters, land and other natural resources. Forests have been denuded, rivers and seas are over-exploited and dying because of human filth and industrial toxic waste. Agricultural produce are decreasing so that food and other commodities are purchased from other countries.[2]

Our history tells us that conflict and the absence of peace are quite intertwined with our economic and politi-

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[1] Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, Manila, 1992, p.276.

[2] Josephine S. Doñgail and Rey M. Natividad, *The National Council of Churches in the Philippines: Towards a Common Vision and Mission*, 1998, 7-8.

cal system. Recently an analyst said that our country is experiencing economic crisis aggravated by the global economic crisis and terrorism by the Abu Sayyaf, which added to the country's political instability.

> "The economic crisis was due to the bankruptcies experienced by the bulk of the agricultural and manufacturing sectors which had long been depressed by structural problems of foreign domination and backwardness. Globalization hastened this process as it displaced peasants and farmers, as well as small and medium entrepreneurs in favor of transnational corporations operating with the comprador landlords."[1]

What are the roots of the crisis situation we are in today? It is the *injustices that have* been entrenched in our economic, political and cultural systems. They are death-dealing rather than life giving and are at the root of our people's *kahirapan*.[2] There is the presence of a *dehumanizing economic structures*, which caters to the few rich to the neglect of the majority who are poor – the Phil-

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[1] Antonio A. Tujan, Jr., "Survival Economics and War," in, IBON Economic and Political Briefing, IBON Foundation, Inc., Manila, 15 January, 2002, p. 24. Many Philippine history books, though written in different perspectives would attest to foreign domination (with different names like colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, and Western intervention) as a major player in interpreting Philippine culture and history and in perpetuating an unjust economic and political system which resulted to violent conflicts (revolts and revolutions) and the absence of peace. See for instance Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 1960; Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* 1975; and Reynaldo Ileto, *Filipinos and their Revolution Event, Discourse, and Historiography*, 1998.

[2] From here on I am following the facts presented by and analysis of Roman Catholic and Protestant writers found in the following: Fr. Thomas J. Marti, et al, *A Letter of Concern from U.S. Missionaries in the Philippines to the Christian Churches of the United States*, Davao City, 1986; Secretariat, *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines,* Manila, 1992, p. 275f; Josephine S. Doñgail and Rey M. Natividad, *The National Council of Churches in the Philippines: Towards a Common Vision and Mission*, 1998, p5f. Though their analyses are not so current, I believe they are still valid.

ippines has one of the most unequal income distributions among middle income countries. This unjust economic situation is partly attributable to *inequitable ownership* of assets like land, *oligarchic power system*, *misconceived economic policies*, and *population growth*. The system of taxation is so designed that the poor has to pay more taxes. Agrarian reform is not well implemented. Payments for our local and foreign debt absorb around 40% of our national budget.

The worsening economic situation is closely reinforced by the political situation. Power is concentrated in the hands of a few (politicians, big businessmen, and the military). "There is a significant popular perception that external forces such as multinationals and political superpowers support this power concentration and tend to intervene to maintain the structure."[1] Political parties are seen as vehicles for personal ambition. "True, democratic tools such as elections are in place, but these continue to be dominated by traditional politicians representing the interests of the elite. The traditional 3Gs – guns, goons and gold – remain the arbiters of elections and governance."[2]

The ideological and cultural system presents different visions and programs ranging from the extreme left to the extreme right, using violent and non-violent means to either survive, cope or maintain their status. Armed struggle by the radical left, the radical right, the Muslims, and the government's counter-action have transformed conflicts on socio-economic, political and cultural conflicts into military conflicts.

However, in spite of the economic difficulties and political conflicts, there are good signs leading to a brighter future. There is a growing people's awareness and

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[1] *Acts and Decrees*…, p.279.

[2]Josephine S. Doñgail and Rey. M. Natividad, *the National Council of Churches*… , p. 6.

movements towards a better economic and political life. For instance, more people have witnessed or participated in the ouster of a corrupt president during the EDSA Dos rally (People Power II).

In the cultural field our negative values are still prevalent like *bahala na, kanya-kanya, utang na loob, pakiusap* and *palakasan*. Colonial mentality, strengthened by media advertisements, entertainment, and the educational system itself continues to grip the Filipino mind.

The positive aspects of such cultural values, however, can be utilized in resolving conflicts and in realizing peace (shalom). Drawing from our collective political, economic and cultural strength, we can confront those forces dehumanizing us so that we could become instruments or facilitators for the restoration of shalom where our people enjoy the blessings of justice, peace, abundant life, human dignity, and the integrity of creation.[1]

Reflection

In 1986, the American missioners in the Philippines have this in mind so that the Philippine people can experience self-reliance and meaningful life.

> "The political will of the Filipino people can prevail only if they are allowed to work out their own solutions to the problems of their country. Given the gravity of the Philippine situation, we believe that it is only through radical societal transformation in the direction of self-reliance, participative democracy and national sovereignty that the tremendous problems and injustices that exist can be solved. After centuries of colonial domination, Filipinos are striving to achieve just such a transformation of their society so that no one class

[1] Cf. Josephine S. Doñgail…, pp. 10-11.

will dominate and their economy can begin to serve all Filipinos rather than just a privileged elite and foreign interests.

The right of Filipinos to design a political system appropriate to their own needs should be respected. The emergence of a democratic and genuinely participative government representative of all Philippine sectors and classes would be hastened and revolutionary conflict averted, if our government would cease interventionist policies aimed at frustrating Philippine nationalist. Our government must come to accept the reality that nationalist feeling is now deeply-rooted among Filipinos, and that attempts to exclude nationalists can only prolong instability and civil strife."[1]

I believe our hope to change for the better can be achieved if there is an appropriate venue whereby we can comprehensively find solutions to the issues we are facing by using our own human and natural resources towards self-reliance and more participative way of life.[2]

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[1] Fr. Thomas J. Marti, et al., *Letter of Concern from U.S. Missioners in the Philippines to the Christian Churches of the United States*, 1986, p. 22.

[2] Pastor Jalando-on asserts that the Philippines is facing a crisis. He cited the following data to prove his claim: "During Erap's (Joseph Estrada) time, our foreign debt amounted to P1.5 trillion. When GMA (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) took over, the debt ballooned to P3 trillion in 2003 and doubled to P6 trillion as of June 2004. Napocor's share on the debt is P1.3 trillion. If you divide this to 85 million Filipinos, each of us has a foreign debt of about P70,000 pesos. Every year in our national budget, 40% is automatically set aside to pay the interest of our debt. This is called automatic debt servicing. Last year (2004), the Philippine government paid about P540 billion. To highlight this fact, the breakdown of our payment was 1.48 Billion Pesos a day, or 62 Million Pesos an hour, or 1.03 Million Pesos a minute. (See, Francis Neil G. Jalando-on's sermon, *EXCEL for God's Greatest Glory*, delivered on January 27, 2005 during the Christ Emphasis Week at the Rose Memorial Hall, Central Philippine University, Iloilo City, page 1) Rosario Bella Guzman asserts that the crisis continues. Thus the "people's suffering was most severe" in 2004. Guzman identifies 10 key unresolved issues that will likely dominate the situation in 2005,

namely: 1) Oil, 2) Power, 3) Water, 4) Fiscal Crisis, 5) Taxes, 6) Prices, 7) Unemployment, 8) Wages, 9) Poverty, and 10) Mining. According to Guzman the Arroyo government listens to the advice of Transnational Corporations (TNCs) and their partners and the U.S. government instead of hearing the people's demands. The Arroyo government places the "country at the altar of globalization with the Filipino people as the sacrificial lamb." Guzman, however, thinks that the Filipino people are fighting and they "have come to realize that it is the system – its rottenness and the rapacity of globalists, big business and landlords squeeze whatever is left of the rotten system – that needs to be changed. They have come to realize that the people's struggle is the wider arena where genuine changes can be achieved." (See, Rosario Bella Guzman, "Crisis Under Arroyo Rages People Bear The Brunt," In, *IBON Economic and Political Briefing*, 13 January 2005, pp. 1-24, quotations are from page 24). Mario Taguiwalo, citing the opinion surveys last November and December 2004 says that there is a growing pessimism among the people. High prices of commodities made life for ordinary people harder. There is also a growing trend among the more educated to migrate abroad. Taguiwalo also observed the worsening inequality among the people and the deterioration of the country's ecological balance due to polluted rivers and lakes. Hope is now a scarce commodity and the people's patience is wearing thin. Moreover, Taguiwalo says: "I do not see how the major initiatives and big ideas placed by this (Arroyo) administration on the nation's table thus far can significantly improve our long-standing fundamental socio-economic realities. Can the President lead the nation to finally make crucial steps to turn away from the more than 40 years of failure that came before her? Or will the masses lose heart in this elected government and turn elsewhere for their salvation soon?" The government has a different view. According to Rigoberto D. Tiglao, poverty had been reduced. "Despite all our problems and setbacks, the situation is not bleak. In 1985, 44.2 percent of households were below the poverty line. By 2000, according to the latest data available, this went down to 28.4 percent." (See, Philippine Inquirer, January 23, 2005, page A14)

Come, Let Us Create and Recreate Humans

A Paper About Genetic Engineering

Cris Amorsolo V. Sian

I. Introduction

I have watched a movie entitled 6th day. It tells the story of a man who came home just to find out that everything precious to him had been stolen, his wife, his daughter, his house, his car, and worst his identity. Somebody has violated a 6th day law, that is a human had been cloned. This man tried to win back his identity until he was entangled in a web of conspiracy that involves a laboratory where people are being cloned at a speed of two hours. Even a cell could be extracted from anybody's hair and be made into a perfect clone of the owner. Some clone became sports heroes, mercenaries, and the like but they were given a short life's span so that they will be under the power of the laboratory owner. The owner in turn amass large amount of money in this modus operandi. The man played by Schwarzeneger later found out that the man he thought was a clone was the real one and he is the clone.

The term "genetic engineering" encapsulates people's fear regarding future of science, since it is seen as having the potential to manipulate human nature. For some it is "playing God" in the most objectionable of

ways.[1] However the term is a multi-faceted subject and must be scrutinized holistically in order for us to render sound if not just moral and ethical judgment.

This paper will explain some of the major forms of "eugenics" and their respective ethical, moral, theological, and practical arguments on this issue. Since it is expected that I present my stand, I will at the latter part of this paper. It is however my prayer that as I supply you with the background of the subject, you will be able to make a stand of your own.

Although I know that as a nation we are technologically behind, the question begins to haunt many questioning minds. Whether I have admitted it or not, genetic engineering is an issue we need to wrestle with, in order for us to evolve to a higher level of enlightenment. I ask you to be open and serious as well in dealing with the issue.

II. Definition of Terms

Consider three cases:

Case 1: A couple contacted a genetic counselor. They had a daughter of 20, 2 sons in their teens, and twins aged 5. The twins were born afflicted with microcephaly, resulting in heads about two thirds of the normal size. Both were born blind, one was deaf, the other had a rare and difficult blood disorder, and both were prone to epileptic seizures. At age 5, continued to cry from 16 to 18 hours a day and weighed only 17 pounds. The parents, devout and conservative Catholics, indicated that their daughter was about to become engaged. If she married and had children, they asked, would this strike again?[2]

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[1] New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology (Leicester England: Intervarsity Press, 1995) p.403.

[2] Leroy Augenstein, *Come, Let Us Play God* (New York: Harper an Row, 1969), p.17.

Case 2: In 1961, an Italian biologist, Danielle Petrucci, fertilized a human egg in his laboratory and kept it alive in vitro (in the glass) for 29 days. Although at that time it had a noticeable heart beat, he let it die because it was monstrously defined. Another of his test-tube embryos lived for 59 days before a laboratory mistake caused its death. The Vatican sternly condemned Petrucci for his experiments, and he agreed to curtail this type of research.[1]

Case 3: A sperm bank is established where frozen sperm from outstanding people would be stocked. The sperm would be carefully catalogued for its genetic traits and will be retained for at least 20 years and until the donor is dead so that additional assessments of his qualities could be made. Prospective parents could then select the traits that they wanted in their offspring.[2]

The cases I have mentioned define the two general classifications of genetic engineering, Negative and Positive Eugenics. Eugenics as a science is concerned with the improvements of hereditary qualities. Negative Eugenics is the attempt to eliminate hereditary defects that have already occurred to individuals or to prevent those who carry defective genes from passing them on to their offspring. Positive Eugenics, however is concerned about improving the race through various forms of controlled reproduction.[3]

Genetic Counseling – As knowledge of genetic disease increases, more people need information about their risks and help in working out how to handle this information. Genetic counseling centers, usually hospital based, aim both to inform and to provide such help.[4]

Genetic Screening – This practice was revolutionized in the late 1970's by the advent of the recombinant DNA

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[1] James B. Nelson, *Human Medicine*(ethical perspective on new medical issues) (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1973), p.97.
[2] Ibid., p 98.
[3] Ibid., p. 100.
[4] New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology, p.402.

technologies, that in turn have led to the development of DNA probes for detecting large numbers of human genetic variants and genes with known functions.[1]

In the genetic screening programs the focus shifts from the individual couple to the testing of whole groups of persons to determine carriers or actual presence of dentic disease. e.g. Screenings have detected sickle-cell trait and sickle-cell anemia among blacks, Tay-Sachs disease among Jewish groups, and phenylketo nuria (PKU) in infants.[2]

Somatic Cell Gene Therapy – It was first tested in humans in 1989. It involves the correction of gene defects in patients' own cells, the cell in question being somatic cells (i.e. ordinary body cells). The strategy involves gene replacement, gene correction or gene augmentation, the genes being introduced via retroviral vectors. The aim of this form of gene therapy is to modify a particular cell population, and so rectify a particular disease in a particular disease (similar to organ transplantation).[3]

Germ Line Gene Therapy / Genetic and Fetal Therapy – This involves inserting the gene into the germ line (sperm, eggs and embryos), so that when modified individual reproduces, all offspring will have the inserted gene instead of the original defective one.

Germinal Choice – Artificial Insemination for Genetic Improvement. It involves the insertion of a gene in attempt to alter a particular trait of an individual. One example is the case no. 3 that I have given you.

Cloning: Carbon Copy People. "Clone" comes from the Greek word "cutting" and refers to a method of asexual reproduction. Sexual reproduction, whether in the forest, bed, or laboratory, requires the cooperation of both female and male, and the resulting offspring is genetically

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[1] Ibid., p.404.
[2] J. Nelson, p 105.
[3] New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology, p.404.

different from either parent. Asexual reproduction requires only one parent and produces a genetically-identical offspring[1]. Biologist Leon R. Kass describes the process:

> "The procedure is conceptually simple. The nucleus of a mature but unfertilized egg is removed (by microsurgery or by irradiation) and replaced by a nucleus obtained from a specialized somatic cell of an adult organism (e.g. , an intestinal cell or a skin cell). For reasons which are not yet understood, the egg with its transplanted nucleus develops as if it had been fertilized and, barring complications, may give vise to a normal adult organism."[2]

Artificial Inovulation and In Vitro Fertilization – It is the artificial insertion of an egg into a woman's uterus or fallopian tubes. Technically it will be possible within the next few years to remove a fertilized egg from one woman's body and to transplant it into a foster mother who could then carry the baby to term.[3]

AID (Artificial Insemination by Donor) – The woman is sterile, she receives a ripe egg from an anonymous donor. The egg is implanted in one of her fallopian tubes, and there it is fertilized by her husband through normal intercourse. Conception in this case is done through a normal coitus.

AIH (Artificial Insemination by Husband) – In this instance, the woman produces perfectly good eggs, but she has malformed oriducts and the sperm cannot reach them. The proposed solution is to remove several eggs from the ovaries by minor surgery, fertilize them in the laboratory with the husband's sperm, grow the fertilized in

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[1] J. Nelson, p.111.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., p. 113.

a day or two, and implant one of them in the woman's uterus for normal development there.

III. Ethical and Moral Arguments

A. On Negative Eugenics

The proponents of negative Eugenics contend that due to the practice of genetic counseling and genetic screening, at least a thousand possible genetic defects are known. Prior to the late 1960's, most couples coming to the counselor have already produce one genetically defective child and wanted to know the likelihood of having another. Some came because of their ages or because of genetic diseases in their family histories. The genetic counselor then takes the detailed medical history of the family, and, after applying known genetic principles, quoting a risk figure to the couple.[1] Based on the result, the couple could then decide the most appropriate course of action. The process is very simple, it is called amniocentesis, a technique of withdrawing amniotic fluid which contains sex chromosomes of the fetal cells.

Almost seventy (70) disorders, most of them serious ones, can be detected with great accuracy through amniocentesis.

Some genetic counselors contend that there are no moral or ethical issues involved in what they are doing. However, the other camp maintains that even without the practice of gene augmentation and manipulation, just the practice of genetic screening and counseling involves lots of moral and ethical considerations.

One issue involves the counselor's responsibility to deal with the effects of genetic counseling upon the couple. Too often, the genetic diagnostic process is accompanied by considerable anxiety, marital stress and sexual maladjustments[2]. If the genetic counselor restricts his

[1] Ibid., p. 100.
[2] Ibid, p. 101.

function as that of the information provider alone and bracket these emotional and interpersonal factors as being beyond his/her concern is somebody who treats his/her counselee as medical cases more than as human persons.

The second consideration is the issue of privacy that affects the patient in a genetic program. Who owns the information? Is it the possession of the couple alone or does it need to be furnished to family members? To a family doctor? To an insurance company? To an employer? Or to a government agency?

A number of moral issue cluster around the central question of genetic counseling: is its aim strictly therapeutic (for the immediate family) or is its aim also positively eugenic (concerned about the wider society)?

> "The question, like that of human experimentation, frequently finds expression in the ethics of the right in tension with the ethics of the good, the ethics of known present obligations versus possible future benefits."[1] At least one country, Denmark, has decided that in such cases society's rights transcend those of the individual: marriage license are refused to person carrying certain genetic defects until one of the couple has been sterilized.[2]

Ethicists who are against genetic counseling and screening represented Reed and Lappe mounts two major arguments. First, it is scientifically erroneous to think that even if all of the genetic counseling presently going on were to proceed with positively eugenic purpose any appreciable effect on the gene pool would take place. Spontaneous mutation and admixture continually reintroduce bad genes into the breeding population, and the scattered "individual sifters" (counselors) can hardly affect this situation. Secondly, the physician's price responsibility is always to the welfare of the individual patients.

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[1] Ibid, p. 102.
[2] Ibid, p. 103.

The couple has a right to know that the counselor has their welfare uppermost in his/her mind, that their immediate interests will not be sacrificed for some long-term social interests. Upon such trust the medical profession crucially depends.[1] In other words, even with the most zealous measures, we could not eliminate genetic diseases from our society. The regular rate of genetic mutations would see to that.

Another problem should not be left out. For example, if the disease which was discovered has no effective cure available, what then? Anxiety may well be created without the offer of any positive reassurance. The other argument is, early knowledge of the disease for some families might give them time to adjust emotionally to the problem so that the diseased person might be treated with helpful human support rather than dehumanizing pity. Second, by detecting persons who are carrier of the disease, they can be assisted in making informed choices about having children.[2]

The strongest argument of those who are skeptical to gene therapy is the fact that "scientists are less optimistic that this can be done safely."[3] Thomas Murray, hasting director affirms that "if you make a change in one area, it may cause very subtle changes in other areas."[4] UCLA neurobiologist Jeremy Riffkin said: "Everything comes at a price, very often when there is a genetic change, when we improve or modify something, something else gets hit by it, so it's never a clean thing…we maybe on the road to programming our own extinction."[5]

While it is true that genetic and fetal gene therapy can detect and remove or augment cell that are potential carrier of cancer, hemophilia and diabetes or other forms of defects, gene therapy remains to be complex and the

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[1] Ibid, p. 102.
[2] Ibid, p. 105.
[3] Ibid., p. 108.
[4] Time Magazine, September 13, 1999 issue, p. 20.
[5] Ibid.

consequences can be incredibly serious. Even if the process will be flawless, which definitely is not, no one can give a guarantee that the "future offspring of the patient will not suffer genetic repercussions."[1]

But even if the treatment were to cure the diabetes problem, it is possible that the offspring of those treated might be afflicted with schizophrenia. Thus, even before the trouble was suspected, a whole generation of persons would have been produced with extensive genetic changes.

> "Doubtless, the manipulation of human genes for therapeutic purposes will be undertaken. In fact, in one case this has been attempted already. However, in the present state of the art moral wisdom lies with those who insist upon a moratorium on any further human use until such time as the risks are much more fully known and controlled."[2]

B. On Positive Eugenics

Paul Kurtz, the author of "Humanist Manifesto II" and "The Forbidden Fruit" wrote:

> "We, not God, are responsible for our destiny. Accordingly we must create our own ethical universes. We should seek to transform a blind and conscious morality into a rationally based one, retaining the best wisdom of the past devising new ethical principles and judging them by their consequences and testing them in the context of lived experience."[3]

Secular humanists express their support on abortion, Euthanasia, suicide and Eugenics among others. They speak glowingly about technology and emphatically deny that there is any God in control, "No deity will save us; we must save ourselves."[4] They affirm that "moral values de-

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[1] J. Nelson, p. 108.
[2] Ibid., p. 109.
[3] Norman Geisler, *Christian Ethics* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1989),p. 174.
[4] Ibid.

rive their source from human experience …. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanctions."[1] All secular humanists believe in biological evolution. In fact many believed that because humans have a duty to guide the future evolution of the race. "For some the hope goes beyond a bionic man to genetically engineered humans …gene splicing holds the promise of creating and patenting new animals. Sperm banks, artificial insemination and surrogate mothers now make it possible to breed superior human beings. The ultimate goal is a human being totally engineered to specification, the creation of a superior breed.[2]

There is no longer a question on whether they ought to be done. But do we really need to create a superior breed of human beings? Is it scientifically viable?

The late Nobel laureate Dr. Herman J. Miller expressed his deep concern about the deterioration of the gene pool coupled with increasing need for more persons of intelligence and cooperation in our time. He envisioned a program of germinal choice. Sperm banks could be stocked with frozen sperm from outstanding men – with the likes of Leonardo, Descartes, Lincoln, Pasteur and Einstein.[3] Ethicists and Scientists both shared Muller's concern for the quality of future life and also raised host of others. First, unknown but injurious recessive genes might become widespread throughout the population; present day children of geniuses do not seem to validate the idea; temperamental compatibility and the psychological adjustments of the father could be acute; and the mutation rate of frozen semen is still unknown…. It is seriously debated whether the types of character traits which Muller wished to foster are all that inheritable.[4] James F. Crow contends that "many of the traits of greatest im-

[1] Ibid.
[2] Ibid.
[3] J. Nelson, p. 110.
[4] Ibid., p. 109.

portance have a low hereditability." J. Scott maintains that experimented evidences show "the lack of congruence between genes and complex behavior characters. Hudson Hoagland adds his voice by saying, "We know too little about the human genotype to feel confidence in our ability to do anything to modify it in favor of desirable traits."[1] There is now a question of scientific viability in the vision of the secular humanists.

Granting that their vision is scientifically viable, they still have to answer question of moral and social viability. Questions like: "Do we have the wisdom to determine what qualities are best for future human generations?" or "Are we prepared to use it as a general practice when couples have no natural barrier for prevention – thus radically sundering baby-making from the act of love-making? And what of the moral questions surrounding social policy?

Theodosious Dobzhansky said:

> "Are we to have, in place of Plato's philospher-king a geneticist-king? And who will be president of the National Sperm Bank? What checks and balances are to be imposed on the genetic legislature and the genetic executive powers?" To us the words of Marcus Aurelius: "Who will guard the guardians?" Paul Ramsey's suggestion is that it must be out rightly rejected "because of its massive assaults upon human freedom and its grave violation of the respect due to men and women now alive and to human parenthood as such."[2]

The proponents of cloning would argue that it offers a more reliable way than sperm banks for genetic improvement, for superior persons could be exactly duplicated. Body-cell banks could replace sperm banks, and genetic copies of dead individuals could be made from

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[1] Ibid. p. 110.

[2] Paul Ramsey, *Fabricated Man* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970) p. 5.

their frozen cells. Sets of genetically-identical persons could be produced for special tasks which require intense communication and certain physical characteristics such as astronauts, soldiers, and underwater explorers. Parents may choose the genotype of their prospective child: someone famous, a departed loved one, or even one of the parents themselves. And of course, the sex of the child could be chosen. The generational gap could be overcome, at least between those persons who were genetically identical. And finally, organ transplants between cloned pairs would create no problem of tissue rejection. Such are the arguments.[1]

Opponents of cloning raise several morally significant scientific issues. Natural sexual reproduction ensures the genetic adaptability of persons to changing environments, and it is not at all clear that cloned persons would be comparably adaptable. Further, if cloned persons should suddenly return to reproduction with members of the opposite sex, an accumulation of deleterious recessive genes and mutation might be dumped into the genetic pool. Another objection, what about the mishaps and mistakes created in the cloning process?

Would the rejection of sexual reproduction in cloning threaten the whole meaning of human parenthood and add more threat to that crucial personalizing institution, the family? Would the cloned person's dignity and worth be threatened by having been deliberately denied a unique genotype? And would there be a dehumanizing effect upon the scientist himself, inasmuch as in the increase of his mastery over human genesis he is subverting the sense of mystery and came in the face of human creation?[2] These are the arguments of Kass and Ramsey. But to Sederberg and Fletcher these questions seem rhetorical. To the latter men the real question is whether

[1] J. Nelson, p. 112.
[2] Ibid., p. 112.

or not cloning contributes to the fulfillment of human need, the rest is relative.[1]

What about InVitro fertilization or to use the most common term “test tube babies”? An alternative applicable to perfectly healthy woman who does not want to interrupt her career with pregnancy’s inconveniences, or women who want to bear children but fear pregnancy, or women who are medically unable to experience pregnancy either because of health, might be seriously endangered, or because she lacks a uterus though is otherwise reproductively normal. In such a case, the egg would be fertilized by the woman and her husband through normal intercourse and then transplanted to a voluntary host mother who would carry the fetus to term, bear the child, and hand it back to the original couple.

But what are the risks involved? Any transplant handling of the fertilized egg runs the risk of chromosomal damage or the embryo. What if the host mother (whether mercenary or unpaid volunteer) becomes psychologically attached to the baby? What if the genetic mother who has good intentions at the start of the procedure later finds out that she is psychologically incapable of accepting the child she did not bear? How would such procedure alter the whole fabric of parent-child relationship? What is the child’s response to the discovery of his/her extraordinary origins?[2]

After presenting some of the arguments from both sides, we are still left with so many questions that none of us can answer objectively. Genetic manipulation can either be good or evil. The opponents of genetic engineering would say that even though bio-medical advancements would be good for society, still, there are many reasons why we should say “no” to it. One of them is the argument that it violates certain intrinsic human value. Its proponent however would say that genetic policies must

[1] Ibid., p. 113.
[2] Ibid., p. 115.

always be judged by the social consequences they produce. Fletcher for that matter would put his vote on the latter argument. What then?

IV. Theological Reflection

Genetic engineering is not a remote possibility; it is here and will always be here. It is now a subject of heated arguments between medical practitioners, ethicists, and theologians. These thinkers know that it is no longer a question of whether they ought to be done, and if they are done to what extent.

In the course of my study, I have come across two prominent positions, that of the secular humanist and the believers of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The former contends that God is not sovereign over life, man is. Human beings are the sole judge of their destiny. They believe that because human beings have reached the technological heights they have a duty to guide the future evolution of the race. Human actions need not be founded on theological and moral standards that often sound rhetorical, but many times not practical. The latter however, points to the nature of man as the springboard of their arguments. James Gustafson said, "There is both grandeur about human nature: we are capable of quite selfish moral wisdom, and we are prone to short-sighted and distorted, self-willed judgments. There is room then for both optimism and pessimism about your genetic future."[1] For the Judeo-Christian adherents, man has no grasp over life as what the humanist would say, for regardless of their seemingly endless conquest of science and technology, there are still things that are beyond their comprehension. God is the creator of life (Gen.1:21,27), and he alone sustains it (Acts 17:28), God has the power over it (Job 1:21, Deut. 32:39). Contrary to the secular

[1] James Gustafson, *Basic Ethical issues in the Bio-medical Field* Vol.LIII (Summer 1970) p. 153.

humanists point of view that man is the master of his destiny, Judeo-Christian adherents believe that God is. In spite of our scientific advancement, we have not created life. Humans have not just produced “some biologically interesting chemicals (e.g. amino acids), spliced and crossed some existing forms of Life. But humans have not created from scratch their own new living things, to say nothing of a full-pledged human being”.

We cannot control death, there are diseases we cannot comprehend, much more prevent and cure. Human limitations then prompt us to weigh everything with outmost care. If we can do it, it does not mean that we should do it.

Secular humanists seem so confident that we are on our way in creating a superior race through eugenics, and to the extreme. With religious fervor see themselves as “messiah” who will bring about genetics awakening. The other camps are totally skeptical if not indifferent to eugenics. Conservative ones would immediately dismiss it as a “wolf in sheep’s’ clothing”, or something that is described in the proverbial maxim as “the way which seem good to men but to the end thereof is destruction.”

But as I sit beside the hospital bed of my hemophiliac friend as he was undergoing blood transfusion, as I stare at his very pale face and frail body, and as I ponder upon the fact that hemophilia is an incurable disease, I cannot help but feel the deep sorrow for my friend who will go through this painful order the rest of his life. I have talked with his doctor who told me that hemophilia is a genetically-caused disease. His mother might be the carrier of the defective genes which might have been transmitted by her ancestors many generations back which she has passed to her offspring as well. The female offspring are potential carriers and most likely 50% of all the male offspring will manifest the disease. The process of passing the defective genes will go on and on unless of course aborted by no other than germ line gene therapy which is one of the many facets of genetic engineering. In

spite of what they say about genetic engineering, I ask the question of whether there is a divine and providential process guiding the genetic future. When I ask the question I exclude the idea that genetic engineering is now being used in food production which they say is one of the solutions to famine and poverty caused by overpopulation. Genetic engineering will ensure that the produce will not only be bountiful but of superior quality as well. I also exclude the idea that it is used in animals for various practical reasons. For example, in the importation of superior breed sheep, cows, horses and goats, genetic engineering is being used. To minimize expenses and to ensure ease in handling the delivery, the embryos of these animals are transferred to the fallopian tube of a rabbit. Upon arrival to their respective destination, there is a simple operation of removing the embryo and transferring it to a surrogate mother which will carry it to term. My reflection is only centered to human application of genetic engineering.

Is it not divine will that my friend's defective genes that carry a deadly disease will no longer be passed to his offspring? Does God oppose the idea that many deadly and agonizing diseases among fetuses will be detected through genetic screening and corrected through genetic alteration? Is it not within the orbit of His divine project of "wholeness" or salvation for that matter? Does God hate the idea that couples who can not bear children because of some factors, a heart problem for instance, are now given the chance to have children through AID or AIH? Some ethicists lean too hard on one side or on the other. Paul Ramsey for instance would maintain that regardless of the good effects of these bio-medical innovations they must be rejected because they break some intrinsic value. Joseph Fletcher on the one hand, would push that the matter be judged in the light of the social consequences they produce. We need to hear both voices but I believe that both of them even if joined together, are not sufficient. There are times when our focus is only

on the individual rights and values that we failed to see the changing and pressing needs of the human community. “There is relativity and a historicity about our notions of human rights that makes them less-than absolute.”[1]

What then is my stand on the issue of genetic engineering? My conviction is to allow its practice or application on human beings. But to what extent should we allow its practice? Some would say that there is no limit to the pursuit of their scientific prowess, but I believe that we are not fated to do everything genetically even though we have the power and the capacity to do it. Some would ask questions like: “What is human limitation? How do we know that humans have already achieved their limitations? If humans can still do it, it means that they have not yet achieved their limits. “[2] Freedom for scientific research is an important value, but it is not absolute. If the aim of genetic engineering is to correct and not to create life as in the case of negative eugenics, I believe it is consistent with the aim of Christianity which is wholeness. There is no biblical imperative that says that we can not work to correct these imperfections. In fact, the Bible recommends medicine (I Tim. 5:23) and prayer for healing (James 5:14,15). “Jesus manifested his approval of a medically corrective ministry by spending much of his time healing the sick”. He gave his apostles the ability to heal the sick (Matt. 10;8). There is a significant difference between correcting imperfect humans and creating perfect ones of our own. Since the aim of negative eugenics is the alleviation of the disease, it does not deviate from the Christian goal. However, in its practice, scientists should see to it that side effects should be studied thoroughly so as not to worsen the case. The fact that they can do it does not mean that they should do it; it should

[1] Ibid., p.153

[2] Questions and comment raised by F.Neil G. Jalando-on during class discussion.

be scrutinized and weighed from all angles so that the desired goals are achieved. Goals, which are for the betterment of the individual. In this business sometimes individuals are treated like guinea pigs to be studied and experimented upon, this is not the aim of medicine.

In the case of positive eugenics which aims for the improvement of human race, I would like to raise some important questions: do we really have a duty to create superior human beings, humans made to specification? Do we really have the power to create perfect humans? And if we have, do we have the moral muscle to resist the temptation to use this power to manipulate God's creation, to play God? Do we have the power to undo the possible damage it could create? What side-effects should we tolerate? Harvard historian Donald Fleming notes that: "the attitude of many biomedical scientists is condescending toward religion, and yet they share an attitude towards their own work and destiny which is clearly religious in character." They believe that the biological revolution will save humankind. "They are men of hope and vision. They are also men who come perilously close to the view that in their particular hopes and visions is the path of human salvation."[1] The problem still lies in the ambivalent human nature. Human beings are capable of adhering to noble ideals, and as well to venal dispositions. From a Christian standpoint genetic engineering which aims at the creation and improvement of the human race is playing God and not serving God. It is violating the fundamental principle that we are only custodians of human life and not its creators. "It is the ultimate in human presumption and pride, man's technological tower of Babel (Gen.11:1-2)."[2] Sometimes human beings have

[1] J. Nelson, p. 121.

[2] N. Geisler, p. 190.

To be honest, I am giving artificial inovulation and in vitro fertilization, being part of positive eugenics, a benefit of the doubt. In the case of AIH for instance, both eggs and sperms belong to the wife and husband and wife respectively, so the moral impediment is lesser. In

this tendency to think that there is no limit to what they can do. Human history would however, tell us that humans are capable of creating some things that pose as threat to human existence. And when the adverse effect of what has been done becomes a clear and present danger, he finds out that he is unable to undo its complications. Take for instance, the discovery of atomic energy, its main purpose was for the good of humanity but humans used it as element of destruction, genocidal weapon, and an agent of domination. It is used to instill fear among peoples and races. In spite of the advancement in science and technology, man is still unable to stop death and the spread and prevention of deadly diseases like AIDS and cancer. There are still human limitations in the understanding of life, which restrains him from doing anything that seems pleasing in his sight. There are still mysteries that can not be fathomed by human understanding, and these mysteries make us human, and in this truth is the foundation of my conviction that only God is sovereign over life. Our human knowledge must be used to serve God and not to play God. It is hard to be absolute in your stand in this issue, especially with its ambivalent nature and multi-faceted ethical and theological implications, but with Nelson, I also believe that a:

> "Hopeful Christian vision of what makes human life truly human will encourage those genetic efforts which are now relieving much suffering and contributing to human wholeness. On the other hand, a wise Christian realism will challenge the biological engineers who are not content with humankind, but are

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AID, although the egg does not belong to the wife, but the fertilization is done by the husband and wife through normal coitus. So the argument that adultery has been committed has a weak ground. As long as they are done not for human convenience but to help couples fulfill procreation. However in cases where couples have no problem in procreation, I oppose their implementation.

> ambitiously intent upon improving the race. Without ingratitude to the brilliance of their genetic achievements, some of us believe that salvation lies beyond any human revolution and that human movement which claims ultimacy for its own vision breeds tragedy. Such is the posture of hopeful realism."[1]

I close by saying that God's will is not devoid of common sense and justice, and I can not help but raise the broader issue of fairness. Will such enhancement be available to all or only for those who can afford it? In the case of cloning, for instance, many parents would want it. Who would not want a hazel-eyed blondie with superior I.Q and sports prowess, towering height, not to mention good looks? But who will have access to it? Will it not create a new form of discrimination? How would it affect our decision to marry – those with altered genes or without? What sort of parent would I be if I have not mortgaged the house in order to have a cloned child? Would my child accuse me because I did not make him/her as beautiful and smart as the others? Granting for the sake of argument that it is accessible to all, having a human cloned is just as cheap as removing a wart, would you still want it? Ethicist Elizabeth Bounds of Emory University's Candler School of Theology echoes my fears when she said:

> "I find this frightening. We run the risk of sharing a much more homogenous community around certain dominant values, a far more engineered community…at the moment nature orchestrates our diversity. But human nature resists leaving so much to chance if we have a choice. Maybe this issue would help us to make some room for reflection on the question like when better is not necessarily good."

[1] J. Nelson, p. 122.

Information Technology: In the Service of God's People. Really?

Francis Neil G. Jalando-on

I. Introduction

It is wise for a student of Information Technology to learn from the legacy of Enlightenment. This Enlightenment period spawned the era of modernization, which led to global exploration, and eventually caused the Information Revolution. In a sense, the Age of Enlightenment gave birth to Information Technology (IT).

This historical trace will focus on the kind of outlook of the Age of Enlightenment and Rationalism. One important aspect was the drive of this era for scientific discoveries that showed the way for exploration of the non-European world. I will also expose how the concept of Enlightenment gave birth to colonialism. It is my conviction that colonialism is a close kin to capitalism that in turn encouraged technological progress. Since colonialism is seen as a form of exploitation in the eyes of the Filipino, I will later on connect on how it begun the concept of free trade, which is not very far from the kind of e-commerce that the IT culture is cultivating.

One aspect of the Enlightenment era that should not be overlooked is on how it ended isolation, since the proponents of this age relentlessly tried to discover new worlds apart from theirs. This is one of the fundamental

concepts that IT is trying to inculcate in the minds of the people - that no one could be out of reach and we all belong to one global village. One keyword of the Enlightenment is *progress*. The kind of progress that I will deal with here is that which means underdevelopment in the "discovered" country which has a great resemblance in what the IT culture is brewing, that of dependence from the West when it comes to hardwares and softwares.

Another desire of the Enlightenment and that of Capitalism is expansionism. We are made to believe by the IT culture that we are inside a borderless world. That we must surrender our boundaries, after all, we belong to one global village. One characteristic of capitalism that can be seen in the IT culture is that we are being encouraged to have a 'buy stateside' mentality. This habit of consumption is being propagated in the internet, televisions, and other telecommunications.

An additional impact by Capitalism that can also be seen in the IT culture, which is also as damaging as the others, is the medium of language used. Making English as the standard medium of instruction in education and in the IT world makes the Capitalist's objective much easier. Language is being made a tool for rapid economic penetration. And when we talk about the economy, it is best to note that the concept of Capitalism, the mother of modernization, is to make our economy an "export oriented, import dependent" type of economy. It is interesting to see why the major actors of IT are investing much in Third World countries like ours. We are made to believe that we are part of the major players in the world of IT but the underlying factor here is the fact that they can find cheap labor and then market it for a much higher profit. Another factor that must be noted is on how we rely heavily to the Operating Systems that can make our computers and other gadgets run. While it is true that we are making softwares, it is equally true that these softwares cannot run by themselves without the Operating Systems that are in the hands of the capitalists.

Our discussion will get more interesting when we come to the part of another IT culture that is Globalization. Globalization is just but a new name for Imperialism. We will see how our economy is on the mercy of the giants that are called the G7, OPEC, World Bank, IMF and WTO. They are in the guise of helping develop our country. Progress is still their main word in trying to entice us, but what that really means is progress on their side and regress on our side. Part of the discussion of the IT culture is also on why the West is always trying to intervene in the national affairs of other countries, and why they are projecting the image that they are the police of the world. This for me is just protecting their own vested interests in the backyards of other people.

The issue that I am trying to bring about in the IT culture is the issue that IT is just but a new tool for subjugation and exploitation. The old colonial pattern is still there, but it is very subtle that our church has not responded to it; for she is slowly being gobbled up by the system she is vowed to fight. The IT culture is on the verge of being very well placed that it seems we cannot get out from it. The only alternative solution that the Filipino people have is to negotiate our place in that global village, and become capitalists ourselves, thus becoming another monster eating up others. The result of that fantasy is a tilt in the current balance, and those who are above the seesaw will try to find means to oppose it. What is left for us to consider is how to surf the wave of IT smoothly and try our best to replace the system of relational structure from that of exploitation to that of interdependence. The latter part of this paper is a theological reflection of our situation in this new phenomenon that gives the impression of having endless possibilities, but at the same time great disadvantages to those who do not know how to deal with it. I will also pitch in my first hand experience as a Webmaster of CPU. A possible stand of the church will also be suggested as a response to either a new demon or a new messiah.

1. Age of Rationalism and Enlightenment

During the 15th - 18th century a new spirit conquered Europe. This new wave of thinking is called the Age of Enlightenment, since the writers of this period were convinced that they were coming out from centuries of darkness and ignorance into a new age enlightened by reason and science.

> "Modern society owes much to the Enlightenment. It was an indispensable step in the evolution of a progressive human outlook. As the last of the great movements in Western thought, it overcame the medieval forms of life and thought which still gripped humanity and made possible the development of modern society."[1]

The motto of this period as Immanuel Kant phrased it was, "dare to know." The fundamental and widely held conviction of this period was the unshakable faith in the power of human reason. One should not also forget that during this age came the birth of the Gutenberg press. The printing machine that Gutenberg invented helped shape this era since it was through this invention that volumes of printed materials were distributed including the Bible. It is also during this era that the Reformation begun in the history of the Christian church.

Rene Descartes deemed to be the founder of rationalism said, "I think therefore I am." His statement made a great impact to man who evolved to what is called the modern man. This modern man has a frame of thought that had produced seven cardinal convictions. According to David Bosch these convictions are: First, its emphasis on *reason* suggested that the human mind is the point of departure for all knowing. Second, it divided all of reality into thinking subjects and *objects* that could be analyzed

[1] A. Franzen and J. Dolan, *A History of the Church* (Herder: Palm Publishers, 1965), p. 349.

and exploited. Third, it dropped all reference to purpose and viewed every process only in terms of cause and effect. Fourth, it put a high premium on *progress*, on *expansion*, *advance* and *modernization*. Fifth, it proceeded from the assumption that all true knowledge was factual, *value free* and neutral. Sixth, it proceeded from the assumption that *all problems were in principle solvable*. And last, it regarded people as *emancipated, autonomous individuals*, no longer under the tutelage of others.[1]

The modern man believed that he could measure anything, value anything and know everything. This drove him to explore the world apart from his world, which at that time was the European world. The exploration that he undertook made him realize that he will not only try to discover things unknown to him but command and conquer those that he can find. This was not only a frame of thought but evolved into an attitude, a hunger to explore and know everything that finally led to colonialism.

2. Colonialism/Capitalism/Imperialism/Globalization

With colonialism came capitalism. According to Vladimir Lenin, the motivation of having colonies is to be attributed in the dynamics of capitalism. The European world had a need for raw materials and outlets for its surplus capital. Capitalism spread in all areas of the colonized world and remained unchallenged as the dominant economic and social system. It also "spurred technological progress which revolutionized navigation thus making possible the era of discoveries"[2] and expansion of new territories.

I will now go to the issues I cited during my introduction. Let me first start with the principle of free trade. Free

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[1] D. Bosch, *Believing in the Future*, (Valley Forge: Trinity Press Int'l., 1995), p. 5.

[2] R. Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited*, (Quezon City: Tala Publishing, 1975), p. 14.

Trade means “the interchange of commodities across political frontiers without restrictions such as tariffs, quotas, or exchange controls.”[1] This is a good concept but during the said Age of Enlightenment the emergence of capitalist nations brought about a new form of policy that is called mercantilism. Supporters of this policy were very nationalistic and their sole motive was to increase the strength of their nation through acquiring wealth from their colonies. Free trade meant the unlimited entry of the colonizers’ goods into their colonies and the restricted entry of the colonies’ products to their colonizers. The connection of this to the IT culture is the fact that the trade policies of the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trades and the World Trade Organization are very unfair, since it requires Third World countries to import goods to satisfy the quotas which in turn spell disaster to the local market. Proponents of this free trade are the European Union, which adopts a single market program and the Euro currency; the North American Free Trade Agreement of the US, Canada and Mexico; and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation in which, not surprisingly, US is still a part of. The primary aim is to open up the economies of many nations thus resulting to less power from national governments, and the real power is being transferred to the global market which can control economic events and dictate economic circumstances. The major players of IT are very protective of their own and by doing so they still hold the upper hand on what type of IT hardwares and softwares should be made. This is the main motive of e-commerce, to flood the market with electronic gadgets with their own specifications thus resulting to loyal followers, who will be waiting for the next generation of their gadgets.

The next issue is about the end of isolation and the onslaught of expansionism. True to their frame of mind as enlightened men, the European world became adventur-

[1] “Free Trade,” *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* 2000.

ers seeking the “unknown” world. They began to expand their territories and explore new possibilities in their new-found colonies. The colonies were made to believe that they were “discovered” by the colonizers and we must show them our gratitude by surrendering our lands to become an extension of their country.[1] With exploration came the inculcating of a new set of cultures and traditions. The big issue in this new global culture is the fact that we have no borders left. National boundaries are fast becoming invisible. We are being bombarded by ideas that we belong to one global community and that no one should remain isolated. If we may ask: “If we really belong to one global village then who is the chieftain governing our village connected with wires and satellites?” The quick answer would be that the chieftains are of course the major proponents of IT, which are Europe and the U.S. The Third World can be characterized as a group of people living in a small *nipa* hut being bullied by another group of people living in a much bigger concrete hut. We are surrendering our national identity by becoming citizens of IT in which we have a say but definitely not the last say.

With the influence of the buzzword “think globally,” we now come to the promised interesting part of our discussion, globalization. At the outset, I mentioned that globalization is just a new name for imperialism. Our discussions about free trade, colonialism and capitalism are all part of this bigger picture. Imperialism is defined as “the practice by which powerful nations or peoples seek to extend and maintain control or influence over weaker nations or peoples.”[2] After the World War II, when formal empires were dissolved, came another modern economic imperialism. US and Europe continued to this day the ex-

[1] For example, Philippine history books tell us that March 17, 1521 is the date when the Philippines was “discovered” by Ferdinand Magellan.

[2] "Imperialism," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* 2000.

ercise of neocolonialism, the exercise of sovereignty without the formality of colonial rule, through the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. This modern day imperialism is called globalization. They still have the same motives, which are economic, political and ideological. Economic motive was already discussed earlier in the area of capitalism, and the same also with political motive in connection with colonialism. The ideological motive can be described as religious in nature because the Whites believe that it is their "manifest destiny" or the "White man's burden" to civilize the "backward people" or to do "missionary activities."

Bishop Camba, Dean of the School of Divinity, Silliman University, has this to say about our hope and struggle to free ourselves from foreign domination, "There is a new religion in our midst now. Its name is Globalization. The gods of this religion are the members of the G7. Their prophets are the economists and their temples are the mega malls."[1] "Globalization is a strategy of international capital to create more markets for itself and to restructure the relationships of production,"[2] said Phambili ka Ntloko of the Church of God and Saints in Christ, South Africa, whose ministry is with industrial workers. Pastor Acosta defined it this way, "Globalization is a condition where most countries of the world are made to align themselves with the economic and political systems of the powerful nations of the world."[3]

The relationship of IT and globalization is said best by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. He said and at the same time warned,

> "The new communications technologies are the driving force of globalization. They are bringing people

[1] NCCP Lecture, Dumaguete City, October 2000.
[2] World Council of Churches, in, http://www.wcc-coe.org.
[3] R. Acosta, "Christian Identity and Global Awareness," in, N. Bunda, ed., *A Moving Faith*, (Iloilo City: College of Theology, 2000), p. 261.

> together and giving decision-makers unprecedented new tools for development. At the same time however, there is a real danger that the world's poor will be excluded from the emerging knowledge-based global economy."[1]

In a knowledge-based global economy, information is power. This statement goes without saying that he who has the information has the power. The question for us is: who are these people who have the large bulk of information that can possibly influence the outcome of world events? Are they the transnational companies, which in their hands lay the vast amount of intelligence gathered by agencies like the British MI 5 or the US CIA? These people may not only influence the outcome of events, but most probably will have complete control on whatever outcome they help influenced in the first place.

It must be noted that imperialism is a broader term than colonialism. Imperialist motives found their expression in the establishment of colonies. If globalization is the new name for imperialism then we are part of the neo-colonies in which the colonizers are the virtual owners of IT.

3. Information Revolution

Information Revolution is defined as:

> "Fundamental changes in the production and use of information, occurring in the late 20th century. Human societies throughout history have had 'information specialists'; and they have had 'information technologies'; but two interrelated developments, social and technological, underpin the diagnosis that an information revolution is now occurring."[2]

[1] February 3, 2001 issue of the Philippine Star, p. 28.
[2] "Information Revolution," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* 2000.

Information revolution has indeed brought about social and technological developments. Let me now briefly discuss these two aspects of advancement and later on expound them in my analysis. First, there have been social and organizational changes. Information processing is the forefront player of the economic, political, and social life of the people. At the beginning, I already mentioned about knowledge-based economies and its effects. These information-based companies are certainly shaping our lifestyle, education and perception of reality. At the same time it has adverse effects in our culture and religiosity. Secondly, there have been technological changes. Computing and telecommunications have now converged. What catapulted their convergence is now what we call Internet or simply Net. The invention of the microprocessor has brought speedy changes in the world of technology. It has become a commonplace in homes and offices, present not only in computers, but also in various devices such as telephones and televisions.

Most people thought that this was already adequate: a little help doing budget planning and a nice word processor for writing letters. Some visionaries talked about computers as information appliances: you could use your home or office computer to connect to the national news services, get stock reports, do library researches, even read professionals journals or literary classics but at that time, these were far reaching ideas. Time has passed since computers first moved from behind the "glass wall" into our offices and homes. In those dozen or so years, another revolution, arguably more important than the first, has taken place. And that revolution was computer networking. Personal computers are great, but computers become something special when they are connected to each other.

With the Internet, networking has come of age. The information resources that visionaries talked about in the early 80's are not just research topics that a few advanced thinkers can play within a lab. They are real life

realities that you can tap into your home. Once you are connected to the Internet, you have instant access to an almost indescribable wealth of information.

I share in the perception of others that the outcome of Information Revolution is as great as the shift from the then agricultural to industrial society as to what happened in the Industrial Revolution. But the essential change is just a change from one form of industrial society into another.

II. Internet[1] and Telecommunications

In the summer of 1969, not everyone was at Woodstock. In the laboratories on either side of the continent, a small group of computer scientists was quietly changing the future of communications. Their goal: to build a computer that would enable researchers around the United States to share ideas. The network became the foundation of the Internet, the vast international computer network that today has become one part buzzword, one part obsession. But its birth required a leap of the imagination. Instead of seeing computer as a giant, plodding number crunchers, they had to be viewed as nimble tools that could talk to each other. After that paradigm shift, the rest was just doing the calculations. The project was called ARPANET, after the agency that paid for it - ARPA, the U.S. Department of Defense's Advanced Research Project Agency. This project is a measure to preserve communication integrity in case of worldwide catastrophe such as a nuclear confrontation.

There was no standard computer operating system; machines generally could not communicate with each other. Even with machines that were compatible, the best way to get data from one to another was to physically carry magnetic tapes or punch cards and insert them

[1] F.N. Jalando-on, *A Feasibility Study on the Installation of an ISP in the City of Iloilo* (Iloilo City: CPU, 1997), 3.

into the other machines. In 1968, J.C.R. Licklider and Robert Taylor published prophetic paper suggesting that computers could serve as communication devices. They pushed for an experimental network, one that would create new communities of scientists separated by geography but united by technology. The initial plan was to link four sites: UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles), University of California, Sta. Barbara, and the Stanford Research Institute and the University of Utah.

The first node, as the network sites are called, was at UCLA. Three years later, there were 62, and by 1981, more than 200. By the early 1980s, other countries wanted to join in. They developed a set of technical standards, called protocols that multiple networks could use. That paved the way for the Internet.

Over the next decade, dozens of new networks were born including the Usenet newsgroups, an electronic forum now used by millions of people around the world to discuss everything from practical physics to nude people. As personal computers became cheaper and easier to use in the late 1980s, anyone with a modem could get online. By that time NSFNET, a network established by the National Science Foundation, served as the technical backbone of the Internet in the United States.

In 1983 the Internet was born as we know it today.

1. Analysis

"The Internet is a new and very, very exciting medium. I think it'll change the world as much as the Gutenberg press did."[1] Information Technology is without a doubt changing the way we live, and how we look at life. I hope that by making an analysis we can come up with a picture of its benefits and then probably come up with alternative solutions on the adverse consequences that come with it.

[1] M. Syjuco, *Net Gains,* in, http://www.localvibe.com

1.1. Effects in society, culture, education and religiosity

Pastor Acosta outlined the following charges hurled by the detractors of the IT culture[1]: First, destruction of our environment. Second, Food insecurity. Third, More poverty. Fourth, Unemployment; and lastly, breakdown in family values.

Most of us know that there are satellites hovering above us in the space, but what we do not perceive is the fact that these satellites are also garbage and wastes already polluting our space, and at the same time objects that will hurl down towards us unknowingly. Soon there will be low orbiting satellites that can be visible to the naked eye that will be just a little lower than the air space of airplanes. Almost all electronic equipments have chemicals that are pollutants and contribute to the depletion of our ozone layer.

Filipino farmers are forced to resort to cash crops (asparagus, cut flowers, bananas, pineapples) for export, rather than planting staple crops (corn, rice) for our consumption.[2] This is the reason why there is food shortage in our country. The supply to fill this shortage comes from other countries.

Former President Ramos said, “left to its own logic, globalization widens the gap between winners and losers at the national level as well as the international level.”[3] Lee Kwan Yew in the same article said, “the financial crisis was made worse by the ability of investors to withdraw their funds at the push of a button. IT, the computerized linkages that drive the process of globalization left Asian countries no time to prepare for the sudden loss of their money. The IT connected fund managers brought

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[1] R. Acosta, in, N. Bunda, ed., p. 209.

[2] For instance, thousands of hectares in Mindanao are planted with pineapples.

[3] B. Stanley, *Asians wary of globalization in wake of recent financial crisis,* Philippine Star, January 29, 2001.

about a collapse."[1] The IT culture leads to unemployment due to the fact that our local companies cannot compete with foreign companies; they are then forced to shut down. The fact also that machines together with new technologies can be handled by just a few people thus leading to downsizing.

The IT culture is forcing universities and colleges to reassess their philosophy of education. The Journal of Information Technology Impact states that there are four reasons, which are primarily market driven that higher education institutions are investing in new technologies.

> "First, there is the vague fear that unless they invest in technology they will be left behind. Students expect the university to be up to date with the latest technological tools. Second, faculty expects the university to provide the latest information technologies for their research and teaching. Third, universities are looking for ways to reach out beyond their campuses through distance education, and the new technologies enable that outreach to occur. Fourth, current employment trends indicate the need for a more educated workforce, especially in high-technology fields such as computer science, computer information systems, and engineering."[2]

Because of these reasons and also to be globally competitive, Central Philippine University as a learning institution built a Web Site, established a Cyber Library, connected all the departments to the Net and offered IT related courses, such as, BS Computer Science, BS Computer Engineering, BS Software Engineering, BS Information Technology, and BS Information Management.

Lee Kwan Yew also said in a recent forum "all Asians face an erosion of cultural values. Confucian prin-

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[1] Yew is referring to the 1997 economic collapse of Asia.

[2] M. Dumestre, *The Impact of Technology on Higher Education* (Louisiana: Loyala University, 1999), p. 64.

ciples underpinning many societies have now been modified or even abandoned as younger Asians fall under the spell of seductive Western lifestyles." Yes, our traditional values are being eroded as well as our local theology as affirmed by Dr. Everett Mendoza in his lecture. He said, "the entire decade of the 1990s finds Filipino theology in a moribund state. For the church in the Philippines the millennium ends with this sad note."[1]

The goal of religion is to address the holistic growth of an individual. How can this aim be addressed by IT if we just worship in front of electronic gadgets? Religiosity of the people will also be hampered because less people will attend church services to have communion and fellowship in the flesh, since it will be replaced by a kind of fellowship in wires and satellites. Some of us are worshipping now in the comforts of our home through TV, radio and at the Net. There has been a shift from the traditional worship of feeling the warmness of each other's presence to that of coldness and being anonymous.[2]

1.2. IT as an instrument of colonization

Of the many reasons I pointed out that caused colonization, two are worth mentioning since the IT culture espouses this pattern. First, colonies have been established as outlets for the energies of the people feeling the need to explore more land; and secondly, the colonizers wish to transplant their customs and modes of life to the world they 'discovered.'

Dr. Everett Mendoza has this to say about globalization and IT, "at the advent of globalization, national boundaries everywhere have fallen down before the relentless battering of global capital and technology. In this

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[1] E. Mendoza, *The future of local theologies in the age of globalization,* an article delivered at the UCCP Theological Education Summit, Dumaguete City, July 1999.

[2] On a lighter side, one can just change the channel if the sermon is boring or can turn down the volume if the preacher is shouting.

new commonwealth, nations are no longer referred as such but as economies – merely producers of wealth or market or fields of investments."[1]

This type of domination is very subtle and cannot be understood by most of us, but it is very much true. Because of globalization our economy becomes an "import dependent, export oriented" type of economy. Addition to this misery is the GATT or the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade in which the main sponsor of this bill was no less than Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo who was then a Senator. We opened our doors to the World Trade Organization that resulted to big disasters than gains. Just take a look at our rice and sugar industry. We are now importing rice and sugar from countries all over the world, and in order for our local goods to compete in the market, our farmers have to lower down prices to the point of losing. Another addition to the pain in our necks is the OPEC or the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries that control the number of barrels of oil pump everyday and the prices in the world market.

A. Command and Conquer principle of computer games

If one is to go inside an Internet café, he will find that not only people are browsing the Net but they also play computer games. The kinds of games that are flooding the market have the principle of command and conquer. Popular games before were Warcraft, Command and Conquer, Starcraft and lately, the famous Counterstrike. These games can be played either single handedly or as a group and the objective is to win the game by virtually erasing the race of an enemy.

In reality, the military of the West is the strongest. At the push of a button, Philippines can be wiped out from the face of the earth. Have you ever wondered why the

[1] E. Mendoza, July 1999.

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) forces in which the majority are Americans, have strategic locations all over the world? Why is it that American troops were sent to areas where there is war and conflict? Why do we have the feeling that they are trying to police the world? These are valid questions that must have valid answers. At the beginning, I mentioned that they are just protecting their vested interests in the backyards of other people. The West does not want to tilt the balance in a system wherein they are the few ruling elite. Military installations all over the globe should be seen as a measure to counter those who threatened to break the system. Treaties like the VFA (Visiting Forces Agreement) are part of the master plan to control all countries in the world. The principle in virtual reality and in reality is indeed the same, to command and conquer.

B. Internet as a global culture that is being developed

Let me first start with some statistics to show how many will be affected by this new global culture. The online population of the Philippines according to the Central Intelligence Agency is about 7.04% of the whole population (5.96 million out of 84.61 million Filipinos). The rise of online population in the Philippines was 198% from the year 2000 to 2004, an indication that Filipino Internet users shoot up from 2 million to 5.96 million.

The number of Internet users around the world is constantly growing. The Computer Industry Almanac has reported that in the year 2002, 490 million people around the world had Internet access. Statistically, it was 79.4 internet users per 1,000 people. After two years (2004), the worldwide Internet Population went up to 934 million, and the projection for the year 2005 is 1.07 billion people out of the total world population of 6.4 billion. The top 15 countries will account for nearly 82 percent of these worldwide Internet users (including business, educational, and home Internet users). By the end of the year

2005, 66.5% of Americans (218,400,380 of 328,387,059 people) and only 7.4% of Asians (266,742,420 out of 3,612,363,165 people) are Internet users. There will also be 25 countries where over 10 percent of their population will be Internet users. [1]

What is interesting here is the fact that in the total online world population, 47.6% belong to English speaking countries and 52.4% are non-English. What makes it interesting is that even though the English speaking world belongs to the minority of the online population, 80% of online transactions are being generated by them and a whooping 85% of online sites are in English.

This is the dimension that we seem not to notice. It is the fact that majority of the contents of web sites is in English language. It is common knowledge in the Internet that if one wants his information to be global, it is to be posted in English. If one doesn't know English, he must learn it so that he can use the softwares and at the same time utilize the vast information that is in the Net. Language is a very integral part of one's culture. This paper for example, must be made in English even though, I am formulating my thoughts first in Hiligaynon. The real danger here is we are fast losing our own identity as Ilonggos and at the same time as Filipinos in the onslaught of information in the Net, which is in English. There will come a time that we will be thinking in English even if we want to speak in Hiligaynon. Our second language will supplant our first tongue. This is one of the issues that best describes why the Third World countries cannot be at par with the English speaking countries. IT is developing a racist culture wherein few reign supreme and we are virtual slaves. This is the kind of culture wherein the minority rules the majority.

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[1] Statistics of Online Population are from this websites:
http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/
http://www.c-i-a.com/
http://www.nielsen-netratings.com/
http://cyberatlas.internet.com

C. The myth that no one owns the Internet

It is a make believe, if one is led to think that no one controls the Internet. Although it is true that the mother of all networks can still survive even if the whole of the Asian network will bug down, it is equally true that the Internet will be mainly paralyzed even if just one telecommunications company in the U.S. will shut down for a day.

If you go deeper to the intricacies of the wires and satellites that are behind this information highway, you will discover that the myth I am talking about makes sense. Take for example our two major Internet Service Providers (ISP) here at Iloilo City. If a user of Mozcom (formerly, Camp Internet) will connect to a website hosted by Sky Internet, he will be happy to note that in a matter of seconds he has in his screen the web page of Sky Internet. He thought all the while, that from one place here in Iloilo City he is connected via the Internet immediately to another place here in Iloilo. What he does not know is the fact, that when he tries to trace the route from his computer to the server of Sky Internet he had already traveled a lot. He thought that if he cannot get connected to his desired website in Iloilo, then maybe he can in Manila. He was wrong again. He will further know that he did not connect either in Hong Kong or in Hawaii, but his computer went all the way to mainland USA from one telephone company to another telecommunications company, that eventually led back to Philippines, and to Iloilo City. It is amazing that an average Internet user does not know anything about it.

In the picture that I presented, who do you think controls the Internet as seen from the perspective of the Filipinos? Yes, it is the major telecommunications companies that control and virtually own the Internet in terms of wires and satellites. It is to be noted that as of year 2000, the requests of ISPs here in the Philippines to establish

an Internet backbone in our country is still not heard. One may wonder why.

Let us add another dimension to this myth. One may wonder how someone who wants to have a web site can get his .com, .net, .org or .edu domain names. Behind the name of http://www.cpu.edu.ph is an IP number that reads 203.177.73.195. What does these domain name and IP number mean to us? It means that we are at the mercy of a regulating body called the Internet Society that virtually controls all the servers of the world. It is through this regulating body that one can be assigned a domain name and a corresponding IP number. You cannot join the Internet community if this body will say “no” to you.

Let us now go to another integral part that can prove my claim that the statement, “nobody owns the Internet” is a myth. Let us ask the question, who designs and manufactures the hardwares and softwares that are needed to connect to the Internet? One may say that the Third World countries, like the Philippines and India, are producing the hardwares needed and programming softwares that make it work. Yes, it is true, but my point here is not about who manufactures it per se, but who engineers the specifications. The specifications are still and may forever be Intel, AMD, Cyrix, Apple, and many others from the hardware side; and Microsoft, Unix, Linux and others from the software side. What is interesting here is the fact that majority of all hardwares of personal computers and mainframes around the world are being run by processors that are made by Intel. Like the 8086, 80286, 80386 and 80486’s of the late 1980’s and early 1990’s and the Pentium class computers nowadays. These processors are being run by an operating system in which Microsoft captures the majority of market. Before there was the DOS (Disk Operating System) and then came the GUI’s (Graphic User Interface), which are characterized by early versions of Windows and now Windows 95, 98, 2000 and XP. Coupled to this OS’s (Operating System) are the browsers that are needed to surf the

Internet. These products have a name that has been largely influenced by the Age of Enlightenment for they are called the Internet Explorer and the Netscape Navigator. It can also be observed that their accompanying logos are that of a globe being circumnavigated by a Microsoft logo and another by a captain's wheel of a ship.

1.3. Advantages and disadvantages of IT Tools

I received a text message that says, "it will be remembered in history that Erap is the first president ousted by texting." Cell Phone, as one of the gadgets of IT, became a revolutionary tool to kick out our former president. It made easier the propagation of information that led the people to march in the streets on the eve when the 11 senators blocked the opening of the second envelope. One drawback in this gadget, as well as other IT tools, is the vulnerability of being fed wrong information like what happened to the supposed death of the Pope.[1]

The advantages of IT tools can be summarized as following: geographic distribution, robust architecture, speed, universal access, freedom of speech, and digital advantage.

A. Advantages

Geographic Distribution

The key feature of the Internet is that once you have connected to any part of it, you can communicate with all of it. All of the Net's technologies – web, newsgroups, email, chat – enable geographically distributed groups of people to communicate, who otherwise couldn't do so. This new, powerful communication media has interconnected our world and created a global village.

[1] This was a hoax last 2001. Sadly, the Pope died last April 3, 2005.

Robust Architecture

The Internet is the most robust network ever built, able to adapt itself almost instantaneously to damage and outages to individual parts. It can't be bought, hijacked, or monopolized. The loss of individual computers and networks does not affect its overall reliability. The Internet perfectly realizes its original intent -- it is robust, and cannot be completely deactivated without bringing down every single connection.

Speed

The Internet operates at near real-time speed. “The Internet is very fast. Digital information travels at about 2/3 of the speed of light on copper wire and on fiber optic cables, or 200 thousand kilometers a second. This is 1/3 less than full light speed, because copper and fiber optic cable are one-third thicker than a vacuum.”[1] At this speed, computers have to be more than ten thousand kilometers apart, or almost half way around the world, before they experience more than a tenth of a second in communications delay.

Universal Access

The Internet provides the same powerful capabilities to everyone with access to the network. The Internet is based on a common standard, the TCP/IP network protocol, which provides all computers on the net with the same interface and capabilities. This common foundation makes all of the Internet technologies -- Email, Web, Usenet, IRC, Mailing Lists -- available universally to anyone connected to the net.

Freedom of Speech

The Internet fosters free speech on a global scale. The Internet is a common area, a public space like a vil-

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[1] P. Baran, *On Distributed Communications*, Volume I, in, http://livinginternet.com.

lage square. Anything that anybody wants to say can be heard by anyone else in the world with access to the Net. In fact, the Internet is the largest common area that has yet existed in human existence.

It is impossible to effectively block access to Internet information, except in very limited and controlled circumstances, such as when blocking access to a specific site in a home, or when using a network firewall to block certain sites from employees in the workplace.

The Digital Advantage

Digital communications have the "D4 advantage" -- "digital data doesn't degrade."[1] The Internet, like all computer systems, is based on digital data, so that information never changes or becomes distorted over time or in transmission between sites. This is the key feature that makes it possible to construct the very complex software systems that run the net, so that a web site doesn't age and become fuzzy or garbled over time, and the characters in an email don't get transposed or mixed up when they are sent over long distances. The future of this key feature is the establishment of low orbiting satellites that are seen by the naked eye. The “Bluetooth” technology will enable any electronic equipment to be connected to the Internet that is, if they are in the vicinity of the low-orbit satellite or cell site. “What new technologies promise to offer simply means**:** improvement of existing lines that will afford more people to use them all at the same time with the fastest digital speed possible.”[2]

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[1] M. Kapor, *Electronic Frontier Foundation Information*, 1993, in, http://livinginternet.com.

[2] An email from PeterAne@iloilo.net with regards to new improvements in technology.

B. Disadvantages

The most critical issue surrounding the Internet is security. There are few security safeguards on the net. IP (Internet Protocol) address, email address, name, phone number, and other information to assemble a detailed profile of your opinions, surfing patterns, and buying habits can match information you leave on the Net.

Any information you leave in a public area on the Internet, including Usenet news groups, mailing lists, chat groups, web sites, and MUD's (Multiple User Dimension/Dungeon), is considered to be placed in the public domain. Anybody can access and make use of this information. Web sites can use cookies to record your surfing patterns on their site, and advertising sites can use cookies to track your surfing patterns across different web sites that they serve.

The strength and at the same time a weakness of Internet is the fact that one can remain to be anonymous. We can intimately chat with a stranger (invariably with the opposite sex) located at the other side of the world, even if we are completely nude. No one would know the difference. No one would know whether you are 18 or 80, whether you are impersonating a female, male or third sex. Bill Gates included in his book a spot cartoon showing a dog busy chatting on a computer. Says the dog to another dog kibitzing at his side: "*You know, on the Internet nobody knows that you are a dog.*"

The Internet is also vulnerable to hacking or the electronic breaking into a system. This can be done by either gaining entry in a system legally as if you are the person the system thought you are or by illegally planting viruses to weaken the defense of the security system then pounce in. In fact, we have gained worldwide notoriety for creating the love-bug. The Filipino is always ahead in advancing backward.

One can say that we can virtually find anything, because the Net opens new doors - the portals leading to

universities and their libraries, to the halls of Congress, to just about the insides of everything in the anatomical preserves of the human biology, literally speaking. In our quest for information, sometimes we stumbled upon the wrong door, that is because we hold the key, accidentally finding ourselves peeping into the most hard core of pornography, that is very far from what one can see in a Playboy magazine, or a site teaching us how to make a homemade bomb.

III. Theological Reflection[1]

A question arose whether the church should take part in non-spiritual matters such as Information Technology. My answer to this is that every human work must be put under the critique of the Word of God, hence this theological reflection.

Information Technology itself is not evil. What makes it evil is, as shown in my analysis, it is being used as a tool for exploitation and subjugation. Webber said it this way,

> "Neither science nor technology is evil. But they may become tools towards evil ends when they are no longer understood and practiced under God. Both science and technology can be used to enhance or destroy life. When they are used towards destructive ends, they become oppressive and demonic."[2]

The context of this theological reflection is my conviction that IT is being used as a tool for neo-colonialism;

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[1] Part of this theological reflection can be found in two articles that I contributed in *Steps of Faith,* CPU Devotional Guide published by the Chaplain's Office. They are entitled *Lighthouse Family* and *Exodus: Movement of the People,* December 2000 and February 2001, respectively.

[2] R. Webber, *The Church in the World* (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), p. 176.

thus, it is tyrannical and evil. This is contrary to the mission of Jesus Christ of advancing the Kingdom of God.

Advancing the Kingdom of God based on my faith can be found in the mission statement of Jesus in Luke 4:18-19, which says: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (NIV). This mission statement was realized and therefore being supported by the account when the disciples of John asked him if he is the one or they should wait for another. Jesus replied: "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me." Matt 11:4 (NIV).

We can now see two contrasting worlds, the IT culture, which has imperialistic goals, and the church, which aims to advance the Kingdom of God. Dr. Mendoza named two cities in his Augustinian analysis, namely, the Empire, which has the logic of conquest and domination thus making it a dominion of evil; and the Church, which has the logic of love and service thus making it a dominion of righteousness.[1] The same is true with the kingdoms found in Revelation, the dragon and the beast plus their prophets, which can now be considered as the developing IT culture; and God and the lamb plus their prophets, which is the church.

How then can a citizen of the empire and a faithful member of the church act in the realities around him? If what I perceived is true, that the IT culture is here to stay, what can the church do about it? What does our faith tell us to do about it?

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[1] *New Ecumenism vs Globalization*, a lecture delivered at the College of Theology, CPU, February 7, 2001.

The cry of the Israelites during the Egyptian bondage had a striking similarity to our longing nowadays. Israelites and Filipinos are in chorus groaning to God about the misery they are experiencing brought about by foreign domination. The same is true with the questions of the Israelites during the Babylonian Captivity, “Can the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?”[1] I believe that we are in a Babylonian captivity. The grip of the mighty and the tyrant is suffocating the Filipinos together with other Third World countries. We long for freedom from foreign domination, but we are losing hope day by day as our captivity continues.

The Lord our God answered us saying:

> “Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken and the prey of the tyrant be rescued, for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children. I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine. Then all flesh shall know that I am the Lord your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty one of Jacob.”[2]

This was the great hope that the Israelites held on during the Babylonian Captivity and today this is the same hope that we must hold on. One can say that we are waiting for a third party intervention to our plight. Yes, it is true, but this hope, that God is with us in history, is what will ignite the spark within ourselves to seek alternative solutions. Solutions that are true to our Biblical tradition and to our national roots.

Nowadays, we are in interesting times. We can either learn from history and make it our guiding light towards a bright future or we can come back to a scenario we seem to be accustomed to, a scenario wherein a few ruling elite is the captain of our destiny, and we are just

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[1] Isaiah 49:24

[2] Isaiah 49:25-26.

willing victims. The Filipino feeling that 'that's the way it is' or '*anhon ta na kay amo gid na ya'* is for me not excusable anymore. I believe that the Filipino Christians are already fed up by our passive stand in a situation, and we are now ready to take part in an active role towards a real transformation and liberation.

Resistance and struggle are matters of faith. If this is so, then how can we bring about change from the current system of the global culture that continues to marginalize people from the third world countries? I believe that we need to consider two things: reformation or revolution. Reformation calls for a change of principles from within the system while revolution calls for supplanting the current system with another one.

The reformist's goal can be that of assimilation. The objective is for us to be absorbed and incorporated in the existing framework. The Filipino's dream is to have a representation in the table that decides the fate of world economics and politics together with the superpowers of the world. The primary aim here is for our participation in political rule and a better share in economic benefits. Our bargaining chip is for us to fully embrace foreign policies, accept the cultural changes that the foreigners want, and for the transformation of Philippines into a foreign controlled country provided that the plight of the marginalized people will be elevated and the wide economic gap be narrowed down.

The Philippine government is on this track, when it entered into various treaties and agreements with foreign countries. But the problem is that the provisions we are asking are not being delivered. The current Arroyo administration is talking about providing safety nets and other measures to cushion the effects of the foreign policies that we have embraced as well as the foreign culture that is degrading our traditional values.

On the other hand, if we are determined to wage a revolution, we must have a clear separatist goal. This call is challenging us to walk away from the tyrannical ways

of the IT culture. This appeal is putting flame to our desire to throw off the neo-colonialism yoke.

What can bring about the goals of revolution? (or better still "transformation" to sound more theological) This call can only be staged and realized if, firstly, the awareness of people is brought into a level wherein they can see the common deprivation and oppression made possible by the IT culture. This is a great motivator, since it is a common grievance against a common enemy. What needs to be done by proponents of this call is to conduct a continuing education of the masses in order to produce a critical mass that can bring about a revolution. Filipinos as well as other nationals in Third World countries will just simply say "enough is enough," then walk away from it. One way of reaching a critical mass needed to transform the situation is to give "hope," which means "Help Organize People Everywhere."

Secondly, if the level of consciousness is heightened, it must be followed by call for nationhood. This is a difficult task that should be done in order for a revolution to succeed. National identity can be brought about if we decide to revisit our past, rediscover our culture and learn from it. "History is not merely a chronology of events; it is not the story of heroes and great men. Essentially, history consists of the people's effort to attain a better life."[1]

History can enlighten us that we once had a relational structure that is not oppressive and exploitative in nature in the form of a barangay. This type of community existed before the pre-hispanic colonization, and bears a striking resemblance to the communal living found in Acts 2:44-45, "All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need."

[1] R. Constantino, p. 6

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History can also fuel our desire to continue on struggling to detach ourselves from an oppressive structure because our foreparents had done the same.[1]

"Historic struggles provide the people with lessons in their upward march and give form and strength to the constantly changing society."[2] Worthy of mentioning here is the act made by the Katipuneros in Pugadlawin on August 23, 1896. "As a sign that they had broken all ties with Spain and would fight her domination to the last, the Katipuneros tore their cedulas (certificates of citizenship) to pieces, shouting, "Long live the Philippines!"[3] A true nationalist can say something like what Manuel L. Quezon said, "I prefer a government run like hell by Filipinos to a government run like heaven by Americans."

Thirdly, we must strengthen our Christian identity. "Christian identity is identifying with Christ in all our concerns, in all that we think and say, in all that we are, and in all that we do."[4] To be identified with Christ is simply to live up with the mission he left for us to continue. The mission to have a society where all people can experience an abundant life. It was found out in my presentation that IT serves not for the end of Christ's mission, but for the end of neo-colonialists. Theologically, IT is a

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[1] A question arose on whether God was and still is with Filipino people in their continuing struggle to break free from the yoke of colonialism and neo-colonialism. This was my answer: "It is in the hope that God is interested with people and is active in history that we continue in struggling to have a better society." The class questioned me about my notion of the sovereignty of God, whether I am trying to present an immanent God rather than a transcendent God. This was my reply: "there is a mystery of the workings of God in history." God in history is a tension from an immanent and transcendent God. I believe that divine intervention happens not as a direct intervention of God from the heavens but through the hearts and minds of people that in turn will result to actions towards the transformation of society. (Class discussion: February 21, 2001).

[2] R. Constantino, p. 6.

[3] R. Constantino, p. 176.

[4] R. Acosta, in, N. Bunda, ed., p. 210.

product of God's creation through man's creativity. I believe that God's creation should serve for God's reign but we have seen that IT is being used not under God's will but under the evil ways.

We must strengthen our Christian presence in order to advance the Kingdom of God in this age of Information Technology. If we see IT as part of God's creation, then Christians must be good stewards in using it. Revolution in this sense is supplanting the principles governing the IT into Christian principles that is neither exploitative nor oppressive, since it seeks to have a society characterize by abundance of life. Churches then must use IT as a tool to bring about abundant life.

IV. Conclusion

This is an attempt to study critically the significance of IT both from the elitist, neo-imperialist perspective, and from a critical Christian point of view. In the course of the research, it was found out that IT moves into the direction of globalization in the service of neo-colonialism. Second, IT can be used taking another point of departure. This point can be directed towards the goal of the Kingdom of God, that is, IT can serve the struggle towards transformation in order to experience a meaningful life.

In such a context we are called to go back to the basic interpretation of our faith. The advancement of IT is both a challenge and a call by God for us to go back to the essential interpretation of our faith. IT is not totally a discovery of mankind; it was created mainly because of God's creative power bestowed to human beings. Therefore it is not totally wrong to assume that IT is both a product of divine and human power.

The problem presented however, tells that IT has been utilized for the purpose of serving the exploitative interest of the neo-imperial system, which was baptized by the name globalization.

Going back to the basic roots of our faith means searching for the essential truth behind IT and its utilization for the advancement of Christian aspirations. From a Christian perspective, IT can be used to advance the purposes of God through Jesus Christ, namely, to build the reign of God on earth and in heaven. This kingdom is interpreted in many different ways depending upon the situation and perspective of the subject of the kingdom. Yet the end goal is to participate in the realization of abundant life (John 10:10).

The thesis of this paper is summarized in one sentence: Given the oppressive situation and the elitist global control, IT is developed in the service of neo-imperial or global ideology. This is correct as the data presented above assert. Is there a way out? There seems to be none. However, as Christians or theologians, we cannot, shall not, and must not stop here. There is hope that justice, peace, and integrity of creation will prevail. It is therefore our Christian responsibility to respond and struggle to find meaningful methods and solutions to fight against the use of IT to serve the greedy ends of the neo-imperial mind. Theologically, it is our responsibility as theologians to realize these theological assumptions, namely, to find ways to make IT responsive in serving the interest of the Kingdom of God.

Nature Religion, People's Religion and Universal Religion: Classification of Religion

Limuel R. Equiña

I. Introduction

The history of humanity shows that it is human nature to depend on a greater power that demonstrates control over the human race. This tendency to recognize the existence of a supernatural power governing the universe leads humanity to acknowledge its own limit. Consequently it results in paying high respect and trust in the Unknown Reality who is universally called GOD. This disposition to depend on God is the beginning of religion. Although it is defined in many different expressions, the word "religion" remains as the underlying reality that determines the existence of peoples whether or not they acknowledge that there is God. The existence of various forms of religious expressions indicates that by nature human beings are religious. Similarly it demonstrates how the impact of religion and the fanaticism that goes with it influenced relationships among individuals and nations.

But if human dependence on a greater power is universal why are there many religions today? If religion has a bearing in human existence why are people divided and alienated from each other?

This paper attempts to answer the above questions on the basis of the evolution of the following classification of religions, namely, Nature Religion, People's Religion and Universal Religion.

II. Nature as Object of Religion

The question on the source of religion is one of the important themes in the science of religion. Max Müller believes that the origin of humanity's religiosity comes either from man's view of nature or from the elementary experience of nature as such. An important aspect in Müller's theory is the emphasis he placed in the quickening of human self-consciousness of the majesty of nature. He believes that the personification of natural phenomenon in all deities is a normal consequence of religiosity for the early civilizations. The primitive humanity lacks a communicative skill to describe the idea of the supernatural or eternity. As such the role of feeling is an indispensable component in the religious experience in nature religion.[1]

Nature worship is as old as civilization. This goes hand in hand with the emergence of people and culture. People who experience always the deadly natural catastrophe look at nature with fear and horror. In a culture with an animistic tradition, the movements and changes of nature like the flight of the bird, the barking of dogs, the singing lizards, and the like are looked upon with serious consideration for they may either bring good or bad omen depending on the circumstances. To people who are close to nature like the farmers, the seamen and the mountain people, nature becomes the object of respect and worship. Nature is believed to have respective gods like the god of the harvest, a fire god, a war god, a god of hell and other deities with the corresponding functions.

[1] Karl-Heinz Kohl, "Naturreligion. Zur Transformationsgeschichte eines Begriffs," 207f.

These gods have a direct influence upon the living people. It is no wonder that they worship the sun and the moon, trees, rocks or certain animals and birds by not harming them, offering food to them or not cutting the trees fit for firewood. These they do so that in return the gods could give them safety, good harvest and good fortunes and not a threat to their existence.[1] Again, this is so because nature is viewed not only as the source of physical power on earth. It has also a spiritual dimension. Thus diseases or illnesses are attributed to the environmental spirits or soul-spirits of the dead relatives.[2]

1. The Structure of Nature Religion

Hans-Jürgen Greschat makes a comprehensive summary of what nature religion is. The following show how nature religion is distinguished from historical religions like Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam:

First, the faith system of nature religion is not fixed, since it has no specific founder. The roots and history of

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[1] Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *History of the Pilipino People,* 8th ed. (Quezon City: Garotech, 1990), 44f., 47. Nature worship is also intelligible in Hinduism for the incarnation of Vishnu can be embodied in an animal. See George Foot Moore, *History of Religions,* vol. 1, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1950), 330.

[2] This is true for instance to China whose religion is believed to have been a "union of nature worship and ancestor worship." The heavenly bodies have their gods, so with weather and clouds, rain, wind, and thunder. The mountains, rivers and seas and crops have their spirits. Nature has power and these powers are regarded spirits. Not to overlook the fact that Chinese offer worship to the "tutelary deities of the empire, and its cities and towns. Therefore spirits are not only confined to celestial or terrestrial powers. They are in human beings as well. Thus the spirits of former statesmen, sages, the patrons of industries are not excluded from the hierarchy of spirit. At the head stands Heave, the Supreme Emperor, followed by Earth with the titles of a great feudatory prime. The deceased emperor of the reigning dynasty comes next, outranking the sun and moon. See Moore, *History of Religions,* 6.

such a religion points back to the origin of the world, that means to the original time or the original people. The task of religion then is to keep the order of life based on its origins.

Second, nature religion has no holy scriptures. Its own texts are orally transmitted and are further passed on to the next generation. This explains why it is easy for these oral texts to adopt to every new situation.

Third, the notion of revelation is recognized in nature religion as a superhuman will. It has no preachers or theologians like in Christianity. But it has visionaries, media, prophets and oracle priests. Questions of supernatural characters are answered through dreams, visions, auditions, inspirations, oracle system, and the like. The answers however are always sought when the source of catastrophe remains vague, because hunger, epidemics and defeats cease as soon as their cause is identified.

Fourth, man understands salvation in the so-called nature religion as ethical actions. The eschatological questions are determined by contemporary actions. Religion in this sense is decisive in so far as it maintains the direction of history by anchoring the present and even the future to the original ordered world.

Fifth, in nature religion, man believes in a gift, which man receives from above and must be guarded as a valuable good. In this view, the believers think that people with special gifts have a connection with the supernatural powers. Here rituals play an important function in facilitating a right reception of such a gift. What is important however in nature religion is its anthropological implication. Greschat observes that in nature religion humanity is not raised to become lord over creations. Rather a person is regarded only as a creature who understands himself as a brother among brothers.[1]

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[1] Hans-Jürgen Geschat, "Naturreligion," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie,* vol 24. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), 186-88.

Nature religion does not have a concrete source of religious authority. Religious authority is based on experience. The question of course is: "Is there any relativization of religious authority in nature religion, since its authority is based on experience?" Obviously a relativization of authority is inevitable in nature religion. Even in historical religions which have a solid dogma, a subjective interpretation of dogma cannot be evaded. If this is so, how much more it is in nature religion in which its organizational structure and beliefs are loose.

Lastly the idea of "God and the world" are not seen as separable entities in nature religion. God is seen both as a personal and impersonal source of gifts from above and the notion of the "profane and the "sacred" are intertwined in this religion.[1]

2. People's Religion

Herm Rehberg defines religion as either a result of long years of cultural processes in which the whole community has collectively worked with, or a work of excellent great men[2]

Such a definition of religion leads to the notion of people's religion. To understand what people's religion is, is to first ask the question, "Who produces religion?" and not "What it is religion?" It is only when the "who" in religion is raised that the "what" of it is properly grasped. Therefore to understand people's religion is to begin with anthropology and not with metaphysics since people are the real bearers of religion. It was people who produced, preserved and passed on sacred texts.[3]

Harvey Cox characterizes people's religion as "the collective stories of a whole people [and]is usually mixed

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[1] Greschat, "Naturreligion," *TRE*, 187.

[2] Herm Rehberg, *Die Prinzipien der monistischen Naturreligion* (Jena: Hermann Dabis, 1883) p.??

[3] Harvey Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit: The Use and Misuse of People's Religion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), 144.

with superstition, custom and kitsch."[1] People's religion has two types, namely folk religion of the ordinary people and popular religion. Popular religion is considered outside the historical religion. Yet both represent a "collective stories" of people. For Cox, people's religion is a web into the nets of people's collective corporate remembrance, dream, cry and longing for identity and dignity; a longing for survival from the past and present stories of symbols of contradictions.[2]It is the people's own soul. As Cox puts it quite clearly:

> "Whatever inner contradictions it houses, it serves an essential purpose for those whose collective consciousness it represents. When the 'soul' departs, as mortals have known since the beginning of time, the body soon dies too."[3]

Central in Cox's understanding of people's religion is the idea of religion as "the seedbed and spawning ground of stories." He defines "stories" in this context as the external expression of human association rooted in the interior attitudes like emotion, value and history and how they are blended into the whole social structure of relationships. These stories preserved the past through memories expressed in parables, jokes, sagas, fairy tales, myths, fables, epics and yarns. Or oftentimes they are acted in the form of dances, songs or demonstrated by way of dressing and other practices and ways of the people. For Cox such stories and practices are important since they depict the people's search for a meaningful existence. Hence a religion continues to exist because these different forms of people's stories nourish religion.[4]

In this sense folks or people's religion has three basic contents: First it tells the answer to the question of origin of humanity and the problem of human predica-

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[1] Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit,* 10.
[2] Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit,* 117.
[3] Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit,* 121.
[4] Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit,* 12.

ment of falling. In the Christian Bible this is called the "myths of the origin of creation and fall." Second, it presents an ideal possibility for humanity to aim for "salvation or satori or nirvana" or the ideal life as exemplified by saints and holy people. Third it provides the way to overcome the problem of human predicament of finitude in order to achieve the aim for what is ideal. In Christianity, this is called the "means of grace."[1]

For this reason the value of community life and family relationship is indispensable in people's religion. The well-being of the community is dependent upon the holistic vitality of the people. Thus life is seen collectively and as a unity. Politics, religion and society are not bifurcated from the idea of the fullness of life.[2] Therefore like nature religion, people's religion is religion of community life. One person belongs to his community.[3]

2.1. Aspects of People's Religion

The veneration of ancestors is an important characteristic of people's religion. In African culture, the lives of the people are related to God who is called in many different names. But the divine life of the living is mediated by the first ancestor of the family or tribe. The dead have their continuing influence upon the fate of the living. A divine life is the source of vitality in society. Such a life is protected by the ancestors against the evil spirit. Thus the dead lead their living generations from misfortunes and sufferings to liberation. They protect the present life of the people and guarantee their future.[4]

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[1] Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit,* 14. Eliade also recognizes the importance of stories and myths in nature religion. See Mircea Eliade, *Geschichte der Religiösen Ideen,* vol 3.1. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1983), 249f.

[2] John Parrat, *Theologiegeschichte der Dritten Welt: Afrika* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1991), 174.

[3] Greschat, "Naturreligion," 188.

[4] Parrat, 174-77. Ancestral worship on the other hand produces an

It is not surprising that death is not considered as the end of life or a separation from the earthly life. The dead is not detached from his relatives. Death is looked at as a journey to another form of life, since the dead person will be revered as an honored ancestor in his death. Hence a dead person is then described as a "living dead."[1] Therefore the ancestors have decisive influences in the African tradition. They are the source of hope and also of fear, since thy serve as mediators between the present world and beyond it.

In the Christian definition, the word "nature" is understood only in the context of creation.[2] It means then that nature is not separable from creation, for creation is understood in relation to God, the Creator. For instance Augustine describes the character of nature allegorically and symbolically as the second book of God's revelation. Nature is the medium and the Bible of God's revelation. The natural happenings are then dependent upon the creative will of God.[3]

The question however is: Is nature alone the only book of God's revelation?

Certainly natural philosophers and natural theologians will offer a negative answer. They believe that God's revelation can also work in the natural knowledge of human beings. I will not however further discuss this subject as it is outside the perimeter of my theme. Nonetheless,

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ambivalent effect upon the Africans. As Bruce Borquist and Ann Borquist, former American Peace Corp. volunteers in Ghana observed: "From our experience, the motivating power behind unalloyed ancestor worship is fear and greed: fear of what the ancestors could do to hurt you and greed in trying to get those spirit powers on your side so you could get or do what you want. African Christians set free from this know what freedom in Jesus means!"(Interview via e-mail, Feb. 9, 1997).

[1] Kwese Dickson, "The Theology of the Cross," *A Reader in African Christian Theology,* ed. John Parratt (London: SPCK, 1987), 87f.

[2] Friso Melzer, *Gott oder Götze? Grundfragen evangelischer Religionswissenschaft* (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hänssler, 1983), 25.

[3] Greschat, "Naturreligion," 102.

what is worth quoting here is the critique of David Hume, an English philosopher and deist, against nature religion.

Hume differentiates the structure of world view between nature religion and nature philosophy. He argues that the original form of religion does not start with the natural idea as in natural philosophy. Rather it is a product of experience and of dependence of earlier people on nature. Hume holds that such a dependence on nature is practically the result of one's limited knowledge of the laws of nature. Hence, primitive humanity projected their feelings and their actions towards the external world. Human sufferings were viewed as the product of unknown supernatural power in nature. Consequently, the natural happenings explicitly determine the existence of humanity. For that reason, the gods were looked upon with fear, or were believed to be the source of hope and power of humanity. In this regard, Hume traces the emergence of polytheistic religions to the natural religion. He rejects the metaphysical explanation of a divine Creator in nature religion. For him studies of nature and its natural laws are the products of the educated idea and has no place in nature religion.[1]

But to the question on the relationship between nature religion and Christianity Terturlian's view is worth noting. Tertulian pursues to make a marriage between nature religion and Christianity in the following statement: "God must be recognized through nature and then through doctrines. From nature through his works and from doctrines through his revealed words."[2]

[1] Hume, *Nature Religion* 1755.
[2] Terturlian, *Contra Marcionen,*1.18.

III. The Universal Religion: Is There such a Religion?

This section aims at exploring the concept of religion in a broader perspective. Primarily, it focuses on the notion of religion as universal. In carrying out this survey, the following set of distinctions are to be explained under the following themes: (a) Universal Religion understood as Universal Spirituality, (b)Christianity as a Universal Religion?: The Inclusivistic Approach and (c) Religious Pluralism: A Universal Religion?

1. Universal Spirituality and the Universalization of Esoteric Experience

First universal spirituality points to a spontaneous self-discovery of God not through received doctrines but through an experience of God or of the divine presence. Similar to the "New Age Movement's" understanding, spirituality in this regard is explained as a mystical experience or as esoteric.[1]

Central in the theology of the so-called New Age Movement is the notion of God understood both as a personal and an impersonal God. But more important than a cognitive knowledge of him is an experience of his presence in one's life. God is thought of as a "divine within" who is discovered in the process of self-exploration. Such an experience is commonly called a cosmic feeling, since God transcends all barriers of distinctions. Cosmic feeling is understood to mean the "presence of God within."

[1] Mysticism is defined as a "common language, uttering a common experience. There is only one great underground river, though there are numerous wells into Buddhist wells and Taoists wells, Native American wells and Christian wells, Islamic wells and Judaic wells." See Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ: The Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of a Global Renaissance* (San Francisco: Harper, 1988), 230, as quoted by Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *The New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Leiden/New York/Köhl: E.J. Brill, 1996), 328.

Such a consciousness of God's presence suggests the truth of God's existence in contrast to the rationalization or psychologization of the concept of God. In this sense, God is understood according to one's personal history and interpretation of God who speaks to him from "within" the way Eva Pierrako explicitly describes God. She writes:

> Think of God as being, among so many other things, *life* and *life force*. Think of God as of an electric current, endowed with supreme intelligence. This electric current is there, in you, around you, outside yourself. ... God is not a person residing in a certain place, though it is possible to have a personal God-experience within the self. For the only place God can be looked for and found is within, not in any other place. God's existence can be deduced outside of the self from the beauty of Creation, from the manifestations of nature, from the wisdom collected by philosophers and scientists. But such observations become an experience of God only when God's presence is felt first within. The inner experience of God is the greatest experience of all experiences because it contains all desirable experiences.[1]

What is obvious in the theological emphasis of universal spirituality is the universality of this cosmic experience which is no less than accessible to everyone. Unlike the historical religions, universal spirituality is characterized by religious tolerance, and inclusivism. It possesses no established set of doctrines. It believes that each religious path is complementary to another leading to the final goal of universal truth.[2]

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[1] Eva Pierrako, *The Pathwork of Self-Transformation* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990), 51 as quoted by Hanegraaff, *The New Age Religion and Western Culture,* 184.

[2] Hanegraaff, *The New Age Religion and Western Culture,* 329f.

2. Inclusivism and the Universalization of the Christian Religion

From the theology of religion, "inclusivism" is understood as a "dialectical yes and no" phenomenon. In Christian theology, the yes and no dialectics both means the acceptance and the rejection of the non-Christian religious claims. The Christian acceptance of other religious truth lies on the basic assumption that God's presence is manifested in the spiritual and religious claims of the non-Christian religions. The Christian rejection of the non-Christian religious tradition is grounded on the latter's rejection of the person of the historical Jesus as the universal point and the final revelation and mediator of God for the salvation of humanity.[1]

2.1. Roots of Inclusivism

A. Acts of the Apostles by Luke

Proponents of the inclusivistic theory of religion draw inspiration from the works of Luke. Central in Luke's theology is the so-called salvation history. Salvation history means that God's action of grace is operative in history which finds its highest fulfillment in the historical Jesus. God's presence in history is not however confined in the Christian tradition alone. Luke illustrates this point in his story about Cornelius where Peter says: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him "(Acts 10: 35). Moreover at Lystra, Luke writes concerning Paul and Barnabas' message to the people, "In past generations he [God] allowed all nations to walk in their own ways; yet *he did not leave himself without witness*.... (Acts 14:16f). Lastly, Luke reports about Paul's discourse

[1] Alan Race, *Christians And Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1982), 38.

with the Greeks in Areopagus which explicitly explains the inclusiveness of Jesus Christ (Acts 17: 22-31). Luke writes that Paul acknowledges that the men of Athens have their own knowledge of God, a God who is however unknown. On the basis of that knowledge, Paul goes on to say by apologetically identifying the "anonymous God" of the Athenians with the name of Jesus Christ, who resurrected from the dead and will later on come back to judge both the living and the dead.

The Lukan accounts implies two things for inclusivist theory: First Luke shows that the person of Jesus is the final fulfillment of all human expectations and prophecies in history. Second the historical Jesus is also the fulfillment of God's dealing with humanity in history. Yet behind these two implications is the fundamental argument that Jesus Christ is not detached from history, since Jesus has long been there before history began.

B. Justin Martyr and His Influence

Another important figure in Church History who follows and enriches Luke's inclusivist position is Justin Martyr. For instance Justin writes:

> It is our belief that those men who strive to do good which is enjoined on us have a share in God; according to our traditional belief they will by God's grace share his dwelling. And it is our conviction that this holds good in principle for all men.[1]

Moreover, Justin Martyr intensifies the inclusivism theory of Christology through his Logos theology. Justin, who was perhaps influenced by Stoic philosophy, believes that all men participate in the universal cosmic Reason, by virtue of the *logos spermatikos*, the eternal divine Logos that permeates in men's intrinsic rationality.[2]

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[1] As cited by Race, *Christians And Religious Pluralism*, 42.
[2] As cited by Race, *Christians And Religious Pluralism*, 42

He argues: "Christ is the divine Word in whom the whole human race share, and those who live according to the light of their knowledge are Christians, even if they are considered as being godless."[1]

Viewed from the theology of religion, Luke's position on the "history of salvation" and Justin's notion of the Logos in Christ imply that all religious truths before Christ serve as preparatory gospels and all leads to Christ as the final end. This does not however imply a complete rejection of the religious teachings of the non-Christian religions. Rather the non-Christian religions have still a place in the history of salvation.

C. The Vatican II Declaration

It is interesting to note how Justin Martyr's position has preceded the position of the modern inclusivists. Undoubted he has infused a visible influence upon the Vatican II's *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.* [2]

The inclusivistic theory is further elaborated by Karl Rahner, a well-known Roman Catholic theologian in his thesis:

> Until the moment when the gospel really enters into the historical situation of an individual, a non-Christian religion... does not merely contain elements of a natural knowledge of God, elements, moreover, mixed up with human depravity... It contains also supernatural elements arising out of the grace which is given... on account of Christ. For this reason a non-Christian religion can be recognized as a lawful religion.[3]

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[1] As cited by Race, *Christians And Religious Pluralism*, 43.

[2] See *Vatikan II: Vollständige Ausgabe der Konzilsbeschlüsse,* spezial Vol. 44, eds. Albrecht Beckel, Hugo Reiring and Otto B. Roegele (Osnabrück: A. Fromm, 1966), 636.

[3] Karl Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions," *Christianity and Other Religions: Selected Readings,* eds. John Hick and Brian Hebblethwaite (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 60f.

Here Rahner admits that the presence of Christ cannot be limited within the Christian tradition. Rather Christ transcends the boundaries of religions. Upon this claim, Rahner treats other non-Christian religions positively. He wrote:

> Christianity does not simply confront the members of an extra-Christian religion as a mere non-Christian but as someone who can and must already be regarded in this or that respect as an anonymous Christian.[1]

Undoubtedly, Justin's view of Christ as the Logo is fundamental in Rahner's concept of the "anonymous Christian".[2] While it is true that the Christian Church may recognize the presence of Christ in non-Christian religions, it is obvious that the Christian Church maintains the view that Christianity is the center among the historical religions. This is for instance reflected in the Vatican II declaration.[3]

Despite such a claim, this official statement of the Church signals a new development in the position of the Church from exclusivism to inclusivism. That is, it considers the non-Christian religions as the bearers of truth as well. However this is so only in the secondary sense. That means that the Vatican II Declaration still maintains the superiority of God's revelation in the person of Jesus Christ. For the inclusivists this implies that the salvation of a good Hindu is not produced by Hinduism, but by Christ through the Sacraments and the Mysteries of Hin-

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[1] Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions," 75.

[2] Similarly Raymond Panikkar joins Rahner's inclusivist position by arguing that Christ is also at work in Hinduism, for Christ is in Hinduism. Thus, in seeking for a meeting point between Hinduism and Christianity, Panikkar proposes to introduce the notion of the "unknown Christ" in Hinduism. See Raymondo Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism,* (London: Darto, Longman and Todd, 1968), part. 28-68.

[3] Vatikan II: 636.

duism.[1] The same idea is expressed by Dr. J.N. Farquhar of the Indian YMCA in his "theory of fulfillment". He writes:

> Christ provides the fulfillment of the highest aspirations of Hinduism... In Him is focused every ray of light that shines in Hinduism. He is the Crown of the Faith of India.[2]

In the theory of inclusivism, the historical Jesus is considered the axis of all religions. While the inclusivists are open to other non-Christian traditions, the centrality of the historical Jesus is decisive in the sense that he is the ultimate answer to humanity's quest for meaning and salvation. In the inclusivist theories, the central place of Christianity in history is not accidental. Its late coming in history is providential, since it is associated with the coming of the historical Jesus as God's ultimate historical revelation. Thus it follows then that if Christianity appears apologetic in its attitude towards other non-Christian religions, this is to be understood in the light of its claim for the absolute character of the historical Jesus, who is the locus of its religious tradition.

Again, what is clear in this position is the attempt of the post Vatican II theologian to universalize the Christian tradition through the spiritualization of Christ. Not wanting to lose the historical character of the Christian religion, inclusivists like Rahner or Panikkar engage in a reinterpretation of the language of the Christian dogma to connect other non-Christian traditions to the Christian religion. Hence a theory of inclusivism is no less than an attempt to make Christianity a "universal religion" of humanity.

To wit, the inclusivist theory maintains the following assumptions: First, it is undebatable that there is inner

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[1] Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, 54.
[2] As cited by Race, *Christians And Religious Pluralism*, 57.

depth of faith in all religious traditions, a faith in which humanity seeks to be transformed from what is not to what it should be. Second, all religions despite their independent historical origins and developments have one Source of origin who is the object of faith and who may be called by many different names. Third, the Incarnation of the Logos is the expression of God's Spirit dwelling in all men. This Logos is no less than Jesus Christ, the final and ultimate expression of divine revelation and salvation in history.

Indeed such an inclusivist perspective of God's historical special revelation in Christianity poses a problem for other non-Christian religions. If Christ is truly the locus of all religions, "Why did Christ come so late?" This question has not been properly answered. It is for this reason that we need to turn to another expression of universal religion which attempts to radicalize the inclusivistic claims.

3. Pluralism and the Universalization of the Historical Religions

The idea of religious pluralism should be understood as a product of the development of knowledge in the history of religions. Its root could be traced back to the eighteenth century where interest for historical science dominated almost all levels of scientific disciplines. Undoubtedly, historical science has infiltrated theology. One obvious example of this is the indelible impact left by the Quest for the Historical Jesus Movement in the last 150 years upon the Christendom in Europe and in the English-speaking continents. Such a movement shows how historical critical science can challenge if not transform the orthodox Christian faith.

In no way can one also deny, that the rise of historical criticism is the product of knowledge in the history of religions. The explosion of historical knowledge in religion leads to a critical study of the Near Eastern culture and

its influences upon the biblical documents in the process of the inception of the Christian faith and dogma.

A concrete example of how the history of religion changes the theological gears of the Christian theologian is Ernst Troelstch's *Das Wesen der Religion.* Here Troeltsch thinks of Christianity not as the absolute religion. What is clear for Troeltsch is that Christianity is a cultural religion which reflects primarily the European culture. In contrast to the exclusivist claim, Troeltsch moves towards the relativism of the Christian religion and looks at it as one of the manifestations of the divine in one culture. For instance Troeltsch writes:

> The evidence we have for this remains essentially the same, whatever may be our theory concerning absolute validity—it is the evidence of a profound inner experience. This experience is undoubtedly the criterion of its validity, but, be it noted, only of its validity for us. It is God's countenance as revealed to us; it is the way in which, being what we are, we receive, and react to, the revelation of God.[1]

Unquestionably Troeltsch paves the way for the rise of today's religious pluralism. His position focuses on the God's continuing operation in the history of religions. He looks at Christianity not as an absolute religion but as co-existence with other non-Christian religions in search for religious truth. Following the Hegelian structure of thought, Troeltsch believes that a universal religious truth or faith will develop in the course of human history.[2]

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[1] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity* (London: SCM, 1972), 111f.

[2] Ernst Troeltsch, "The Place of Christianity among the World Religions," *Christianity and Other Religions: Selected Readings,* eds. John Hick and Brian Hebblethwaite (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 11-31. Similarly, Wilfred Cantwell Smith argues: "Co-existence, if not a final truth of man's diversity, would seem at least an immediate necessity, and indeed, an immediate virtue." Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "The Christian in a Religiously Plural World," *Christianity and Other Religions: Selected Readings,* eds. John Hick and Brian Heb-

3.1. The Names of God

The notion of religious pluralism begins with a study of comparative religions. The central point in religious pluralism is the question of God. This leads to an interest in the study of the directory of gods. God has many names. From the literature and traditions of India we find God whose names are Rudra, Agni, Mitra, Indra, Varuna. From the Near East God is called Osiris, Isis, Horus, Ra, Jahweh. From the southern Europe, God was known as Jupiter, Apollo, Dionysus, Poseidon while in northern Europe God is called Odin, Thor, Balder, Vali, Woden. In Africa, God is addressed as Nabongo, Luhanga, Nyame, Lesa, Ruhanga. And we go to America, Asia and Australia, what we have would be a long list of names from A to Z.

What does this imply? Proponents of religious pluralism argue that God's revelation is general. God is known to people in different names and forms.[1] But all humanity makes a response to a transcendent divine Reality. Their responses may vary. But they reflect an awareness of the supernatural.[2] This awareness of the divine are experienced and expressed in many different ways, since each religion responds to this divine Reality according to its historical backgrounds and experiences. These religious thoughts and experiences serve then as the mediators between humanity and the "Ultimate Reality". While human religious consciousness and experiences are limited and imperfect in nature, they are proofs of a special encounter with God either personally or impersonally.[3]

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blethwaite (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 96.

[1] John Hick, *God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 59.

[2] Hick, *God Has Many Names*, 40-59.

[3] John Hick, *Problems of Religious Pluralism* (London: Macmillan, repr. 1988), 38f.

3.2. Characteristics of a Pluralistic Religion

It interestingly shows how religious pluralists like John Hick reject any Marxist and Freudian concepts of religion as a matter of human delusion and projection. His grounds are two-fold: First, reflections, conceptualization and reconstruction of religious ideas cannot ignore the divine and natural realities. Second, the patterns of interpretative concepts are the results of various human perceptions and consciousness of a reality. And to some extent these perceptions are influenced by one's cultural background.[1]

It follows further that no religion possesses any absolute claim for truth. A Hindu cannot say that access to the *sanatana Dharna*, the eternal truth, incarnated in human language in the Veda, should lead him to believe that he has more advanced and superior awareness of truth than others. Or Muslims cannot say that the Qur'an is God's final words of commandments which the whole of humanity should obey. Or the Christians cannot say that Jesus Christ is alone the final expression of God's incarnation. Therefore, they can declare *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the church, no salvation) or the Protestant equivalent, "Outside Christianity, no salvation."[2]

Religious pluralism rejects any exclusivist dogma of any particular religion. Exclusivism like inclusivism, demonstrates a feeling of religious arrogance and superiority over others. Thus religious superiority does not belong to the vocabulary of religious pluralism. As argued by Hick, religious pluralism speaks of world faith and not of a particular faith. Thus he regards each religion as "alternative soteriological spaces within which, or ways along which men and women can find salva-

[1] Hick, *God Has Many Names* 102-105.
[2] Hick, *Problems of Religious Pluralism,* 46-51.

tion/liberation/fulfillment.[1] Hick proceeds to concretize his philosophy of pluralism by departing himself from the orthodox Christian theology. He radicalizes his theology by aligning Christianity with the rest of the historical religions. He calls this pluralistic view of religion, "the Copernican revolution." His theory states that Christianity should not be the center in the planetarium of religious faith, but rather God. That means, that all religions revolve around God following their own theological orbits. Upon this theory, Hick moves to interpret the Incarnation of Jesus mythologically.[2]

Another important aspect in the rise of the theory of religious pluralism is conditioned by the awareness of the social and political situations of time. An interest for a common understanding among historical religions are instigated by their common question on the role of religion in the world of suffering, exploitations, threats of environmental deluge and the like. In this respect, a new word comes out as an expression of that concern for the whole plight of humanity. The word is "ecumenism".

Ecumenicism arose as ‘a word of the atomic age, of the jet age, of the age of unprecedented social and international mobility, opportunity and peril.’[3] Originally the word comes from the Greek word "oikoumene" which means "the whole inhabited world." Doubtless because of this association, the ancient church adopted it to mean, "die Kirche als ganze betreffend." But in a broader definition of the word, "oikoumene" includes a humanization of

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[1] Hick, *Problems of Religious Pluralism,* 47.

[2] See John Hick, "Whatever Path Men Choose is Mine," *Christianity and Other Religions: Selected Readings,* eds. John Hick and Brian Hebblethwaite (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 181-186.

[3] See Huston Smith, "Identification of Problem: The Irenic Potential of Religion," *Religious Pluralism and World Community: Interfaith and Intercultural Communication,* ed. Edward J. Jurji (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), 27 quoting George Williams, "Dimensions of Roman Catholic Ecumenism," *International Association for Religious Freedom Papers on Religion in the Modern World,* Number 1, 1.

the world and uniting the whole humanity which could either lead to pluralism or syncretism of religions.[1]

It expresses a sense of openness to spiritual proximity and serves as a bridge across religious differences. It defines the religious response to the growing political and social tensions which alienate peoples and cultures. For instance, questions such as: Would Pakistan be partitioned from India if Hinduism and Islam were disparate? Would there be quarrels between Israel and Palestine today "if Judaism were not a historic community distinct from Islam?"

4. Appraisal

Religious problems are no doubt inseparable from political problems. In fact, it is undeniable that in most cases, religion is one of the sources of political problems in the world. Cardinal Newman rightly expressed this mode of religious problems: "Oh, how we hate one another for the love of God!"[2]

It is upon this context where the question of the role of religion as a potential agent of reconciliation is raised. Can the so-called historical religions unite in spite of their diversities in dogma in the face of the political conflicts that beset humanity? Can they tame the powers of nations and individual persuasions in search for peace? Given these social and political challenges of time, a religious dialogue is considered imperative in addressing not only the religious questions but in maximizing its potential

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[1] Such a broader definition of the Greek word, "oikoumene" becomes however the major focus of criticism against the World Council of Churches (WCC). Critics consider the WCC's understanding of "oikoumene" as a tendency towards a secularization of the Christian mission and the reduction of the gospels to purely social, ethical and political programs. See Erich Geldbach and Gerhard Ruhbach, "Ökumenische Bewegung," *Evangelisches Lexikon für Theologie und Gemeinde* (Wuppertal and Zürich: R. Brockhaus, 1994), 1468-1471.

[2] Smith, "Identification of Problem," 21.

towards peacemaking. A religious dialogue on social sufferings and humanitarian cooperation however is not as difficult to undertake as a dialogue on dogmatic issues and claims for truth. All historical religions can work together in addressing the socio-political problems that directly affect them. This is because the longing for liberation from all forms of human sufferings and exploitations is a universal dream.

But things are different on matters of epistemological concerns like doctrinal discussions or dialogues. The goal for the unity of religions is yet a long process. Although it must be admitted that there had been a number of inter-religious dialogues that have been conducted on philosophical and theological levels, it still remains hard to arrive at a consensus of religious and philosophical consensus. The problem of suspicion and distrust continues to linger among religious leaders as to the sincerity of the dialogues.[1] Is the religious claim for the absolute truth a demonstration of religious arrogance and intolerance?

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[1] For instance Stanley Samatra, former director of the Dialogue Programme of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, quoted the reaction of a Hindu who declined the Christian invitation for a continuing inter-dialogue: "Do not think that I am against dialogue ... On the contrary, I am fully convinced that dialogue is an essential part of human life, and therefore of religious life itself. ... Yet, to be frank with you, there is something which makes me uneasy in the way in which you Christians are now trying so eagerly to enter into official and formal dialogue with us. Have you already forgotten that what you call 'inter-faith dialogue' is quite a new feature in your understanding and practice of Christianity? Until a few years ago, and often still today, your relations with us were confined, either to merely the social plane, or to preaching in order to convert us to your *dharma. ...* For all matters concerning *dharma* you were deadly against us, violently or stealthily according to cases. ... And the pity was that your attacks and derogatory remarks were founded in sheer ignorance of what we really are, or what we believe and worship. ... The main obstacles to dialogue are, on the one hand, a feeling of superiority and, on the other, the fear of losing one's identity." *Dialogue Between Men of Living Faith,* (WCC Geneva, 1971), 22f.

It is hard to give an objective answer to that question. But what is actually more decisive is the practical question of why an honest and open inter-religious dialogue remains an impossible possibility. The reasons are two-fold:

First, inter-religious dialogue requires a great amount of openness to rethink, self-criticize and reinterpret each religious tradition. And it is evident that even within each religion, this in itself is a difficult task and will not invite any popular acceptance. For instance, if one attempts to interpret the incarnation of Logos or Jesus metaphorically or mythically like what John Hick and others do, how many Christians would accept that view? Or how many Buddhist would accept the Christian understanding of *satori* as the inner witness of the Holy Spirit?[1]

Second, it is still difficult for all historical religions to regard themselves as equal and on the same level with others. If Christianity will insist for its superiority in account of its Christology, Hinduism will immediately claim for its supremacy being the oldest religion in the world. To regard each religion like "ecclesiastical ethnicity" could hardly be accepted by each religion. Normally the tendency for each religion is to compare each other's claim for truth, and then judge it on the basis of one's particular religious tradition. Certainly the outcome is an endless conflict among historical religions. The reason is primary: It is hard for a certain religion to sacrifice a part of its religious tradition in favor of the claims of other religions. If it does, it takes a high level of religious maturity and tolerant attitude to accept the idea that all religions are co-existent and complementary in search for a religious truth.

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[1] See C.S. Song, *Theologie des Dritten Auges* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 65f.

But is there really such a universal religion? The answer is partly yes and partly no.

Partly yes, that is, if one defines religion as a personal belief in an "Ultimate Reality" and an esoteric experience of the divine which is universally accessible to anyone. Theoretically a universal religion exists as a loose religious group without fixed religious system of belief and organization like the "New Age Movement." The question however is until how long this movement will exist, since the criteria of its religious beliefs are based on esoteric experience, or primarily on feelings. When they no longer appeal to the followers, will there still be a "New Age Movement?" This is certainly an academic presumption which remains as such until the so-called new religions of today will pass the test of time.

Partly no, in the sense that a meeting of all religions for a broader ecumenical religious celebrations or prayers does not necessarily imply an assembly of a new religion, namely the universal religion. Ecumenical meetings normally take place on a social level, like demonstration of friendship and cooperation that is not usually an outcome of the emergence of a new universal religion.

The actual praxis of religious pluralism through a humanitarian way may indicate a positive sign that promotes common understanding among religions. Yet it is hard to assume that such concerns for social and political liberation implies commonality of belief, no matter how religiously motivated the concerns are. On matters of social and political concerns, religion does not normally take center stage. For the saying is true, "Doctrines divide, but service unites."

Thus in my opinion, a religion to be truly historical has to have a stable organization and a concrete system of religious claims, like dogma which have gained popular acceptance among its followers regardless of the amendments it undergoes in the course of its existence. Based on this criterion, the New Age Movement and other groups which aim at establishing a pluralistic or a uni-

versal religion no doubt cannot be qualified as one of the historical religion. If ever there is an attempt to push for the realization of such a phenomenon by the adoption of the philosophy of religious pluralism, it is still on its conceptual or on its embryo stage yet developing.

However the emergence of the pluralistic and universal religious movements poses a critique and a challenge to the facticity and relevance of every historical religion. In the light of the contemporary religious, social and political problems, the questions of faith and history, fact and meaning of every religion remain as indispensable questions. It follows that if each religion or religious group wants to be responsive and significant to modern questions, it cannot ignore the urgency of reevaluating its history and the direction of its religious claims for truth in the one and only powerful cause of human existence – GOD.

And, if each religion desires to be truly historical then it has to prove dialectically its historicity in view of its continuity in history and its existential relevance. It has to be willing to be criticized by others and to surrender its own religious arrogance if later its original positions and traditions are verified as rationally and theologically illogical. After all, a religious phenomenon develops as a product of human historical experiences and encounters with the visible and invisible elements of history, the natural and supernatural, the intelligible and the mysterious, and the revealed and the hidden.

Local Governance vs. Centralization: The Case of Pastors in the CPBC

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I. Introduction

Background

The principle of "local autonomy" was introduced by American Baptist missionaries working in the Philippines, to guide the leadership structure of Philippine Baptist Churches.[2]

By 1935 the principle of "local autonomy" was institutionalized when the newly organized Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC) was organized. The delegates of the Baptist Churches in convention assembled

[1] Convention Baptist Bible College – Center for Research, Ecumenical Endeavor, Evangelization and Development (CBBC-CREED), Bakyas, Bacolod City.

[2] N. Bunda, 1999, 96f; J. Empig, "How to Make Church Organizations Work," in, D. Kirkwood, ed., *Outline of Theology Used in Baptist Work in the Philippines*, 1952.

on May 23, 1935 approved the preamble of the CPBC By-Laws which states:

> "In order to more intimately unite the Baptist Churches in the Philippines and the Baptist missionaries, to work more effectively for the spread of the Gospel ministry, to give more harmony to the work of the different Baptist churches in the Philippine Islands, and to promote and perpetuate the Baptist principles which include (a) the authority of the Bible, (b) the competency of the should to work out its religious destiny, (c) a regenerated church membership, (d) the democracy and independence of the local church, (e) the separation of church and state and (f) religious liberty, we do hereby ordain and establish these By-Laws."[1]

The principle of "democracy and independence of the local church" has been assumed to be similar to the principle of "local autonomy." Since then the latter became the general church rule followed by local churches in managing their affairs. In many cases, local churches registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) have adopted those CPBC principles in their Constitution and By-Laws. It is common knowledge that the local churches are independent in themselves, not only because they are legally registered with the SEC but importantly they apply the principle of local autonomy, that is, the local churches exercise "self-rule". This "self-rule," however, does not necessarily mean "democracy" and "independence."

The "self-rule" idea has been influencing, on one hand, local churches in fulfilling their Christian mission. Churches have the last say in calling, appointing, or firing a pastor. The churches have the last say in resolving their conflicts or planning for the future. The churches

[1] Preamble, 1935 CPBC Constitution.

have the last say in deciding leadership structure and style or determining what is moral or not moral. The churches have the last say in their economic affairs, for instance, on how much they should give to the budget of the CPBC. On the other hand, association of churches like the Kasapulanan and the CPBC, which are in themselves "legal and independent," being registered with the SEC, are having their own programs on spirituality, leadership, and social and economic projects.

In the course of history, the principle of local autonomy has not only survived but became an essential part of the understanding and practice of the local churches and church related institutions. Yet, when a conflict surfaces, for instance, that involves the local church and the Kasapulanan or CPBC, it is difficult to come up with a common solution and a common accountability in the execution of that solution, when that solution and execution are in conflict with the practices of local autonomy by the local church, the Kasapulanan or the CPBC.[1]

It is observed that tensions arises, for instance, between the CPBC and a local church when they are confronted by problems in governance because guidelines and implementing details in the practice of local autonomy have not been clarified or agreed upon. In some cases, the consequences of that tension are regrettable and even lead to splits within the local church, or to the withdrawal of financial support by the local church to the CPBC. Moreover, the lack of an intensive research that evaluates and critically analyses, for instance, the principle of "democracy and independence of the local church" in relation to the perspective and practice of the local churches, aggravates the perceived tension.

The CPBC in assembly in May 2004 at Capiz Evangelical Church was not unaware of the problems and tensions arising from the interpretation and practice of local

[1] J. Gico, "A Critique of Conflict Management Who Will Throw the First Stone" in, N. Bunda, et. al, eds., *Appropriating Faith Resources*, 2004

autonomy. During the assembly it was noted by the assembly that there were some abuses in the application of the principle of local autonomy to the point that the structure of CPBC down to the Kasapulanan (association of local churches) and Circuits (localized association of local churches) appears unhelpful. Hence, a resolution was passed by the CPBC assembly to study the definition, scope and limitation of the principle of local autonomy.[1]

In order to contribute to the discussion on local autonomy, a study has to be conducted. Hence, this investigation.

Objectives of the Study

This research endeavor seeks to determine preferences of CPBC pastors on local governance versus centralization.

Specifically, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1) To determine the profile of the pastors according to sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, work and nature of work.
2) To determine the preference of pastors in these areas – spiritual, social, economic and management – as far as local governance and centralization are concerned.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarity and common understanding, the following terms are operationally defined:

Localization means that the local church has the sole authority to decide on church matters.

[1] F. N. Jalando-on, Interview by Nestor D. Bunda, March 17, 2005.

Centralization means that the Convention of Philippine Baptist churches (CPBC) has the authority to decide on matters of local churches.

Spiritual refers to the religious aspect of the local church ministry.

Call is an offered appointment to a pastor presented by a local church.

Liturgy is part of the worship program of a local church which includes order and content of a worship service such as the reading and preaching of the word of God.

Christian Education includes the content of study utilized during Sunday Schools; the selection of Sunday School teachers; and the standard books used in Baptist seminaries.

Creed consists of statement of beliefs formulated by the CPBC on contemporary issues and basic church covenant.

Ordination is the official and divine proclamation of a pastor tasked to proclaim the word of God and realize the mission of Jesus Christ. The CPBC Ordination Council examines the candidate for ordination upon the recommendation of the local church. Then the local church ordains the pastor upon the recommendation of the CPBC ordination council.

Management is the administration of the affairs of the local Baptist church and church related institutions.

Church program refers to the activities of a local church.

Conflicts are disagreements and differences in policies and implementing of policies among local churches, church related institutions and CPBC.

Church schools are church related educational institutions related to the CPBC.

External Linkages are linkages (example linkage with another denomination) outside the CPBC network desired by a local church or church related institution.

Internal Linkages are linkages of a local church or church-related institutions within the CPBC structure.

Social refers to the sense of community participation and morality particularly on women participation, homosexuality, and actions with moral consequences.

Women participation is the involvement of women in the decision making process of the local church and the CPBC.

Homosexuals are persons who feel and act not according to their physical gender. This study asks if homosexuals should be tolerated, accepted and offered program that fit their needs.

Vices and Morality are acts related to gambling, consumption of alcoholic beverages, and adultery.

Economic refers to the financial and other material resources in the local church and CPBC.

Pastors in business refers to pastor's engagement in economic business in addition to his/her pastoral work.

CPBC in business refers to CPBC's engagement in economic business including multi-purpose cooperative, stock-marker, agri-business, and ecological tourism.

Pastor's salary is the fix income received regularly by a pastor.

Financial share is the contribution, tithes or pledges of the local church and church-related institutions to the CPBC.

Pastor's affiliation is the position occupied by a pastor in government, in CPBC church related institutions and non-CPBC related institutions

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study serves as baseline data on the case of pastors on local governance versus centralization with focus on issues related to the decision-making process (local governance) of churches in the CPBC. The population is the pastors and workers who attended the Convention Baptist Ministers' Association Conference

(CBMA) last January 24-26, 2005 at Central Philippine University, Iloilo City. With resistance and or lack of interest on the part of the respondents, this study experienced mortality. However, the appropriate number of respondents is obtained making the data valid and reliable.

The statistical tool is descriptive in nature which consists specifically of percentage and mean. Moreover, the theological implications are made to correlate the result to biblical reality for the utilization and application when possible for discussion during the CPBC assembly in May 2005.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research is that it comes at a time when the very notion of autonomy is being challenged in practice and theory, not only in the CPBC but also in the wider, larger, Baptist world. Second, it is significant because as observed nothing of this sort and of this magnitude has been undertaken in the entire history of the CPBC. Third, it is significant because it seeks to develop a baseline for further research. Fourth, it is significant because it allows pastors and workers, even if only in an initial way, to express what they think and feel about important issues related to the CPBC.

The results of the study on the preference of pastors on governance could assist pastors, local churches and CPBC. The pastors will know their preferences and could critically evaluate their own stand. The local churches could look into themselves and discuss their beliefs and their relationship with their pastors. The CPBC could look into their structure in relation to the preference of the pastors.

II. A Brief Review of Local Autonomy Experience in the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches 1900-2005

In the Beginning: Centralized Leadership 1900-1935

The American Baptist Foreign Mission society (ABFMS) that started the Baptist Mission work in the Philippines adopted a centralized type of leadership wherein they established a brand of Christianity without prior consultation with the local people. The American historian William R. Hutchison from Harvard University said that American missionaries in general have a shared belief in a right of conquest. American missionaries had a right to define Christianity and civilization "with almost no thought that the perception of others must or could be consulted."[1]

In the course of Baptist mission history in the Philippines, the ABFMS policy makers spread a kind of Christianity as implemented by American missionaries that established local churches, health and educational institutions. The structure of leadership and management, however, varied. Health and educational institutions had adopted a centralized leadership, wherein the American missionaries were the recognized leaders. Local churches, led by local pastors, had adopted the "principle of local autonomy," although the Baptist mission subsidized the salaries of pastors.

The missionary efforts of American Baptist missionaries and Filipinos (men and women pastors and leaders) had organized congregations in many rural and urban areas in Western Visayas. "In spite of the collaboration of

[1] W.R. Hutchison, "A Moral Equivalent for Imperialism: Americans and the Promotion of 'Christian Civilization', 1880-1910," in, C. Torben and W.R. Hutchison, eds. *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era: 1880-1920*, 1982, 168-169

Philippine Baptists and American missionaries in founding Baptist congregations, during the first three decades of Baptist mission, the leadership in churches and mission institutions like schools and hospitals was clearly controlled by the missionaries."[1]

Transition: Democracy and Independence of Local Churches 1935-1971

The local churches through their Filipino pastors struggled to be "independent" from missionary leadership. Thus, in 1935 the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Inc. was born (CPBC). Membership in the CPBC was then composed of individual missionaries, Filipino pastors and representatives of local churches. In 1967 the membership composition was changed to include Baptist congregations only. After 32 years (1935-1967) the churches became the highest policy makers in the CPBC leadership structure. In the 1967 CPBC Constitution, the members of the CPBC Board of Trustees were all Filipinos. The CPBC Board of Trustees had the power and duty to "act on such matters in connection with churches, pastors, missionaries, institutions, missionary personnel, and other activities as delegated to it by other bodies."[2]

Leadership Initiatives 1972-2005

In 1966 CPBC and ABFMS had agreed that all ABFMS properties be transferred to CPBC at the earliest possible time. But due to the high taxes of transfer and other reasons, the transfer was completed only in 1973 as President Marcos decreed to exempt religious organization from paying taxes to donated properties. These properties included agricultural and residential lands,

[1] N. Bunda, 1999, 169
[2] CPBC Constitution, 1967, Article VII, Section 2.a., 5

schools, hospitals, Christian centers, buildings, and equipment. Moreover, as the different institutions (e.g., schools and hospitals) and local churches were registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) properties within their immediate environment were also transferred to them.

The CPBC leadership during this period almost always respected the voice and decision of local churches and institutions but at the same time the local churches supported missionary projects that originated from CPBC. For instance, during martial law years the CPBC initiated projects outside of the traditional “healing, preaching, and teaching” ministry. It had created projects for the poor, deprived and oppressed (for instance, Health Aid to the Needy for Development and New Frontier projects), self-reliant projects and foreign missions.

To sum up, the leadership structure introduced and practiced by the American Baptist missionaries as they did missionary work in the Philippines was centralized in nature. The missionaries had the authority to decide what programs to be implemented or which area in the Philippines to do missionary work. This centralized leadership was adopted by church-related institutions like Central Philippine University, Filamer Christian College, Iloilo Mission Hospital and Capiz Emmanuel Hospital. The CPBC structure, however, had adopted a localized governance, wherein its member churches are autonomous and has the authority to decide for themselves.

III. Methodology

This chapter describes the research method used in conducting this study. The study population, sampling method, data collection and data analysis are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

Research Design

This study used the descriptive method of research. The researchers employed a survey descriptive research to describe the present personal preferences of pastors regarding some issues related to the decision-making process (local governance) of churches in the CPBC.

Sampling

The population of this study are pastors who attended the CBMA conference held at the University Church, Central Philippine University, Iloilo City on January 24 - 26, 2005. There were 634 registered participants in the CBMA assembly. 315 respondents are included in this study which is about 50% of the total attendance of the said conference. This 315 number of respondents is 31% of the total population of CPBC pastors which is 1,017.[1] According to Cochran 20% of the sample could already be considered valid to represent the entire population.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was formulated by the CBBC-CREED Committee. When the final draft was finished, it was distributed to 15 pastors from different sectors such as pastors who are professors, pastors who are Master of Divin-

[1] F.N. Jalando-on, *A History of Philippine Baptist Pastors 1898-2002*, 2003, 261.

ity students, student pastors, among others to get their suggestions to improve the questionnaire. Then the final questionnaire was reproduced. Copies were prepared to be distributed to delegates to the CBMA assembly in January 2005.

The questionnaire consisted of 54 questions. The content of which were categorized into Spiritual, Management, Social and Economic issues. Spiritual has five aspects, namely, Call, Liturgy, Christian Education, Creed, and Ordination of Pastors. Management has five aspects, namely, Church program, Conflicts, Church schools, External linkages, and Internal linkages. Social has three aspects, namely, Women participation, Homosexuality, and Vices and immoral acts. Economic has five aspects, namely, Pastors in business, CPBC in business, Pastors' salary, Financial share to CPBC and Pastors' affiliation.

Data Processing and Analysis of Survey Data

The gathered data were subjected to descriptive statistics only. Specifically, the statistical tools used were the mean and percentage distribution.

IV. Data Analysis

This chapter deals on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data on the personal preferences of pastors regarding some issues related to the decision-making process (local governance) of churches in the CPBC.

Profile of the Respondents

The profile of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

As to *sex*, a little over one-half of the respondents are male (51.4%) while a little over of them are females (36.8%) and a little over one-tenth did not specify their own sex group.

As to *age*, almost the same number of pastors belongs to the 2-39 and 40-60 age groups (39.68% vs. 38.73%) while a minority of them either did not specify their age group or belong to the 61-above age group (12.06% and 9.52% respectively).

As to *civil status*, more than one-half are married (57.8%) while there are only a little over one-fourth of them who are single (26.7%) while a very minimal of them are widowed (3.2%). More than 10 percent did not specify their civil status (12.4%) which might be indicative of their real status or they might have forgotten about it.

As to *educational attainment*, majority are college graduate (66.3%) while a little less than one fourth (23.2%) have not specified their educational attainment. Minority of them have finished graduate school (4.8%)

As to *nature of work*, majority are engaged in pastoral work (67.6%).

As to *place of work*, a little less than the majority are in the barrios (48.3%) while a little over one third are either in the town or city (20.3% and 14.6% respectively).

As to *number of years of work*, a little over 1/3 of them (36.19%) did not specify their years of work; a little over 1/10 of them have either 1-5 years of work (13.97%); 6-10 years of work (11.75%); and 11-15 years of work (13.02%). A minimal number of them have 16-40 years of work (16-20 years of work - 6.67%; 21-25 years of work – 6.98%; 26-30 years of work - 6.03%; 31-35 years of work – 2.54%; and 36-40 years of work – 2.22%).

Table 1:
Personal Characteristics of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Female	116	36.8%
Male	162	51.4%
Not Specified	37	11.7%
Age		
20 to 39	125	39.68%
40 to 60	122	38.73%
61 and above	30	9.52%
Not Specified	38	12.06%
Civil Status		
Single	84	26.7%
Married	182	57.8%
Widow	10	3.2%
Not Specified	39	12.4%
Educational Attainment		
Elementary	7	2.2%
High School	11	3.5%
College	209	66.3%
Graduate School	15	4.8%
Not Specified	73	23.2%
Nature of Work		
Pastoral	213	67.6%
Christian Education Director/Directress	22	7%
Teaching in CPBC-Related Institutions	21	6.7%
Others	8	2.5%
Not Specified	51	16.2%
Place of Work		
Barrio	152	48.3%
Town	64	20.3%
City	46	14.6%
Not Specified	53	16.8%
Number of Years of Service		
0-5 years	44	13.97%
6-10 years	37	11.75%
11-15 years	41	13.02%
16-20 years	21	6.67%
21-25 years	22	6.98%
26-30 years	19	6.03%
31-35 years	8	2.54%
36-40 years	7	2.22%
Not Specified	114	36.19%

The Pastors Preference According to the Following Areas:

A. Spiritual

Overall, in the spiritual area that includes call, liturgy, Christian education, creed and ordination, the pastors either agree or strongly agree (29.5% and 29.4%) that churches should have common stand regarding these.

In the ***Call***, a little over one-half of the pastors either agree (26.8%) or strongly agree (25.2%) while a little over one-fifth (23.5%) are neutral or indifferent about it.

Specifically, the pastors prefer that:

a) A church should seek approval from the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches when calling a Pastor (strongly agree – 29.5% and agree – 27.3%);

b) A pastor should not transfer from one church to another without the approval of CPBC (agree – 22% and strongly agree – 17.8%). Although, one fourth and a little less than one fourth of them are neutral or indifferent and disagree about the situation (25.1% vs. 23.2%).

c) A pastor should accept the call with the provision stipulated in the CPBC standards of calling a pastor (agree – 26.8% and strongly agree – 25.2%). A little less than one fourth of them are neutral or indifferent about the situation (23.5%)

In the ***Liturgy***, when combined, 2/5 of the pastors agree (20.3%) or strongly agree (19.4%) while a little over 2/5 either are neutral or indifferent (22.6) or disagree (21.6%).

Specifically, the pastors prefer that:

a) Churches should be free to exercise any type of worship according to its own spirituality (strongly agree – 39.4% and agree -30.2%)

b) Worship should follow CPBC prescribed worship liturgy (neutral – 34.6%; agree – 19.7% and strongly agree – 9.2%). However, 21.6% disagreed while 8.6% strongly disagree to this situation.

When asks the question, only pastors, not lay persons, should be allowed to preach in the church, majority disagree to it (disagree – 34.9% and strongly disagree – 19.0%). 18.1% of them are neutral or indifferent about the situation.

In the ***Christian Education***, when combined, majority of them either agree or strongly agree (29.7% and 27.3% respectively).

Specifically, the pastors prefer that:

a) There should be a uniform curriculum and materials for Sunday School and other Christian education-related activities of the church (strongly agree – 35.9% and agree – 27.9%)

b) Selection of the Sunday School teachers should follow the standards set by the Convention (agree – 28.3% and strongly agree – 17.8%). However, 26.3% are neutral or indifferent and 18.7% disagreed to the situation.

c) Theological textbooks and references of the different seminaries and Bible schools should be approved by the CPBC (agree – 29.7% and strongly agree – 27.3%). However, 21.4 % are neutral or indifferent about the situation.

In the ***Creed***, when combined an overwhelming majority agree to it (strongly agree – 42.3 % and agree – 34.2 %)

Specifically, the pastors prefer that:

a) There should be a common statement of faith approved by the CPBC (strongly agree – 46.7 % and agree – 33.7 %)

b) CPBC must have a common statement of concern on contemporary issues (strongly agree – 37.8 % and agree – 33.0%)

c) A uniform church covenant should be adhered to by the churches of the CPBC (strongly agree – 42.5 % and agree – 35.9 %)

In the ***Ordination*** issue, when combined, majority of the pastors agree to it (agree – 36.0 % and strongly agree – 33.2 %)

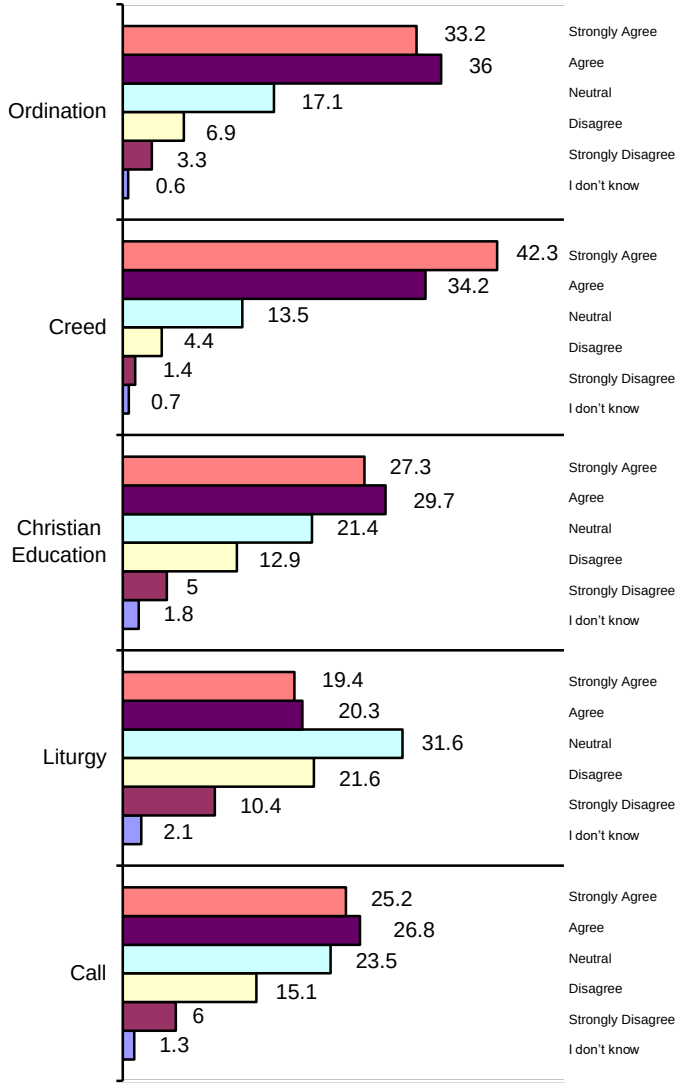
Specifically, pastors prefer that:

a) The Ordination Council should have the authority to examine and to ordain Pastors according to standards set by the CPBC (strongly agree – 46.0 % and agree – 38.1%)

b) A Pastor should be ordained by the CPBC upon receipt of a call from the local church regardless of the form of the call (agree – 34.6 % and strongly agree – 25.4 %)

c) An ordination should be granted to Pastors who are working in church-related institutions (agree – 35.2 % and strongly agree – 28.3 %). However, 20.0 % are neutral or indifferent about the situation.

Graph 1 – Distribution of Respondents According to Spiritual Area



B. Management

Overall, in the Management area, namely Church program, conflicts, Church Schools, external linkages and internal linkages, when combined, majority agree (agree – 32.5% and strongly agree – 29.3 %). However, 20.1% are quite neutral or indifferent to it.

In the ***Church Program***, when combined a little more than 2/5 agree to it (agree – 25.4 % and strongly agree – 18.5 %). However, almost the same percentages are quite neutral or disagree to the situation (neutral – 25.1 % and disagree – 18.5%)

Specifically, the pastors prefer that:

a) There should be a uniform program of activities of churches in the CPBC (agree – 25.14% and strongly agree – 18.7 %). However, 25.1 % are neutral or indifferent while 19.4 % disagree to it.

b) Church program of activities should be implemented on the basis of CPBC mission-vision (agree – 34.9 % and strongly agree – 24.8 %). However, 24.1 % are quite neutral or indifferent about the situation.

When asked the question if non-CPBC Pastors should be allowed to work in the Convention Churches and related institutions, a little less than 2/5 disagree to it (disagree – 26.0 % and strongly disagree – 13.3 %). However, 26.0 % are neutral or indifferent while when combined, a little less than 1/3 agree to it (agree – 16.2 % and strongly agree- 12.1%)

In ***Conflicts***, pastors agree to it (agree – 38.3 % and strongly agree – 34.6 %)

Specifically, pastors prefer that:

a) The CPBC should have the power and authority to settle conflicts in local churches (strongly agree – 37.1 % and agree – 33.0 %)

b) There should be guidelines, rules and regulations in settling conflicts in the CPBC to be adhered to by local churches (agree – 40.6% and strongly agree – 36.2 %)

c) A conflict resolution committee should be created by the CPBC (agree – 38.3 % and strongly agree – 34.6 %)

In ***Church Schools***, the pastors agree to it (agree – 39.1% and strongly agree – 30.0%)

Specifically, the pastors prefer that:

a) Church-related schools should be managed by CPBC qualified pastors (strongly agree – 34.6 % and agree – 34.0%)

b) There should be program in the CPBC in the management of these church-related schools (agree – 45.4% and strongly agree – 27.6 %)

c) A committee should be created to manage CPBC church-related schools (agree – 39.1 % and strongly agree – 30.0%)

In ***External Linkages***, when combined, a little more than 1/3 agree to it (agree – 27.0% and strongly agree – 16.9 %). However, a little over ¼ (26.8%) are neutral or indifferent about it.

Specifically, the pastors prefer that:

a) Any local church desiring linkages with other institutions especially other denominations should seek approval from the CPBC (agree – 36.5 % and

strongly agree – 26.0%). A little over 1/5 (21.6%) are neutral or indifferent about it.

b) CPBC Pastors earning a degree from non-accredited and non-CPBC theological institutions should be allowed to serve in the CPBC-related institutions (agree – 27.0% and strongly agree – 16.9%). More than ¼ (26.8%) are quite neutral or indifferent to it.

When asked the question whether churches should not look for financial linkages with other external institutions, such as in the US and other foreign countries without the approval of the CPBC, the pastors disagreed to it (disagree – 26.7 % and strongly disagree – 14.6 %). However, more than ¼ (29.8 %) are quite neutral or indifferent to it.

In ***Internal Linkages***, pastors agree to it (strongly agree – 46.5 % and agree – 32.6 %)

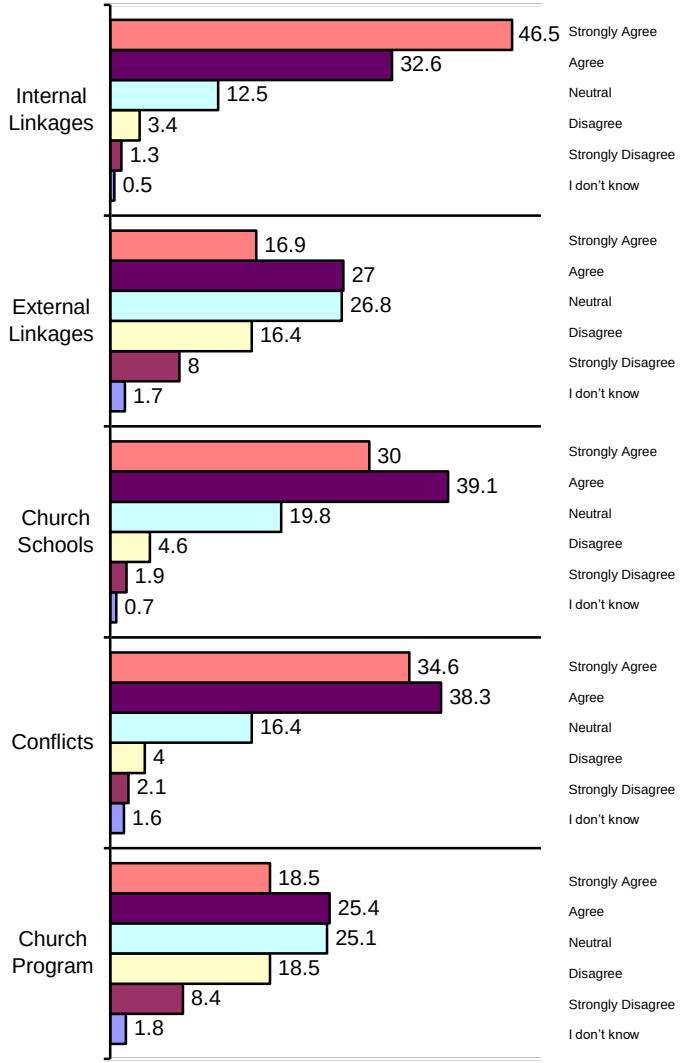
Specifically, pastors prefer that:

a) Pastors should be well informed of opportunities and privileges offered by CPBC-related institutions such as scholarships, grants, etc. (strongly agree – 63.5% and agree – 26.0%)

b) Attendance should be required of all Pastors in all CPBC conference and assemblies from the local circuits, Kasapulanan and national assembly (strongly agree – 40.3% and agree – 39.0%)

c) A centralized system of governance throughout the CPBC structure, programs, activities and processes (strongly agree – 35.6% and agree – 32.7%)

Graph 2 – Distribution of Respondents According to Management Area



C. Social

Overall, in Social Area, Namely, women participation, homosexual and vices/immorality of Pastors, when combined, a little over than 2/5 (43.9%) disagree to it (strongly disagree – 26.8 % and disagree – 17.1%).

In ***Women participation***, pastors agree to it (strongly agree – 31.7% and agree – 30.5%)

Specifically, pastors prefer that:

a) Women should be given equal role to that of men by the local church (strongly agree – 45.1% and agree – 32.7%)

b) A woman Pastor with her husband-Pastor should be called by the church separately with appropriate prescribed remuneration by the CPBC (strongly agree – 35.2% and agree – 29.8%)

c) CPBC has to allocate 50% of the membership of its Board of Trustees to women (strongly agree – 31.7% and agree – 30.5%)

In ***Homosexual issues***, majority of the pastors disagree to it (strongly disagree – 30.4% and disagree – 23.6 %)

Specifically, when pastors were asked for their preferences regarding the following situations, they disagree:

a) Homosexuals in churches including pastors should be ignored (meaning – we should not ask or tell about homosexuals) (strongly disagree – 34.0% and disagree – 27.3%)

b) There should be tolerance and programs fitted to the needs of the homosexuals (strongly disagree – 27.0% and disagree – 26.3%)

c) Homosexuals should be accepted in churches of the CPBC (strongly disagree – 30.2% and disagree – 17.1%)

In ***Vices/Immorality of Pastors***, majority of the Pastors disagreed to it (strongly disagree – 47.2% and disagree – 20.6%).

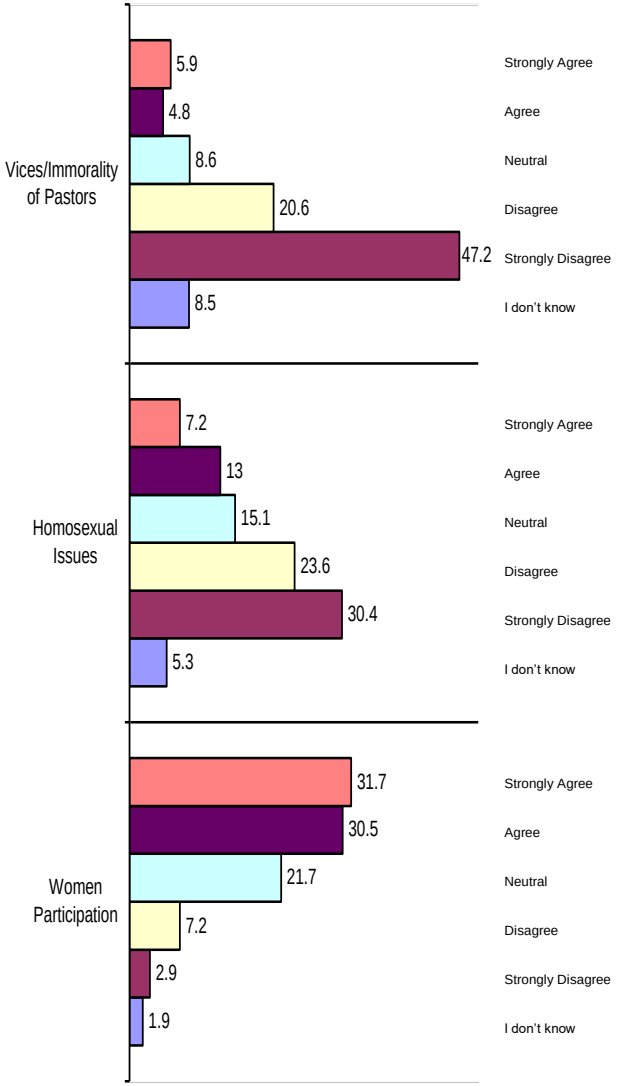
Specifically, when pastors were asked for their preferences regarding the following situations, they disagreed:

a) Pastors should be allowed to consume alcoholic beverages (strongly disagree – 40.3% and disagree – 22.5%)

b) Moderate social gambling (not illegal) may be allowed to CPBC members (strongly disagree – 40.3% and disagree – 22.5%)

c) Adultery may be tolerated in churches of the CPBC (strongly disagree – 54.9% and disagree – 17.8%)

Graph 3 – Distribution of Respondents According to Social Area



D. Economic

Overall, in the economic area, namely, Pastors in business, CPBC in business, Pastor's salary, financial share and Pastor's affiliation, when combined, majority agreed to it (agree – 32.4% and strongly agree – 26.2%)

In ***Pastors in business***, majority of the pastors cannot make their stand (neutral – 26.7%, agree – 24.8% and disagree – 16.0%)

Specifically, the pastors preferred:

a) Pastors may engage in business while serving as full time resident ministers (agree – 30.8% and strongly agree – 14.6%). However, 31.4% are neutral or indifferent about it.

b) As long as church members approve, Pastors may engage in business (agree – 34.6% and strongly agree – 17.1%). However, 23.2% are neutral or indifferent about it.

When asked whether Pastors should leave the church the moment they are engaged in business outside their ministry, they disagreed to it (strongly disagree – 26.7% and disagree – 25.7%). However, 25.4% are neutral or indifferent about it.

In ***CPBC in business***, pastors agreed to it (agree – 38.9% and strongly agree – 30.9%)

Specifically, pastors preferred/agreed:

a) There should be a national multipurpose cooperative endeavor of CPBC (agree – 38.1% and strongly agree – 31.7%)

b) The CPBC may engage in business to support its programs (agree – 37.1% and strongly agree – 28.9%)

c) The CPBC may engage in business ventures like stock market, agri-business, and ecological tourism (agree – 38.9% and strongly agree – 30.9%)

In ***Pastor's salary***, they agreed to it (strongly agree – 40.9% and agree – 29.4%)

Specifically, they preferred/agreed:

a) There should be a standardized salary and benefit scale for Pastors set by the CPBC (strongly agree – 50.5% and agree – 32.1%)

b) If the local church cannot fully support its Pastor, the CPBC should subsidize his/her salary (strongly agree – 53.7% and agree – 30.2%)

c) Salaries of Pastors should be remitted to the CPBC office through the Kasapulanan (agree – 26% and strongly agree – 18.4%). However, 21.3% are quite neutral or indifferent about it.

In ***Financial share*** (CBBC Share), they agreed to it (agree – 40.6% and strongly agree – 27%)

Specifically, they agreed:

a) The local church and church-related institutions should strictly observe the CPBC policy and guidelines on remittance of share (agree – 41.9% and strongly agree – 28.6%)

b) Remittance of share during the last three years should be a condition for maintaining membership in the CPBC (agree – 41% and strongly agree – 21.6%). However, 21.6% are neutral or indifferent to it.

c) In return of CPBC share, the CPBC should allocate subsidy in the form of scholarships and grants per Kasapulanan (agree – 39% and strongly agree – 30.6%)

In ***Pastor's affiliation***, a little than ½ of them (48.4% when combined) agreed to it (agree – 28.1% and strongly agree – 20.3%)

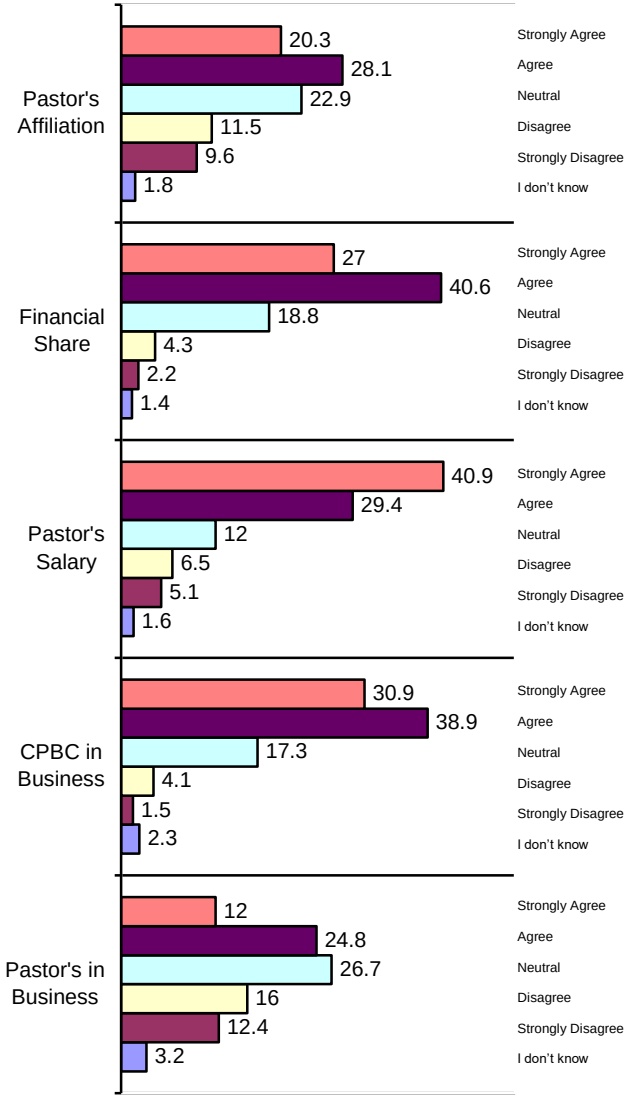
Specifically, they agreed:

a) Pastors can work in non-CPBC related institutions and still keep their CPBC affiliation (agree – 29.8% and strongly agree – 15.2%). However, 24.8% are neutral or indifferent about it.

b) Top level and middle management in CPBC-related institutions should be occupied by theologically trained people accredited by CPBC, provided they are academically qualified according to the requirements and standards of the Philippine Government (agree – 37.% and strongly agree – 32.4%)

When asked whether Pastors should be allowed to run for election and occupy government positions while engaged in pastoral work, they disagreed to it (disagree – 17.1% and strongly disagree – 16.8%). Although, 27.9% are neutral or indifferent to it.

Graph 4 – Distribution of Respondents According to Economic Area



Graph 5 – Quantitative Summary of Results of Study

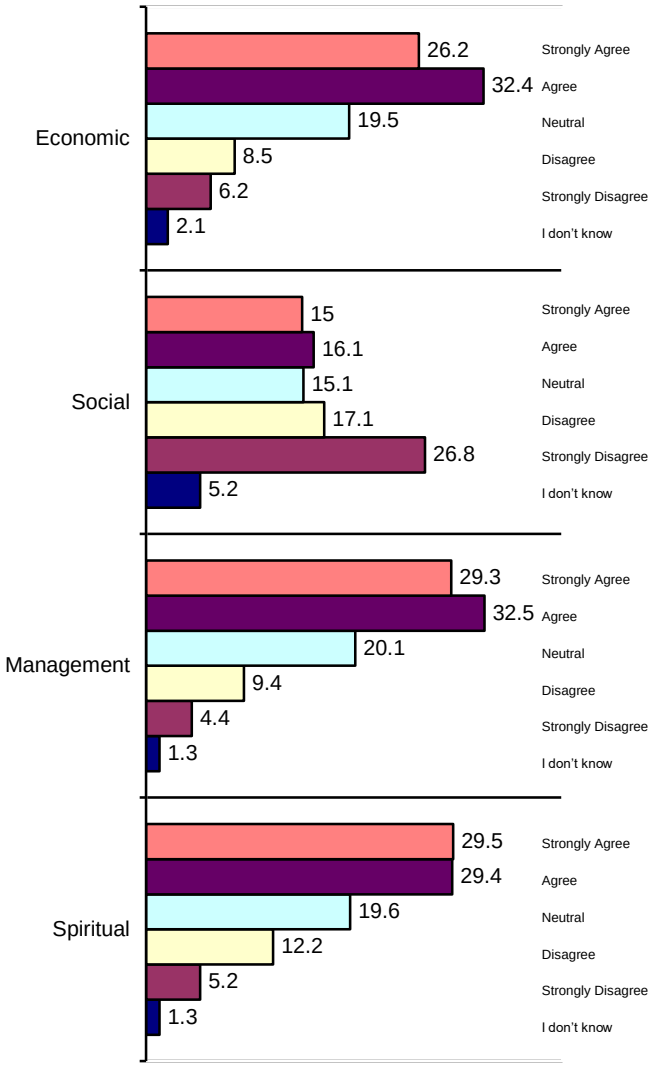


Table 2:
Qualitative Summary of Results of Study

Areas	**Results**		
	Localized	Neutral Geared Towards Centralization	Centralized
A. Spiritual			
1. Call			✓
2. Liturgy		✓	
3. Christian Education			✓
4. Creed			✓
5. Ordination			✓
B. Management			
1. Church Program		✓	
2. Settling Conflicts			✓
3. Administration of Church Schools		✓	
4. External Linkages (outside of CPBC links)			✓
5. Internal Linkages (inside the CPBC)			✓
C. Social			
1. Women Participation			✓
2. Homosexual Issue	✓		
3. Vices	✓		
D. Economic			
1. Pastors in Business			
2. CPBC in Business			✓
3. Pastors Salary			✓
4. Financial Share to CPBC			✓
5. Pastors Affiliation (Political, CPBC and Non-CPBC leadership)			✓

V. Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study shows that as to the profile of respondent pastors, majority are male of productive age, college graduate, married, and engaged in pastoral work and ministering in the barrio.

Respondent pastors generally prefer a centralized form of governance in the spiritual, management, social and economic affairs of the local churches. As written in the constitution of CPBC and as observed, the pastors' preference seems to contradict with the practices of the local churches which prefer local governance (or local autonomy). In a sense, there is a gap between what is practiced (local autonomy), as observed, and what the respondent pastors prefer (centralized governance) – between perceptions of what is desirable in terms of centralized governance and localized governance.

In specific cases, however, which include the particular areas on liturgy, church program, administration of school and pastors in business, the respondent pastors are not clear of their stand, although their preference is geared towards centralized form of governance. As observed, there is a tendency towards laissez faire attitude, meaning if something is functional it can be followed. For instance, if the *Eskuela Dominikal* published by the CPBC is good then a local church could adopt it, and if not, the local church could reject it.

On the areas of Homosexuality and Vices the respondent pastors believed that they are "localized issues". In a sense, homosexuality and moral issues are "private" matters – issues between God and the individual person. Thus, respect of each other's spirituality is quite strong in those areas.

Based on the above findings, this study recommends the following:

1) There is an urgent need for CPBC together with the Convention Baptist Ministers Association (CBMA) and local churches to conduct a deeper assessment and evaluation on the governance of the CPBC and local churches taking into consideration the preferences of their pastors. There is a need to pursue these issues more fully and in greater depth--and with some urgency because it is clear that pastors and workers have expressed their preferences rather forcefully.

2) There is a need for further study to find out the reasons of pastors (e.g., biblical, theological and personal reasons) why they prefer centralization than local governance.

3) There should be a deeper discussion on the relationship between governance and theology.

4) Further study may be conducted which are not covered in the present investigation.

Appendix:
Statement of Concern Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Inc., 1977

On Human Dignity

We affirm that the dignity of a person or his worth emanates from his being created in the Image of God. This state defines both his limit and potentiality. It shows his limit in so far as he is a creature, but it also shows his potentiality in so far as he is created in the Image of God. The worth of a person, in other words, is a gift of God bestowed upon him – a gift that can only be tampered with or enhanced in the context of a living relationship with his fellow man.

We maintain that the person's dignity and worth are tampered with if he is used as mere instrument to achieve the goals of the State; or left alone at the mercy of a powerful profit-motivated System; or handled with violence and cruelty against his conscience or convictions.

We believe, on the other hand, that person's dignity and worth are enhanced when a State or a System or a community opens for him every opportunity to discover and develop his God-given potentialities not only as a person in the light of his limitations, but also as a social being, who finds meaning only in a community life which is a life reconciled with his fellow beings.

On Environment

We believe that the environment in its entirety was created by a loving and providing God. Man's use of the environment for the sustenance of his life is a moral mandate. To replenish and to subdue means to preserve, conserve and control the environment to maintain the ecological balance.

We therefore affirm our accountability to and our responsibility for the environment. To give substantive evidence of this commitment, we recommend the following:

1. Cooperate with the government and its agencies in its program of population development and regulation.
2. Cooperate with all and anybody in the promotion of the health of the peoples of the world.
3. Cooperate with specific programs of conservation and replenishment of the environment such as the Green Revolution, the Blue Revolution, Water Conservation, Anti-Air Pollution, etceteras.
4. Appeal to government to adequately equip government bureaus, such as the Bureau of Forestry and the National Power Corporation, with authority and material to control the spoiling of natural resources vital to human life.
5. Report any violation of laws governing environment to the authorities.
6. Disseminate informational and educational material on environment preservation within our individual and collective spheres of influence.
7. Commit personally to the responsibility for the environment.

On Poverty

We believe that the world and the resources in it were created by God to be enjoyed by all. We also believe that it is His will that man become good stewards of the world's resources which means that he should exercise effective control of all resources for the good of society as a whole. Furthermore, it is God's intent that man should have abundant life (John 10:10): abundance here taken to mean in its fullest sense. We believe that the ministry of Jesus was directed toward helping the poor realize that they were not necessarily powerless and that they could and should participate in the restructuring of oppressive systems which undermined human dignity.

We believe that poverty, defined as a person's inability to meet his basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, health and recreation as a condition that causes underdevelopment, and therefore, is not in consonance with God's intention for His people.

We believe that poverty is not only a matter of food shortage nor of overpopulation but it is because of too much concentration of the world's wealth in the hands of a few; in other words, where poverty is, there is unequal distribution of natural resources. According to Gandhi, "there is enough for everybody's need but not for everybody's greed."

We affirm the right of men to decry any system which breeds and encourages poverty because such a system tramples a person's dignity when he is made subservient to powers-that-be, making him unable to decide on issues which pertain to him and his right to life. Instead of being the crown of creation (Genesis 1:1-2:3) with power to dominate and subjugate, poverty reduces man to a state where he is subjugated and dominated which robs him of his worth and dignity.

We recommend the following:

1. Encourage the government to implement total land reform.
2. Establish cooperative societies which are organizations of families which operate and work in communities in the context of the Christian way of living together.
3. Develop a philosophy that everyone should work according to his ability and should get according to his needs.
4. Develop economic projects managed by church members to supplement or raise income of the church and its individual members.

On Wealth

We believe that life abundant is a right of every man. While wealth is that which can allow man to have stability, security, freedom from want and independence, its concentration in the hands of a few in a world where the majority of people are in want, is a form of injustice that must be deplored.

We believe that God is the owner of all things. Our possession of things is not an ownership but a stewardship. As stewards of God's creation, our use of what we have must be in accordance with the divine mandate that wealth must be shared. The Christian concept on the utilization of wealth is that "those who have in abundance must share with those who have less."

We believe that the idea of stewardship strengthens the right of man to be given an opportunity to work and to amass wealth not only for his own self-preservation and security but also for the preservation and security of society and fellowmen.

We believe that wealth and property must be used effectively to make known to all people the demand of

God that life must be good for all as it was his intention when He first created the world.

We believe that if man fails to discharge faithfully his stewardship on wealth, God as the Owner of everything can use just means to deprive him of his possession.

On Human Settlement

We believe that progress is beneficial, when it provides a place of dwelling and maintains a healthful living. However, progress as we see it being pursued or aimed at through rapid infrastructure developments of urban centers is detrimental to urban dwellers. Such kind of progress does not only dislocate family life, but it also makes a depressing impact upon the livelihood of poor families in these centers.

We recognize that socio-economic progress which is based primarily on vested-interest or industrial enterprises only poses a threat to natural resources, environmental balance and the human dignity of slum dwellers and/or squatters.

We therefore recommend that Human Settlement projects should provide for a place of dwelling which answers to the basic needs of human beings. Moreover, it should provide an opportunity for maintaining a healthful living.

We further recommend that government and private agencies ask the participation of people concerned in making decisions regarding the kind of human settlement they may need.

On Human Rights

We believe in the worth of every individual created in God's image, and that no circumstances whatsoever can justify practices intended to break bodies, minds and spirits.

Both tortured and torturer wherever they are found are victims of the evil from which ho human being is immune. We however, believe that the life and power of God are greater than evil, and in that life and power declare our opposition to all torture.

We affirm the sacredness of human dignity and life, and will support efforts of education, law enforcement, and judicial powers toward the elimination of such violent destruction of health and life.

We recommend to its affiliates, the churches, and members as well as members of other religious organizations, to create a force of public opinion which will oblige those responsible to dismantle everywhere all apparatus which permits or encourages torture, and to observe effectively those international agreements under which its use is strictly forbidden.

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