

*500 Taon ng
Pananampalatayang
Pumipiglas*

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Pagsusuma sa Pag-alala sa

500

Taon ng Kristiyanismo sa Pilipinas

Rev. Luisito Saliendra

PAGSUSUMA SA PAG-ALALA SA 500 TAON NG KRISTIYANISMO SA PILIPINAN



Magandang umaga sa lahat. Una sa pagdiriwang ng Convocation ng UTS ay ang konklusyon sa pag-alaala sa 500 taon ng Kristiyanismo. Sa huling talakayan na ito, ang petsa ay itinaon natin sa Anibersaryo ng pagbitay kay Apolinario Dela Cruz o Hermano Pule. Isang lider layko o hermano na siyang pangunahing tagapagtatag ng Cofradia de San Jose, isang lokal na relihiyosong kapati-ran na nag-aklas laban sa kolonyalistang Kastila, na isa sa itinuturing nating tampok na halim-bawa ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas. Bibigyang diin natin ang kabuluhan ng anibersaryo ng kamatayan ni Hermano Puli sa huling bahagi ng mensaheng ito sa pamamagitan ng pagtalakay sa karanasan ng Cofradia. Inaakala nating ito ang angkop na halimbawa sa pagsusuma ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas.

BAKIT MAHALAGANG ALALAHANIN AT PAHALAGAHAN ANG 500 TAON NG KRISTIYANISMO?

Subalit muli ay ating balikan ang dahilan ng pag-alaala sa 500 taon ng kristiyanismo. Bakit mahalagang alalahanin ang 500 taon ng kristiyanismo? Alam nating ang pagdating at paglaganap ng kristiyanismo sa Pilipinas ang humubog, nagluwal at naglalarawan sa kalakhan ng kasalukuyang lipunan at ng kanyang pananampalataya. Ang tunggalian sa pagitan ng mga katutubong Pilipino na may sariling pananampalatraya at kultura, at ng mga mananakop taglay ang dayuhang pananampalataya at kultura, at siyang puminsala sa una, ang nagpabago sa lipunang Pilipino at nagluwal ng bagong kaayusan at kamalayan. Maging ang mga pag-aaklas at iba pang mga kilusan sa huling dalawang siglo ay may bahid at/o inspirasyon ng kristiyanismo. Hanggang sa

kasalukuyan ay nariyan ang nagtutunggaling mga puwersa sa loob at labas ng paniniwalang kristiyano—kung paano sinusuhayan, o kaya, paminsan-minsan ay binubulabog ng kristiyanismo ang umiiral na kaayusan ng lipunan.

Sa ganitong diwa nakabatay ang pag-alaala sa 500 taon ng kristiyanismo sa Pilipinas. Ito ay pagbibigay diin sa kritikal na pagtanaw o pag-unawa sa pananampalatayang kristiyano na ang hangarin ay higit na mag-ugat ang pananampalatayang ito sa lipunang Pilipino para sa ganap na paglaya ng sambayanan at pagkakamit ng pamayanang mapayapa at makatarungan.

BAKIT 500 TAON NG PANANAMPALATAYANG PUMIPIGLAS?

Bakit 500 taon ng pananamplatayang pumipiglas? Sa ating pagtingin, ang pinakabuod ng pag-alaala ay sinasalamín ng mga katagang “Pananamplatayang Pumipiglas” kung paanong nakikita natin ang mukha ni Jesus sa mga mamamayang kumilos at kumikilos para sa lubos na paglaya at pagbabago tungo sa isang pamayanang mapayapa at makatarungan. Kagaya ng nabanggit na, hindi maikakaila ang katotohanang ang kristiyanismo ay dumating at pinalaganap sa disenyo ng kolonyalismo. Gayunman, ang pananampalaya ring ito ang nagpalaya sa makalumang kaayusan at pag-unawa sa lipunan, at nagbukas sa makabago at malawak na pananaw sa daigdig at sa ka-likasan ng ating pagkatao. Sa kaibuturan ng kristiyanismo, na kinakatwan, una, ng mga ordeng relihiyoso ng Romano katoliko, nagmula ang maririing pagtuligsa sa mga pag-abuso at pang-aapi ng mga conquistadores sa unang siglo ng pananakop. Ang sumunod na malalaking pag-aaklas na inilunsad ng mga Pilipino ay hinubog at udyok ng mapagpalayang diwa ng kristiyanismo.

Makakanluranin o kolonyal ang protestantismong itinanim ng mga misyonerong Amerikano na ang naging hudyat sa pagmimisyon ay ang pananakop ng imperyalistang Amerika. Subalit mula dito ay umusbong ang makabagong kamalayan tungkol sa kalayaan, karapatan at dignidad ng tao, pangunahin ang karapatan sa malayang paniniwala (religious freedom), at nagpatibay sa sekular na sistema ng demokrasya sa bansa. Mula rin sa Protestantismo ang paglaganap ng bagong kilusan ng ekyumenismo na naghahangad ng pagkakaisa ng pananampalataya sa iba't ibang larangan at panuntunan.

Ang mga kilusan at grupo ng mga pananampalataya na nahubog mula sa pagsasanib ng katutubong paniniwala at kristiyanismo, na tinagurian sa pangkalahatan na “popular christianity”, ay mga tangkang pagpiglas sa dayuhang relihiyon na naging mapagmanipula at mapang-alipin dahil sa nakaugnay nito sa institusyong pulitikal ng mga dayuhang mananakop. Ang mga kilusan at grupong ito ay pagpapalaya ng sarili sa udyok ng katutubong pananampalataya upang lumaya sa pagkakulong sa dayuhang pananamplataya at danasin ang buhay ayon sa sariling pagpapasya.

Maging ang mga bagong kilusan ng mga mananampalataya, mga “evangelicals” at “pentecostals”, na mula rin sa dayuhang bansa at nagpapalaganap ng kaisipang indibidwalismo, sa kani-kaniyang kaparaanan ay paghahanap din sa mga bagong anyo ng relihiyosong pamumuhay.

Hindi rin maitatangi ang katotohanan na sa kasalukuyan, may lihim na organisasyon na nagtataguyod ng rebolusyon na ang inspirasyon at gabay ay udyok ng kristiyanong pananamplataya.

Ang mga pangyayaring ito sa kabuuan ng kasaysayan hanggang sa kasalukuyan ay mga patunay kung paanong ang pinakadiwa ng kristiyanismo ay pagpiglas at pag-igpaw sa lumang katangian at kalagayan ng buhay at istruktura ng lipunan na kinakatangian ng kabulukan, kahirapan at kaapihan at tumungo sa bagong kalagayan.

Sa mga nabanggit ay hindi na kailangang palawigin pa na sa likuran ng kapahayagang pumipiglas na pananampalataya ay ang pagtanggap sa katotohanang nariyan din sa kristiyanismo ang tendensya na sumupil at magmanipula. Subalit naniniwala tayo na ang tendensiyang ito ay resulta lamang ng institusyunal na istrukturang nagbibigay hugis sa kanya na iniluwal naman ng kasaysayan at sistemang umiiral. Ito ang isa pang bagay na binibigyang diin sa “pananam-palatayang pumipiglas”. Ninanais nito na humulagpos sa mga hangganang itinatakda ng mga institusyon upang patuloy na magkaroon ng bagong anyo at kaparaanan ang panananampalatayang naghahangad ng ganap na paglaya ng sangkatauhan mula sa lahat ng puwersang umaalipin sa kanya.

ANG PERSPEKTIBA AT PROSESO NG PAG-ALALA

Tiyak at maalinaw ang ating perspektiba. Ito ay sa perspektiba ng ekyumenismo, propetiko, ng nasyonalismo, at ng mga api.

Una, inuunawa at inilarawan natin ang 500 taon ng kristiyanismo sa perspektiba ng ekyumenismo upang itampok na ang kristiyanismo sa Pilipinas ay hindi monolitiko o iisang hugis, sa halip ito ay may iba't ibang anyo, iba't ibang pagtanggap ng mga tao, iba't ibang impluwensya sa lipunan, at iba't ibang pagsasabuhay nito.

Ikalawa, ito ay inilalarawan natin sa perspektibong propetiko upang tunggaliin ang pananampalatayang hinugis ng pananakop. Higit dito ay upang igiit na ang kristiyanismo ay pagpapalaya sa mga tao sa lahat ng uri ng pagkaalipin, at sa pagbuwag sa di-makatarungan istruktura ng lipunan, at ang tunguhin ay humubog ng bagong kaayusan. Ganito, mismo ang layunin ni Kristo sa kanyang pangangaral, pagtuturo at pagpapagaling.

Ikatlo, inilalarawan natin ang kristiyanismo sa perspektiba ng nasyonalismo upang bigyang diin kung paanong ang pananampalatayang ito, na sa kabila na ito'y dinala at pinalaganap sa disenyo ng kolonyalismo, ay naging daan ng pagkakaisa ng malaking bilang ng mga Pilipino, humubog ng kanilang kakanyahan, at naging inspirasyon sa paglaban mismo sa mga mananakop na dayuhan. Sa prosesong ito ang kristiyanismo ay nagkahugis Pilipino at hinahangad nating mag-ing inspirasyon sa lubos na paglaya at pag-unlad ng buhay ng mga Pilipino.

Ikaapat at panghuli, dapat nating tingnan ang kristiyanismo na panig sa inaapi upang alpasan ang mapagpalayang diwa nito na ikinukulong o sinusupil ng kanyang pagiging institusyonal. Sa gayon ay makita ang katotohanang ang Diyos ay panig sa kanila at hindi sa mga makapangyarihan at mang-aapi.

Batay sa perspektibang ito, ang buong proseso ng ating pag-alaala sa 500 taon ng kristiyanismo ay ang pagbibigay daan sa iba't ibang mga grupo ng pananampalataya partikular ang nasa minoritya na mailatag ang kanilang naging papel sa paghubog ng lipunang Pilipino udyok ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas. Binigyang puwang din natin ang pananaw ng akademya, ng mga relihiyoso, at mga aping sektor sa lipunan sa diskursong ito. Ang iglesia ay dapat na patuloy na nagbabago (semper reformanda) upang magdala ng mabuting balita. Sa buong proseso na ito ay nais nating tumbukin ang hamon na nakaukol sa institusyonal na simbahan na kinakatawan ng mga iba't ibang denominasyon at mga lider nito. Inaakala nating ang mga aping sektor at ang mga relihiyosong pamayanan na nasa gilid ng lipunan ang siyang magbibigay ng tunay na dahilan at gabay na pagbabagong ito ng simbahan.

PAGSUSUMA SA MGA TALAKAYAN

Inilahad sa atin ng mga kapatid nating mga Lumad sa Mindanao ang patuloy nilang pakikibaka para sa lupang ninuno at sa karapatan sa sariling pagpapasya. Sa kasalukuyan, ang kanilang mga pamayanan ay sinasalakay at binibomba ng mga elemento ng estado, hinuhuli at pinapatay ang kanilang mga pinuno, isinasara at sinisira ang mga paaralan, tinatakot at pinagbabantaan, at pinagkakaitan ng mga batayang pangangailangan upang mabuhay. Sa kabila nito, hindi sila tumitigil sa kanilang paggigiit at paglaban sa pundamental na batayan ng kanilang pagkatao at pagkamamamayan ng lupaing ito.

Alam natin na bagama't marami rin sa mga katutubo ang yumakap sa kristiyanismo, kapwa sa paraang paghikayat o pananakot, at dahil na rin sa mas sopistikadong pulitika at kultura (pyudal) at superyor na armas ng mga mananakop at hindi nakayang sagkaan ng katutubong lakas, hindi nagawang mapawi o mabura ng mga kolonyalistang Espanyol ang marami pang pamayanan ng mga katutubo. Malimit na kinakatawan ito ni Lapu-lapu at ng kanyang tribu na gumapi sa pwersa ni Magellan. Subalit kahit sa kalagitnaan ng pananakop ng Espanyol ay nagpapatuloy ang mga pag-aaklas na ito tulad ng Pag-aaklas ng Igorot noong (1601), Irraya (1621), Isnags (1625-27) at iba pa. Ang mga pamayanang ito ay naggiit sa malayang pamumuhay na nakabatay sa kanilang pagiging bahagi ng lupa at ng buong kalikasan. Dito hinuhubog ang kanilang pagkatao at ang kanilang kultura at paniniwala. Dito bumubukal ang lakas at dahilan upang patuloy nilang labanan ang anumang pwersa nagwawasak sa kanilang sistema ng pamumuhay at pagkatao.

Inilinaw din sa mga talakayan ang naging papel ng mga kapatid nating Muslim taglay ang paniniwalang Islam sa paghubog ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas. Ipinahayag sa atin na ang mga Muslim ay mas naunang dumating sa Pilipinas at naitatag ang mga Sultanato sa Sulu at Maguindanao halos dalawang siglo kaysa Kristiyanismo. Bukod sa Sulu at Mindanao, may mga pamayanang Muslim din sa Isla ng Mindoro, sa Luzon, at sa Kamaynilaan. Ang pagdating ng mga Muslim ay nagbigay daan sa pag-abante ng mga hiwawalay na pamayanan na mala-alipin malakomunal tungo sa lipunang pyudal na may sopistikadong sistema ng pulitika at kultura kaysa sa nauna, sa ilang rehiyon ng kapuluan. Ang sopistikasyon ng kanilang sistema ay may "cultural expression" sa paniniwalang Islam na siya ring binubukalan ng kanilang pagpapahalaga sa dangal ng kanilang pagkatao at pagiging pamayanang Muslim.

Walang rekord sa kasaysayan na ang pagpapalaganap ng Islam ay ginawa sa pamamagitan ng digma o dahas, bagaman alam nating sa anumang proseso ng pagkokonsolida ng kapangyarihan sa lipunan, palagi't palaging gamit dito ang pwersa o dahas sa iba't ibang anyo. Anu't anuman humabi sa kasaysayan ng lipunang Pilipino ang paniniwalang Islam at ito'y nagpapakita ang paglago ng isang pananampalatayang nakaugat sa malayang pamumuhay ng pamayanan.

Sa panahon ng kolonyalismong Espanyol, matagumpay na nalabanan ng mga Muslim ang pananakop sa lugar na matatag nilang napamamahalaan partikular ang Sultanato ng Sulu at Sultanato sa Maguindanao. Ang sultanato na isa ring pyudal na lipunan ay nakayang hadlangan ang pangwawasak ng dayuhang pwersa. Maging sa panahon ng pananakop ng Imperiyalistang Amerikano ay ipinamalas nila ang kanilang pagtanggì sa dominasyon ng dayuhang kapangyarihan. Nagapi man sa mga aktwal na laban, naipagtanggol pa rin ng mga Muslim ang kanilang kalayaan bilang pamayanan.

Naunawaan din natin ang papel ng mga pananampalatayang iniluwal ng pagsasama ng katutubo at dayuhang mga paniniwala. Sa pananampalatayang ito ay nagsasanib ang kapangyarihan o galaw ng kalikasan sa mistikal na kapangyarihang nagmumula sa Banal na Trinitaryo.

Maliit na minorya ang mga pamayanang ito ng mananampalataya subalit maliwanag ang mensahe nito na ang pananampalataya ay malayang gumagalaw labas sa mga institusyong pangrelihiyon, at malinaw na pagtanggì sa mapagmanipulang paraan ng dominanteng pananampalataya.

Ang naging tipikal na halimbawa ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas sa Pilipinas ay inilarawan ng IFI. Taglay ang klasikal na Katolisismo na dala ng mga kolonyalista na siyang nag-udyok sa mga tao na lumahok sa mga kilusang tumutuligsa sa kolonyalismong Espanyol at kasunod nito ay ang rebolusyon 1896.

Paanong ang relihiyong dala ng kolonyalista ay siyang ring binukalan ng pagpapalaya? Sapagkat ang mga tagasunod nito ay kumawala sa kontrol ng institusyon na kinakatawan ng hiyarkiya ng simbahan. Ang pagpiglas mismo mula sa kontrol ng kapangyarihan ang siya mismong diwa ng pananampalataya. Mula rito ay iinilatag ang bagong patakarang pangrelihiyon at itatag ang pamayanang ng mananampalataya na nagsasarili.

Kritikal at mapanuri ang latag ng akademya sa 500 taon ng kristiyanismo. Mayroong hindi pagtutugma sa opisyal na katuruan o sinasabi ng simbahan sa aktwal na pamumuhay mismo ng mga tagasunod nito (cognitive dissonance sabi ni Bautista o split level christianity ang kay Manazan na tinutukoy so Fr Jaime Bulatao). Ang nakatutuwa pa nga ang mas malalalim na pahayag tungkol sa buod ng kristiyanismo sa Pilipinas ay ginawa hindi ng mga relihiyoso sa loob ng simbahan kundi yaong mga kritiko nito na yumayakap din naman sa paniniwalang ito. Sa ganitong diwa ay nakikita ng akademya ang potensyal ng kristiyanismo na dalhin ang pagbabago sa malawak na lipunan kung mapag-iisa nito ang kanyang sinasabi sa kaniyang ginagawa.

Mas matalas ang kritisismo mula sa mga religious women sapagkat damang-dama nila ang pagkiling ng simbahan sa lalaki at mababang pagpapahalaga naman sa mga kababaihan. Ang tradisyong ito ng simbahan ay nadadala sa malawak na lipunan. Sa kabila nito ay naroon ang malaking ginagampanan ng mga kababaihan sa ministryo sa loob ng simbahan at sa malawak na mamamayan. Sa karanasan ng mga babaeng relihiyoso ipinapakita nito na isang binhi na sisibulan ng pagbabago sa loob ng simbahan ay mismong mga kababaihan. Taglay nila ang pananampalatayang pumipiglas.

Ang patotoo ng mga religious women ay sinasang-ayunan ng mga nasa sektor ng kababaihan na lantarang nagsusulong ng karapatan ng kababaihan. Sa kalakhan, hinubog ng simbahan ang mga lalaki at babae sa sistemang patriyarkiya na nagdi-discriminate sa huli at sa ibang oryentasyong pangkasarian. Gayunman, pinatutunayan din nila ang mapagpalayang elemento sa loob ng simbahan sa pamamagitan ng mga relihiyosong nakikipagkaisa (solidarity) sa kanilang pakikibaka.

Umaasa (o hopeful) ang pagpuna ng mga kabataan sa simbahan. Mas nakikita nila ang malaking papel ng simbahan sa pagbabago ng kalagayan ng lipunan kung nanaisin lamang nito na hindi matali sa mga tradisyunal na tuntunin ng pagkasimbahan. Ang pag-asang ito ng mga kabataan ay nakasalalay sa katotohanang hindi pa sila lubos na nahuhubog sa umiiral na sistema.

Sa mga batayang sektor, direkta ang kanilang paghamon sa simbahan; “na pumanig ang simbahan sa pakikibaka ng mamamayan para sa katarungan at karapatang pantao.” Huwag silang manahimik sa gitna ng mga karahasang ginagawa ng estado sa kanyang mamamayan. Nangha-

hawakan sila sa mga progresibong taong simbahan na piniling huwag matali sa mga institusyonal na pagkarelihiyoso at konserbatismo. Sa halip ay sinasamahan sila sa kanilang pakikibaka.

Sa kabuuan ay makikita natin ang habi ng kasaysayan ng kristiyanismo sa Pilipinas. Ang mapagpalayang diwa ang esensya ng kristiyanismo. Gayunman ang mapagpalayang esensya ng simbahan ay nakulong sa institusyong nilikha o hinubog ng umiiral na sistema. Sa karanasan ng Pilipinas, ang institusyong nagbigay hugis sa kristiyanismo ay ang kolonyalismo/pananakop katulad ng binigyang diin ni Sis Mary John Mananzan.

Ang ganitong pagkabatid ng simbahan sa sarili ang inaakala nating bubulabog sa kanya at magpapalaya sa kanyang pagkasimbahan at mag-uudyok upang magsuri at magbago sa kanyang sarili. Kung handang angkinin ng simbahan ang buod na diwa ng pagkasimbahan bilang isang kilusan na nagtataguyod ng pamamayani ng Diyos-kung saan ang pag-ibig, katarungan, pananam-palataya ay namamayani ayon sa SOF ng UCCP, handa nitong baguhin ang anyo ng kanyang pagkasimbahan bilang institusyon at angkinin ang mapagpalayang esensya nito mula sa pagpapalaya ni Cristo (Galacia 6:2).

HAMON NG PAGBABAGO SA SIMBAHAN AT ANG TUNGUHIN NITO: PAGIGING ASIN NG LUPA

Sa pagsusuma, paulit-ulit nating binabanggit na ang kristiyanismo ay dumating sa Pilipinas sa konteksto ng kolonyalismo. Ito ay nagkahugis bilang institusyon ayon sa itinatakda ng istruktura

at sistema ng lipunan na pinairal ng mga mananakop. Ito ay may sariling buhay, hiwalay sa mga tao at pinanatili ng hirarkiya, ng mga doktrina at paniniwala, ng mga ritwal at simbolo, ng mga patakaran at regulasyon, ng mga gusali at palamuti, at ng materyal at salapi. Bagama't sa kasaysayan ay nasaksihan ang panaka-nakang pag-alagwa o pagpiglas, subalit sa pangkalahatan ay kinukulong at sinusupil ng institusyonal na kaaayusan ng kristiyanismo ang nagpapalaya at bumubuhay na pananampalataya, at naging instrumento ng pagsasamantala at pagpapahirap sa mamamayan.

Paano lubusang maangkin ang mapagpalayang diwa ng kristiyanismo?

Ang matapat na tunguhin ng pagbabago ng simbahan ay mabuting magsimula sa pag-angkin sa pagkatawag sa mga unang disipulo. Ang pagiging asin ng lupa. (Mateo 5:13) Ang metaporang ito ang pinakauna sa Biblia bagama't hindi ito malimit na binabanggit sa mga pagbubulay. Ang kabuluhan ng pagiging asin ay nasa paggamit nito ayon sa likas nitong katangian. Walang saysay ang pagkaasin kung hindi ito gagamitin at mananatiling asin. Gayundin ang pananampalatayang Kristiyano ayon sa papel na ginagampanan nito sa buhay ng lipunan. Ang kristiyanismo ay walang saysay at halaga kung ito'y tumitindig at nabubuhay sa sarili, hiwalay sa mga tao, kung ang lahat na potensyal nito lalo ang kanyang mapagpalayang enerhiya ay nakakulong sa institusyonal na kaayusan.

Ang halaga ng asin ay ay naggiging totoo batay sa paggamit nito. Kailangan itong matunaw at humalo. Gayundin ang simbahan, ang mga kristiyano ay kailangan humalo sa mga pamayanan

upang apektuhan nito ang pamayanan ayon sa esensya ng pananampalatayang ito. Alam natin ang tunguhin na pagkatunaw at paghalo. Nangangahulugan ito ng pagkawala ng kanyang pagkakakilanlan liban sa epekto nito sa kanyang hinaluan. Sa Simbahan, ang paghalo nito sa pamayanan ay nangangahulugan ng pagkawala ng kanyang nakikitang anyo, maging ng pangalan, ang paglaho ng kanyang buong kakanyahan liban sa pagbabagong nilikha nito sa pamayanan, ang pagpapalaya nito sa lumang sistema upang lumikha ng bagong sistema.

Naniniwala ang simbahan na siya'y nabubuhay hindi para sa sarili kundi para kay Cristo at sa kanyang ministryo. Sapagkat si Cristo ay namatay para sa sangkatauhan at sa buong sangnilikha at nabuhay na muli mula rito, gayundin ang tunguhin ng kristiyanismo.

ANG KARANASAN NG COFRADIA DE SAN JOSE

Ang metapora ng asin ay hindi metapora para lang sa pagbubulay at pagpapatingkad ng pag-unawa sa pagiging simbahan. Ang metapora ng asin ay ginamit ni Cristo upang ilarawan mismo ang katotohanan ng pagiging simbahan at siya mismo ang halimbawa nito. Inilarawan sa iba't ibang pangyayari sa kasaysayan ng pananamplata ang pagiging asin, ang paglaho ng kanyang sarili at paglaho nito sa buhay ng mga tao upang bigyan sila ng bagong buhay. Ang mga martir sa kasaysayan na hindi napangalanan at hindi na naaalala, ang mga misyonerong hindi natala kasaysayan, ang mga rebolusyunaryong nilait at itinuring na mga bandido, ang mga karaniwang tao na nagsakripisyo para sa pagbabago subalit nalibing na lamang sa lupa kasama ang kanilang ala-ala. Sila ang mga halimbawa ng pagiging asin ng lupa.

Gayunman, ang pagbabagong kanilang nilikha sa kasaysayan at lipunan ng mga tao ay muling nagkahugis ayon sa tunguhin nito. Ibinabalik ito sa kamalayan ng mga tao sa pamamagitan ng mga labi o mga kakarampot na mga tala sa kasaysayan ang kanilang mga ginawa at basahin ito ng kasalukuyang henerasyon sa bagong pananaw o perspektiba. Dito natin pinupulot ang mga aral ng karanasan ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas.

Ang Cofradia de San Jose ay isang kapatiran ng naorganisa sa Lucban sa Lalawigan ng Tayabas (ngayon ay Quezon) at lumaganap sa maraming lugar sa Timog Katagalugan at nakaabot pa sa Kamaynilaan at sa Kabikulan. Ang kaaniban nito ay purong indio, mga mahihirap na magsasaka at iilang kilalang tao. Ginagamit nila ang katutubong lengguwahe. May signipikante papel ang mga kababaihan sa buhay at gawain nito kakaiba sa umiiral na dominanteng simbahan. Nag-sisikap sa komunal na pamumuhay at marubdob na debosyon sa relihiyon at sa kapatiran. Ang pinakamatingkad, isinabuhay nito ang pananampalatayang kristiyano, labas sa saklaw ng hirarkiya ng Romano Katoliko bagamat at kinikilala nila ang mga pari at Obispo nito. Sa katunayan, regular silang nag-iisponsor ng mga misa bilang bahagi ng kanilang buhay kapatiran. Ang Pasyon para sa kaanila ay hindi lamang ritwal kundi uri ng pamumuhay kung saan ginagaya nila si Cristo sa kanyang buhay at sakripisyo. Para sa kanila ang panalangin ay hindi tuntunin ng pananampalataya (*lex orandi, lex credendi*) kundi tuntunin mismo ng pamumuhay.

Ang Cofradia ay itinuring ng hirarkiya ng simbahan na erehe, at ng pamahalaang Kastila bilang banta sa seguridad. Inusig ito at sa huli ay minasaker ng mga Kastila ang mga kaanib sa huling

kampo nito sa Aritao. Namatay at naglaho ang kapatiran subalit mula rito ay naganap ang iba pang mga pag-aaklas at iniluwal ang mga kilusan sa kasaysayan ng bansa: ang pag-aaklas ng Rehimiyento ng Tayabas (1843); ang tangkang buhayin ang kapatiran tatlong dekada matapos ang masaker sa pangunguna ni Apolonio Purgatorio; ang rebolusyong 1896 at mga sumunod na paagbabangon tulad ng sa Sakdalista, ng Colurum at Lapiang Malaya; ang mga mystical na relihiyon sa Banahaw; at maging ang kilusang lihim sa kasalukuyan, ang National Christians for Liberation ay direkta at hindi direktang kaganapan at kilusan iniluwal ng Cofradia. Hindi natin sasabihing dalisay ang mga kilusang ito. Tiyak na may mga pagkakamali sa pagkilos ng mga ito na siyang dahilan ng kanilang pagkagapi at paglaho. Hindi rin naman ninais ng mga ito na mamatay at maglaho ang kanilang mga samahan; ang totoo ninainais nilang manatili ng matagal. Nakatitiyak tayong hinangad din ng mga samahang ito ang matanyag at umangkin ng kapangyarihan. Subali't ang esensya ng pananalampataya na kanilang niyakap— ang maging pwersa ng pagbabago—ay gawing halimbawa mismo ang sarili bilang siyang mensahe at daluyan ng mensahe (the medium is the message) na katulad ng ginawa ni Jesus. Kaya naman likas na tunguhin ng mga kilusan ng pananapamalatayang hangad na isabuhay ito ay magsakripisyo at mag-aalay ng sarili, at sa Gayon ay maglaho, para sa pagbabago. Sa ganitong puntong, hindi sila nagkakamali. Sabi ni Salud Algabre, isang organisador na Sakdalista: *“Walang pag-aaklas na nabibigo, ang bawat hakbang ay sa tamang direksyon.”*

Ang 500 taon ng kristiyanismo sa nPilipinas ay pananamplatayang pumipiglas para sa ganap na paglaya ng sambayanan at pag-iral ng katarungan at kapayapaan. Padayon!

—UTS Historical Committee



*Ang Simbahan at ang
Pananampalatayang Pumipiglas,*

The Most Revd Pablo Virgili S. David D.D



500 TAON NG PANANAMPLATAYANG PUMIPIGLAS

SERYE 4: **Ang Simbahan at ang Pananampalatayang Pumipiglas**, (The Church on Faith Seeking Liberation), *The Most Revd Pablo Virgili S. David D.D*

I would like to begin by congratulating you dear Professors, Alumni and Students of the Union Theological Seminary as you celebrate your 114th Founding Anniversary, and as you open the first day of the Church worker's convocation with this last of a four part series. I hope I don't disappoint you.

This occasion brings back to my memory the good old years of my involvement in the Ecumenical Seminarian's Fellowship (ESF), which was at the forefront fight against The Marcos Dictatorship in the early 1980s. That was the experience that introduced me to the spirit of ecumenism. It was during those years, that I became good friends with many seminarians and pastors from the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, The United Methodist Church, the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, those from the evangelical and Pentecostal Churches.

The topic that was assigned to me by Dr. Reeve Velunta gives a clever tweak to St. Augustine's definition of theology as "Fides quæres intellectum" in English, "faith seeking understanding" because you ask to share about the Roman Catholic Church experience on Faith-Seeking Liberation. Well actually, I see both objective understanding and liberation as related to each other; they are related to each other as theory and praxis should be. Because separated from each other, either one or the other can go wayward. Liberation has always been a constitutive dimension of salvation in Christian discourse. It is not an invention of liberation theology.

I feel very sad, about the way even the Catholic, Liberation theologians has been vilified within the Catholic Church. We are happy Pope Fran has more or less vindicated Catholic liberation theology. I think of the theology of liberation is a mere articulation of the praxis of faith that tends to be overlooked or glossed over, especially when the elements of understanding are co-opted by the hermeneutics of domination. That is when you can expect the faith to get domesticated and to lose its radical, essentially radical, or revolutionary spirit. The Christian faith has essentially radical or revolutionary spirit. And that's when the faith can be petrified into an institutionalized religion and reduced to spiritualism and pietism, the kind that conditions us to simply accept the structure of domination and subservience as the will of God. Which, for me, is a blasphemy. That is also when faith begins to be equated with otherworldly concern and reinforces submissive and a rather cynical attitude towards this our worldly concerns or our efforts to live life on earth as it is in heaven. Which I call the vision and mission of Jesus. That life on earth must be the beginning of heaven.

Christianity has never been a choice between the imminent and the transcendent has it. One does not make sense without the other; the imminent and the transcendent, unless we see their intrinsic connectedness. A "Faith Seeking Liberation" is what our Judeo-

Christian faith is basically aboutIt has never been a just a promise of heaven for a disembodied soul after we die. As my old professor in scriptures in the Loyola School of Theology, Father Carlos Abesamis, S.J. used to tell us "It is those who hold on to such an eschatology who tend to confirm the Marxist critiques of religion as a pie in the sky when you die." Karl Marx actually spoke of religion as the opium of the people in a more positive light. And it is often misquoted let me therefore quote in full what Karl Marx said about religion "Religious distress is at same time, the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress." That's beautiful, and he is almost poetic here "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is spirit of spiritless situations. It is the opium of the people" I think the better modern term for this, should be the "anesthesia" of the people. We know that anesthesia is essential for major operations or surgeries that would require a lot of fixing up, you can think of it that way in our society. He continued "The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness. The demand to give up the illusions about its condition is the demand to give up a condition which needs illusions.

It was in the Catholic University in Louvain where I did my theological studies, that I became convinced. Thanks to the teachings of the Flemish psychologist of religion Professor Antoine Vergote not all religion is about GodHindi porke nag God-God ang tao, they are really talking about God. A lot of the most Godless endeavors in this world have been justified using religious discourse, including slavery, sexism, genocide, and colonization. Speaking mainly as a psychologist, Professor Vergote opened my mind when I heard him say "Not all religion is about God, some of it could be just a manifestation of collective neurosis or collective psychosis" Parang ang lakas ng dating sakin nun. It was my first time I heard that. Pwede palang magkaroon ng relihiyon na manifestation lang ng collective neurosis o collective psychosis. It is a shared mental illness and I think we have to be ready to deal with a lot of shared mental health illnesses in religious activities. That really struck me as an "aha" experience.

Many years ago, during that time that I was doing my research work in Jerusalem, they called Biblique de Jerusalem, I received a postcard from a good friend of mine from Paris. Instead of a picture on the front of the card, the card bore a quotation in French from a poem by a French poet, Jacques Prévert. And it was actually a paraphrasing of what we Christians call the Lord's Prayer – The Our Father, because the title was "Notre père." Here is the quotation: "Notre Père qui êtes aux cieux - Restez-y - Et nous resterons sur la terre - Qui est quelquefois si jolie." If you translate it English "Ama namin, sumasalangit ka, dyan ka na lang sa langit mo. At kami, dito lang kami sa lupa kase ok lang naman ang buhay paminsan-minsan dito." Our Father who art in heaven, stay there in your heaven. And we, well, we can stay here on earth where it can sometimes be just as lovely anyway.

I said to myself after I read those postcards, "Whoa! What an angry prayer – Sinuman ang nagsulat nito galit siya." So I had to do a little bit of a research about Jacques

Prévert and sure enough, was an agnostic. It sounded to me like a protest against a distant God, seated on his throne in heaven watching our human affairs on earth promising an ethereal afterlife reward for disembodied souls, which the protester has obviously given up for this world's occasional pleasures however fleeting they might be. Is such a concept of God who is distant and uninvolved in human history really biblical? Well the bible can be read and interpreted that way. Tell me who reads and interprets it and I will tell you who they are.

Think for example how the Christian faith was taught to the black slaves in America by the anti-abolitionist who fought a civil war just to hold on to what they believed to be their right to own slaves, using the bible for justification. , I've come across it before. Sa totoo lang nakakita na ako, sana mamakita din kayo ng Bible na andaming mga linya, na in-excite, in-edit ba naman ang bible at inalis lahat ng mga dangerous lines daw in the bible. They went to the extent of coming up with versions of the bible that got rid of the parts that contained what they regarded as dangerous ideas of liberating God who hears the cry of the poor. I would refer you to James Cone, one of the leading black theologians of liberation for that. Some Spanish missionaries also tried to do exactly the same thing with the "pasyon" in the Philippines. Precisely to prevent the faith for giving the natives of this country the dangerous ideas aspiring for freedom during the Spanish colonial period. They were wrong, I would refer you to Professor Reynaldo Ileto's "Pasyon and Rebolusyon" to prove to you if the natives could be chain, the Christian faith could not.

This episode in Philippine history that led to the native uprising against Spanish colonial rule was inspired by the same faith that the colonial rulers used in order to keep us subservient. And this would prove to you what was said by St. Paul in 2 Timothy 2:9, "you remember that famous passage. St. Paul speaks to Timothy about the Gospel for which he is suffering, even to the point of chains like a criminal, meaning the apostle, the evangelist has been chained. He says confidently, "Nagkamali sila because the word of God is not chained." The word of God cannot be chained. Maybe that passage should be our slogan for Faith Seeking Liberation. We can be chained by our captors, but the word of God cannot. "Isang pananampalatayang hindi maitatatli sa tanikala, laging pumipiglas – pananampalayatang pumipiglas." (A faith that cannot be bound by chains, always resisting – a faith that resists.)

The whole Judeo-Christian tradition is founded on a narrative about a God who is on the side of the poor and downtrodden, a God who desires the well-being not just of a privileged few but of all. This biblical God is involved in our world and human affairs through and through, always guiding us paths to what Jesus proclaims as the reign of God. A goal that we are able to glimpse every now and then in history but is not fully realized until all humanity has come to discover its call to divinity. The Israeli writer Yuval Harari calls it the aspiration of Homo sapiens to evolve into a Homo deus, and he speaks to the desire for divinity as if it was esoteric. I wonder how familiar this guy is with his own Jewish background. If only he could take his Jewishness more seriously all the way to the Jewish Jesus of Nazareth and Jewish Paul of Tarsus, he would chance upon the consistent narrative of the innate human aspiration for what both Jesus and

Paul call the true freedom that God has in store for all humankind, which is to be sons and daughters of God (Romans 8:21). This God is grieved by the human propensity to play god and aspire to divinity in the wrong way by lording it over. . Ito yung katanghan ng tao, nagsusumikap maging katulad ng Diyos sa maling paraan. It is not power that makes us godlike. So this God is disturbed by the afflictions suffered by the Hebrew slaves. This God hears their cry, this God is hurt when accused of having forgotten or abandoned His people, telling them that even if a mother may forget her maternal care and tenderness, God will never forget His people (Isaiah 49:40-50).

We are supposed to see this God that work in the gracious act of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 8:9), who became poor even although He was rich so that by His poverty, we might become rich - isang pananamapalatayang nagpapayaman. This gracious act is described as God's self-emptying, kenosis in Jesus Christ, the God who emptied Himself took the form of a slave, coming in human likeness, humbled Himself, and became obedient until death, even death on the cross (Philippians 2:7-8). Alam nyo noong semenarista pa ako, sa isang parokya may nagreact sa tema na isinulat naming sa loob ng Simbahan, kasi nadiriwang kami noon ng BEC (Basic Ecclesial Community) Sunday. Reaksyon ba naman ng medyo maykaya doon sa parokya, bakit daw sinulat namin "Proclaim the Good news to the Poor" – Ang Mabuting Balita para sa mga Dukha. Ang sabi niya hindi ba pwedeng alisin na lang yung dukha, sabihin na lang "He proclaimed the Good News to all". Hindi ba raw pwedeng alisin na lang yung dukha. Sabi ko "Ok naman ho, pero aalisin na rin ho yung good sa good news". Dahil ang kabutihan ng balitang ito ay nakasalig sa ihahatid nitiong kabutihan sa buhay ng mga dukha. Kung hindi sya naghahatid ng kabutihan sa buhay ng mga nasasantabi, ng mga napapabayan, ng mga naiiwanan sa ating lipunan aba'y huwag nyo syang tawaging ebanghelyo, hindi siya mabuting balita. Ang pananampalatayang Hudeo-Kristiyano ay hindi maaring maging totoo kapag tinignan sa perspektiba ng mananakop o manlulupig. Ito'y mabuting balita para lamang sa mga dukkha at lahat ng nakikiisa sa kanilang paghahangad na lumaya mula sa anumang uri ng paniniil o pang-aalipin. Ito ang pakilala ng Diyos kay Moises di ba? Diyos na nababagabag sa pagdurusa ng mga malilit at sinisiil, Diyos na may malasakit, Diyos na kasangkot sa kasaysayan ng sangkatauhan.

Last week, in my homily about Ephesians 2:19-23, I began by speaking about undocumented Filipinos in the Philippines. I know that the term "undocumented Filipinos" is usually referring to fellow Pinoys living and working in foreign countries, the so-called TNT (Tago ng Tago). But it was not until I became a Bishop, the Bishop of Kalookan, that I came to know about undocumented Filipinos in the Philippines. It's even embarrassing to note that it was through a group of sisters in our Diocese that I learned about it. I was totally ignorant about it. The sisters are running a preschool for the poor and indigent children in one of our parishes in Navotas City. They were shocked to find out na pagkatapos ng pre-school around 20% could not be enrolled in the public elementary schools because undocumented sila. Meaning wala silang birth certificate or any form of identity to present. Many children in our slum communities were not born in hospitals or health centers; some of them were born at home with the assistance of a midwife. The midwife is actually required by law to have them

registered, but if the family is not even afford to pay the midwife's services, why would the midwife even bother the children registered? Later pag lumaki na yung bata and they want to file register birth certificate, late registration believe or not they have to spent at least 5000 on legal documents para lang magawa nila. That was shocking to me. And the consequences for the children are terrible; the children grow up as non-entities, like non-citizens in their own country. They cannot avail themselves of any public services because they do not count, and they don't have any form of identification. Strictly speaking, because their names are not listed in the National Statistics Office (NSO), they are not even counted in the national population. Kaya kapag sinabi nilang ang populasyon sa Pilipinas ay 100 milyon please wag kayo maniniwala. 100 milyon yung mga documented Filipinos, but I wonder how many undocumented Filipinos you would have to add to that 100 million. The concept of citizenship was very restrictive in more advanced civilizations, like the Hellenistic or the Roman Empire in the 1st century. When St. Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, the arresting officer were shocked to find out that he was a Roman citizen, and they immediately treated him with a lot of deference. They knew that he had legal rights that were protected by the Roman Empire and that he was entitled to due process by appealing to his Roman citizenship. The concept of citizens was limited to a privileged elite during his time. It could either be obtained by birth or paid for with a huge amount of money. Only citizens had rights, and the rest were like, yung tipong gypsies of Europe, the Rohingyas of Myanmar, the untouchables of India, or the burakumin of Japan in earlier times. From its moment inception, Christianity has always understood its mission as a participation in the mission of Christ, and is about reaching out to the disenfranchised, the non-entities in Jewish society, and telling them that they counted too, that in the eyes of God, citizens din sila.

Christianity is founded on the belief that every human being is naturally endowed with dignity and has a lofty calling that God, unlike human societies, does not discriminate. He calls us to be His children and excludes nobody. St. Paul creates a vocabulary for this apostolic mission. It is about reaching out to the non-entities, those who do not matter in society, those who live at the margins of society. Their apostolic advocacy was, as it were, to work for their citizenship. Let me quote St. Paul in Ephesians 2: "You are fellow citizens of the holy ones and members of the household of God." If that is not a liberating message, I don't know what is. Try telling that to the disenfranchised in society. For the apostles, this is the summary of the good news of the kingdom of God. While citizenship among earthly kingdoms is valid or recognized only within the boundaries of their kingdom, this kind of citizenship offered by Jesus goes beyond the boundaries of a nation or even of this world.

Alam nyo pagkatapos kong binigay ito bilang homily last week, andami kong natanggap na comments na hindi rin nila alam na meron palang undocumented Filipinos in the Philippines. Isa sa mga comment na natanggap ko, medyo mahaba-haba ito, galing sa isang babaeng young professional ito ang comment babasahin ko, "Bishop what you said in your homily earlier about undocumented Filipinos in the Philippines is true. Ako nga po mismo, I only began to realize this about four years ago nung nagvolunteer ako sa St. Arnold Jansses Kalinga Center ni Fr. Flavie Villanueva. Sa katatamaby ko doon

looking for homeless people, nabuksan ang mata ko sa realidad tungkol sa sitwasyon ng mga homeless and street dwellers. One time may isang teenager napansin ko malungkot siya, tinanong ko po kung bakit, ang sabi niya namemiss nya ang dalawa niyang kuya, nakakulong daw silang pareho, ang sabi ko ehh 'Bakit hindi mo dalawin?' Ang sabi nya 'Kasi po wala akong ID' Noong una hindi ako makapaniwala, meron palang taong walang ID. Tapos na realize ko, oo nga, hindi sila naka rehistro wala silang birth certificate. At ano ang ilalagay nilang address sa ID ehh wala nga silang bahay, dahil marami sa kanila pinanganak at nakatira sa kalsada. Yung mga pinanganak po sa kalsada, ano nga naman ang ilalagay nilang address, pangatlong kariton, ilalim ng tulay, tabi ng poste o naka care of na lang sa barangay, eh kaso palipat lipat din po sila ng lugar ehh. Napakadami ko pong natutunan sa pakikipag kwentuhan ko sa mga homeless dati, ang dami kong narealize. Nung araw napaka judgmental ko rin po pag nakakakita po ako ng homeless people, sinasabi ko sa sarili ko, 'Bakit kasi nagsusumiksik dito sa siyudad ang mga taong ito?' 'Ba't 'di na lang sila bumalik sa probinsya nila?' 'Ba't 'di sila magtrabaho ang lalaki naman ng mga katawan nila blah blah blah...' Tapos nung nakaranas akong bumababad sa Kalinga Center nagkapalagayan po kami ng ibang homeless na pinapakain, pinapaligo doon, nagka chance po ako na magtanong ng diretso ng ilan sa kanila. Doon ko na realize na ang hirap pala ng kalagayan nila. Yung iba sa kanila, lalaki, babae, dating bilanggo nakalaya na, sino nga ba naman ang kukuha sa kanila sa trabaho ehh may bad records na sila? Tadtad sila ng mga tattoo. Meron nga po doon pati mukha, pati noo may tattoo. Kahit nagbagong buhay na sila wala nang gustong magtiwala na kunin pa sila sa trabaho. Tungkol naman po sa pagbalik sa probinsya, marami nagsabi sa kanila sinubukan na po yun, pero sobrang hirap ng buhay raw po doon. Hindi naman sila pwedeng magtanim sa hindi nila lupa. Hindi daw lahat ng tanim mapapakinabanagn agad, Wala din daw po silang mahingan ng tulong sa probinsya at ang iba itinakwil na ng sariling pamilya kaya nagtitiis sa siyudad. Marami po sa kanila nakatira sa kalsada, hindi nakapag aral, hindi naturuan ng tamang values, ugaling kalaye, natural yun ang alam nila. Survival ang objective nila araw araw, isang kahig, isang tuka, kaya ayun nag aasawa sila ng bata, nagkakanak sila kahit bata pa sila. Tpos mauulit lang sa anak nila yung nangyari sa buhay nila. Hay nako vicious cycle ng kahirapan. Palala na po ng palala ang level ng kahirapan sa bansa natin, still hundreds or few thousands of pesos kulong ka na. Mahihirapan ka nang bumalik ng normal sa lipunan your future look bleak already..." Hindi ko na po babashin medyo mahaba.

Alam nyo ho pagkabasa ko sa mahabang comments ng babaeng ito, tinanong ko sarili ko "Ano kayang nagpatalas sa paningin nya?" Palagay ko ang pagbabad – immersion. Natutuhan niyang tignan ang realidad mula sa abot tanaw ng hindi kasali, mga nasa laylayan, mga walang tinig. Ito ang pundasyon ng bokasyon ng mga propeta ang nagpatalas ng paningin sa ibig itawag pansin ng Diyos. I refer you to Numbers 24:3-4, the Prophecy of Balaam, the oracle of Balaam, son of Beor, the oracle of a man whose eye is true, the oracle of one who hears what God hears and knows what the Most High knows, of one who sees what the Almighty sees. I also refer you back to Exodus Chapter 3, where Moses, in rapture with unveiled eyes, saw and heard God. The faith that seeks liberation works for the citizenship of the disenfranchised in this world.

Alam niyo nasundan pa ang reflection na yun ng sumunod na araw na ang oagbasa sa Gospel ay Luke 14: 1-6. Tungkol naman sa kahulugan ng Sabbath bunga ng aking pakikipagkape araw-araw kay Jesus, yun ho ang pinagmumulan ko ng theology, ang aking pakikipagkape ng madaling araw, around 4:30 AM kay Jesus. Ito ang reflection ko,

Jesus addressing an issue related to the Sabbath. The background is the Third Commandment, where the Pharisees oversimplify it into a mere obligation to abstain from work on the day they should be worshipping. After all, the Hebrew word "Shabbath" means rest. Their simplistic interpretation was that the day of worship strictly a no work because it is the Sabbath, the day of rest, and doing any form of work is a sin. Luke tells us that people were observing Jesus carefully as he was having a dinner at the home of one of the leading Pharisees, it means he probably have a reputation of violating commandments because he interpreted them differently. He found the perfect opportunity to offer his alternative reading of that part in the scripture about the third commandment. The Gospel writers says Jesus happened to be seated in front of a man who was suffering from dropsy or medical term "edema". Jesus begins by asking "Is performing a cure permitted by the law or not?" No answer, so he performs the healing session anyway, something that was regarded as work and violation of the Shabbath. Afterwards he would ask them with a silly question "Who among you will not save your son or ox if he falls into a water cistern will you not pull him out even in Sabbath day?" I said it was silly because he intended it to sound silly precisely make the audience laugh,

Let me make it make sound even more ridiculous, sasabhin mo ba sa anak mo nahulog sa swimming pool at nalululnod na dahil hindi siya marunong lumangoy "Sorry anak, ahh no work day ngayon, swimming is a form of activity or work so pasesnya ka na, I cannot pull you out of there because I will be violating the law." How ridiculous diba? I imagine Jesus doing this tongue-in-cheek, winking and humoring his listener. LOL, ika nga ng mga digital text abbreviations on social media. I imagine everyone else laughing except the Pharisees. Jesus is caricaturing the legalistic attitude of the Pharisees precisely to make ridiculous, and he succeeds in doing so. Alam nya ang kanyang scripture, he is aware that the Third Commandment is not saying thou shalt not work on your day of rest because it is your day of work. Hindi namn yun ang sinasabi ng third commandment, the third commandment says thou shall consecrate your Shabbath, thou shall keep holy your Shabbath – your day of rest.

Keep it holy, how do you do that? The Book of Deuteronomy's version of the tenth commandment says it, in Chapter 5: 14-15, we will read; the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God. You shall not do work, neither you, your son and daughter, your male or female slave, your oxen, your donkey, or any animal, or even the resident alien within your gates. Why? So that they too can rest as you do. Then the writer reminds them how once upon a time when they were still slaves in Egypt, they were abused by their masters who did not give them the opportunity to rest. So this third commandment is really meant for former slaves. You were formerly slaves - don't become oppressors.

In simpler language, what it is saying is to be kind to those who work all the time while you enjoy the luxury of being able to rest several days without being afraid to starve. You keep your Sabbath holy not just by resting yourself but by giving rest to people who have no day off because they were being oppressed and exploited. Kung sasabihin ng asawa sa misis nya "Dear, Sabbath ngayon don't wash the clothes or do the dishes" Dapat sabihin din nya "Ako na ang gagawa, you can take a rest." Ito ang tunay na diwa ng Sabbath or think of a wife says to her husbandd "Dear, buong lingo ka nagtatrabaho at pagod na pagod ka. Now, just seat and relax will give you foot massage so you can get a good night sleep. That is Sabbath mean, I will give you rest.

Jesus is reorienting people's attitude. What he is saying is you don't just tell people to rest; that is a tall order. Rather, you give them rest or, in plain English, give them a little break, a paid day off. Many people cannot take a day off not because they don't want to but because they will go hungry. How do you expect those living from hand to mouth to rest for a week, even if you keep telling them to rest every week, worship today? Who will provide for their families? How do you give rest to a person with a disability or a person with a long-linering illness? During those ancient times, how could a slave take a rest? They would be beaten up. And yet, there are people who splurge on luxurious vacations and flaunt it on their social media accounts. Imagine saying to an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) who needs to work three full-time jobs in various shifts in support their family in the Philippines. The commandment says, "Do not make your children, your servants, or your animals work on the Sabbath so that they, too, can have some rest." Thus, you sanctify the Sabbath by giving rest, not just by taking rest.

That is why in Matthew 11, we hear Jesus saying, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." That is what his mission is about. So, I'd summarize it as a faith that seeks liberation consecrates the Shabbath by striving to give rest to those who are weighed down in our society, to those who are burdened by oppression and inequity in society.

Mga kapatid, if you have followed some of my homilies over the past almost two years in our pandemic experience, you may have noticed my emphasis on redemption over the more generic word salvation. Because most communities of faith in this world, for which over religious tradition holds on to the doctrine of restrictive salvation, a doctrine of retribution, meaning salvation is reserved for the good, for the just, the righteous and the deserving. It is an eschatology that is always coupled with a doctrine of damnation for the wicked, sinners, and the undeserving. Sounds orthodox? But I dare say it is not fully consistent with the Judeo-Christian tradition. This became clear to me, in the light of my own experience as the Bishop of a controversial Diocese – the Diocese of Kalookan, that includes Malabon and Navotas City. My Diocese is one of the epicenters of the war of this government against illegal drugs – so called "against illegal drugs" because I never believed it was a war against drugs. You all know how the populist regime that is presently in power has succeeded in branding, labeling, and othering its perceived enemies: addicts, drug pushers, criminals, communists, terrorists.

When the bodies of EJK victims began to pile up, the stories of "nanlaban" became more and more atrocious based on the personal testimonies of the scared witnesses. It was then that I began to ask questions to the government, like, "Are you not supposed to go after illegal drugs and its traders precisely to save the victims, who are the drug users?" I've have never thought that the day would come when I could be programmed into believing that the enemies were the addicts themselves. What a stupid thought. No doubt, some of them are capable of heinous crimes when they are under the influence of substances, but don't we have just as many instances of crimes perpetrated by non-drug users? I have always thought of addiction as a mental health issue, as a negative way of coping with a stressful life, especially for the poor. If you were in their situation, you might resort to drugs too. And nobody has the right to condemn them for their illness.

But the President himself has succeeded in vilifying contrary opinions. At some point, I became used to such reactions, even from our Catholic faithful, and that was really hurting. Yung tatanungin yung Obispo nila, "Bakit nyo pinagtatanggol yung mga criminal? Don't the citizens have the right to be protected from the addicts and criminals (which they practically equated) by the government?" My answer has always standard: "Yes, it is the job of the police to prevent criminality, pursue the lawbreakers, to bring them to the law, and protect the citizenry, but there is nothing in the law that said it is justified to just summarily kill them. Not only is it immoral, it is illegal."

But to prove our sincerity and goodwill we will not just out there to criticize kasi parating ganun ang banat sa amin 'wala naman kayong ginawa kundi mag criticize.' As early as 2017, we coined the slogan "Stop the Killing, Start the Healing." We proposed instead to address the drug problem from its roots. When we heard how many alleged drug users voluntarily surrendered, and the government was not prepared for a program of rehabilitation for them, so proactively nag respond kami. We partnered with De La Salle University and Ateneo De Manila University, to come up with a community-based drug rehabilitation program, if only to save a few lives. I will look back and I will call our list of our rehab patient as "Schindler's List." If only we could save a few lives. We negotiated with the police to have the names of those who availed themselves of a rehab program stricken from the drug watch list. Alam nyo, I recall very distinctly how the former PNP Chief of Caloocan spoke like he was God during the graduation ceremony of our rehab patients. He said, "I now declare you officially delisted from the drug watchlist. At nag-iyakan yung mga rehab patients, along with their families, They heaved the side of relief upon receiving what I call a new list of life and yet many of them ended up dead nevertheless.

I would not find out until later that we were talking about many drug watch list pala - barangay level, city level, intelligence level, police, PDEA (Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency) lists – at sangkaterbang drug watchlists. The poor barangay captains were obliged to keep their own lists updated, otherwise, they could end up on the list themselves as drug protectors and eventually counted among the casualties. This happened with a few barangay captains here.

You may have heard me say on many occasions before that although I am concerned about the deaths resulting from drug-related killings in my Diocese, what I was more seriously alarmed about was the death of conscience. There was an EJK committed in broad daylight in the year 2018, on one of the business streets in Calookan City. I was able to get footages of the video from a CCTV of a nearby homeowner who pleaded not to be identified, lahat naman yan ay takot eh, If I had time I would show you the video, but I don't have so I will just describe it. The killers, who behaved like a traffic enforcer, stopped the traffic to carry out what seemed to be a regular operation. They moved about in a very casual and methodical way in plain view of the motorists and the bystanders. The first shooter sped away as the backup shooter finished the job. May bata pa ngang nakasakay sa tryicycle kung saan siya pinagbabaril, buti nakatakbo yung bata. Take note of what happened afterward: the motorists drove passed the body of the victim. They were all watching habang yung operation ginagawa. Pagkatapos nagsinal na yung pumatay, para siyang pulis – traffic police, "Go ahead." They all drove passed the body of the victim, and not a single one bothered to stop to check on the victim in case he needed to be rushed to the hospital. He remained there sprawled from 5:00 PM until 8:00 PM, dinadaan ng mga motorista. Kay sabi ko sa inyo totoo talga yung parable of the Good Samaritan, the parable of the priest and the Levite.

I never thought that I'd live to see so many young widows in my whole life. It was like back in the biblical times of the prophets. What got me particularly alarmed about it all was when I learned from the October 2017 Pulse Asia Survey that while 73% of Filipinos believed that EJK was actually happening around them, about 88% expressed support for the government's drug war as an effective solution to criminality. I tell you, it was then that I felt ashamed that we were called a predominantly Christian nation.

One day, around midnight, I got my usual notification from a group of freelance journalists who helped me document the killings in my Diocese. There were five who have been killed that night, but what disturbed me the most were the scenes of mothers and children weeping inconsolably as their loved ones were being casually profiled by the CIDG. Because I could not sleep after that, I found myself in the chapel, spending time with the Lord. It was around 1 o'clock in the morning when I opened a lectionary to check the readings for the day, and lo and behold, the words of the prophet Amos leaping out of the book. Suddenly, it felt like the words were burning inside me and being given to me as a template. So I found myself scribbling in my spiritual journal - a long oracle of judgment against the murderers. I'm sure you have already read it. If you have not yet read that oracle, perhaps you can just check on my Facebook page. I think I published that about two years ago. The last paragraph of that oracle that I wrote was addressed to Christians and Pastors: "Woe to you who call yourselves Christians but do not care an iota about the victims of Extra Judicial Killings. You can still afford to laugh even when your faith is trampled upon, and your God is called stupid. You blind fools! You come to church and hear the word of God. You line up for communion to receive the Lamb of God who died for sinners, but you tolerate the murder of those whom He died for. Woe to you who call yourselves shepherds that allowed your sheep to be slaughtered." It was on that day that I found myself shifting from a vocabulary of redemption instead of salvation.

The notion of salvation is always accompanied by the idea of damnation, as I mentioned a while ago. Salvation for the good, damnation for the wicked. Salvation for the righteous and the deserving, damnation for the sinners and the undeserving. That is the most basic superiologogy that is shared by most religions in this world. One that is founded on the idea of retribution. If you are good, you are rewarded; if you are bad, you are punished. You know this theology has its dangerous implications in politics, especially in populist politics. It can motivate some of its believers to play God and zealously eliminate those whom they judge to be living unrighteous lives, following their own standards of righteousness, of course.

For me, the most radical thing about Christianity is our faith in the possibility of salvation even for sinners, even for the undeserving, as long as the Redeemer himself and those who belong to the body of the Redeemer are willing to pay the price with their own blood, with their own passion and death. The Redeemer does not sacrifice others on the altar of salvation.

I think at the very core, populist leaders and their enablers are actually religious, but religious in the sick sense of the word. I mean the kind of religiosity that motivates them to play the role of Saul of Tarsus, who had made it his mission to eliminate the early followers of the way of Jesus. That was before, of course, he shifted from being the persecutor to being a propagator of the Christian faith. There is a sick kind of messianism in the psychology of populists. What makes populists dangerous is the fact that they appeal to what is most base in the minds and hearts of their enablers. They are able to stoke within people the desire for quick revenge, motivated by a deep resentment about their sense of victimhood. So they are easily captivated by demagogues who tell them, "I love my country, so I'm ready to kill those who destroy the future of our young people", in short, save the good, get rid of the wicked, and they reserve to themselves the definition of good and wicked.

Kaya many occasions I found myself arguing with a strictly retributonal faith. I have often found myself asking "Meron ba talagang likas na masamang tao dito sa mundo?" "Hindi ba ito it insulto sa Diyos?" Isa lang naman ang Diyos natin – Diyos na mabuti. "Gagawa ba ang Diyos ng masamang tao?" So you know that really shook me. You know, ang dami natin nakikitang kabuktutan, kasamaan na nagagwa ng tao, pero if there is something we stubbornly hold on the truth that, anumang masamang kayang gawin ng tao hinding-hindi natin ituturing ang kanilang pagkatao bilang likas na masama. I think that is so essential in a liberational faith.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. Ano po ang konkretong ekspresyon ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas, ngayong panahon ng eleksyon?

Ang CBCP nag issue ng Sulat Pastoral pa ra sa mga layko, saying hindi totoo na hindi dapat tayo ma-involve sa pulitika, alisin na isip natin yun. At hinde rin totoo na ang

klaseng pulitika na pwedeng ma-involve ang lay ay yung partisan politics at nilinaw namin ang ibig sabihin ng separation of Church and State. It doesn't apply to the Church, it applies more to the state. That, the state must respect the freedom of religion. That the state will never establish its own official religion, but the members of the Church are citizens of this country. As a citizens of this country, there is moral imperative as citizens in light of the Gospel and for the catholic, the social teachings of the Catholic Church, to make sure that we get involved in politics so that it is directed to principled politics. Kasi, msyado nating ini-equate ang pulitika sa bad politics, the politics of patronage. The more we talk that way, the more we surrender. Parang kailangang pumiglas tayo sa ganyang pag-iisip. Ang pananampalataya mismo ang magtuturo sa atin, kung papano pumiglas, doon sa kategorya, mga pag-iisip, na tanggapin na lang natin yan, God's will yan. Like I said, blasphemy yan, huwag tayong padalos-dalos na tawaging God's will ang mga sitwasyon. Tulad din ng mga sinasabing "Maybe God allowed me to become President" no enablers allowed some people who are not supposed to be in public office to be there and malaking kasalanan sa Diyos. Pero we learned the lessons the heard way.

2. Walang tigil ang mga red-tagging sa mga Simbahan, at mga taong Simbahan na tumatalima sa Misyong ating Panginoong Hesukristo. Ano po ang inyong maipapayo sa mga mananampalatayang napanghihinaan dahil sa sitwasyong ito?

Kahapon doon sa aking pagninilay, yung Gospel kahapon na pinagnilayan ko sa aking sermon Luke 14: 25-33 was about the cost of discipleship. Bahagi siya ng hamon talaga sa atin. Actually ang take ko doon sa Gospel text kahapon was what he's really saying is, if you follow me and you are not ready to be named names or even accused falsely of being a family hater you cannot disciple. The early Christians were called many names. Remember Jesus said that in the sermon in the mount "Blessed are you, when they insult and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you because of me. The Lord as if were saying "I beg your pardon, I never promised you a rose garden, the Cristian life is not a walk in the park." Kung talagang pinananinidigan mo ang mga itinuturo sa atin ng ating Panginoon, talagang kailangang handa tayong humarap sa mga ganyang sitwasyon. At hindi naman nasasayang ang mga dugo ng mga martir, ito ay binhi – binhi ng isang kahariang sumisibol at patuloy na sumisibol sa ating kamalayan. Tuloy lang, huwag tayaong magpadala sa takot, ganyan naman ang kalaban inexploit nya ang takot para hindi tayo manindigan sa dapat panindigan natin.



*Mga Diskurso ng
Pananampalayang Pumipiglas*

Mo. Mary John Mananzan OSB



MGA DISKURSO NG PANANAMAPLATAYANG PUMIPIGLAS

Mo. Mary John Mananzan OSB

I was asked specifically to talk about the role of women especially religious women in the Catholic Church, but before I'll go into this para kasi sa context. Napakalalim ng historical background na binigay but I just want to zero-in on the way Christianity was brought to the Philippines before I go into the women, because we are celebrating the 500 years and I wrote a book and I want to show it. It's called the shadow of light, there is a cross and the shadow is a *sword (referring to the book cover)* because as you all know Christianity came into the Philippines in the context of colonization. That's what I call, the cesarean birth of Christianity in the Philippines. So you must realize that there are consequences to this kind of introduction, because unlike Korea, hindi colonization. They really went to study and contact with missionaries etc., but ours was really in the context of colonization.

I would like to say that when the missionaries came to the Philippines they had a decision to make, "How do we introduce Christianity in the Philippines?" Now, before that De Nobili and Ricci, they had already done missions in China and India and the decision they made was this "Let us study first the belief system of the people and then we will show that Christianity is not really contradictory to their belief and it is something like a completion or a continuation" but that was not the decision in the Philippines. What they decided was this, "We have to show to the people here that Christianity is the radically new, and therefore everything that comes before Christianity is from the devil." So they demonize the belief system of the Indigenous People in the Philippines. Now, that has a lot of repercussions in the way the people then assimilated or adopted Christianity. So that is one very important thing that we have to note. That was the decision of the missionaries to show Christianity as the radically new and that before Christianity everything came from the devil.

Another thing, I would like to show also, because when we celebrate something we do not only celebrate the wonderful things but we have to show the shadows that came with it. I would like to trace some of our traits as Filipinos to this context of colonization. Number one, the Padrino System – It is really so much in our blood, that kung meron kang kilala diyan sa taas ok ka na. In fact, kahit nanoong ako ay Dean, may pupunta sa aking nanay kapag nag-eentrance exam, sasabhin "Ito po ay sulat ni Obispo..." Parang I will be moved by the letter of the Obispo kasi Obispo siya di ba? Kaya ipapasa ko yung anak niya kahit na sa huli. Sabi ko sa nanay "Alam niyo po Misis kapag nakapasa anak niyo, ok lang, kung hindi po nakapasa, kahit na po sulat ng Santo Papa hindi ko po pwedeng pagbigyan. kasi po against ng anak nyo. Kasi po, ibig sabihin ng hindi nakapasa ang bata sa entrance exam, hindi niya kaya. Kapag ipapamilit ninyo na kakayanin niya, magkakasakit lang ang anak ninyo." It is really terrible because that is so much in our system. All the corruption that is happening in our system is because of that, "Malakas ako diyan" "Mayroon akong kilala diyan". That's one.

Number two, Yung lusot ng lusot tayo. Kasi naiintindihan ko naman noon, noong araw kasi colonial masters mo sila, hindi ka makalaban ng diretsuhan Anong klaseng laban?

Passive-aggressive, ibig sabihin “ok sasabihin ko say’yo oo, pero lulusot ako dyan sa mga sinasabi mo” You can understand that from a colonial mentality, pero naging engraved na naman sa atin yan na ngayon, kahit hindi na tayo under colonial master but we try na lulusot ng lulusot. Tignan mo yung ating mga migrant workers pag naroon sila sa ibang bansa, law abiding citizen sila, sa traffic sa lahat-lahat kasi alam nila ipapairal ang law. Pero, pagbalik nila dito kahit magbabakasyon lang you will see, lulusot sila ng lulusot sa traffic sa ganito...sa ganyan... kasi alam nila hindi ipapairal ang batas.

Number three, Bakit tayo may insurgency? Because of poverty. What is the cause of poverty? Dalawang bagay, unequal distribution of wealth and the foreign control of our economy. Now this kalahati na unequal distribution of wealth, saan nanggaling yan? Sa hacienda system, saan nanggaling yan? Hindi ba ang mga friars talagang they got a lot of lands, ang lalaking mga lands. Kasi, there were five religious orders came to the Philippines and they divide the country among themselves, for evangelization but also, they really acquired a lot of lands. Ngayon nung aalis na sila, kanino pupunta yung lands, syempre dun sa mga favorite followers nila. Kaya nagkaroon tuloy ang mga individual families, nagkamal sila malalaking lands, dun nagumpisa ang mga tinatawag na mga Hacendero. Hanggang ngayon nga wala tayong magawa kahit anong klaseng law, land reform system wala pa talagang epektibo na talagang naidistribute natin ang resources ng country sa mga tao.

Ang ikatlo pa dyan, yung tinatawag nating colonial mentality, kasi colonial masters natin sila, so parang they are more advanced culture. In fact, hindi sila nag ordain ng mga pari noon in the beginning, kasi daw napakababa ng kultura natin, hindi sila pwedeng maging pari. That is a whole controversy. Then afterwards ngayon kahit na tapos na ang colonial [period] natin, ang ating mentality ganon pa rin. Yung sa labas [ng bansa] mas magaling kaysa sa atin, especially kung galing sa West (western countries). Yet, andami nating gifts, yung brain drain lang. Examplelang, yung election system natin, hindi ba natin kaya ang ginagawa ng SMARTMATIC? I tell you there are enough genius Filipinos who can do better than SMARTMATIC, pero kailangan natin ng SMARTMATIC. Then our Engineers are going naman all over the Saudi Arabia and they are using their expertise to make this people progress.

Ang isa pang gusto kong sabahin, I’m sure you have heard of Fr. Bulatao’s expression – split level Christianity. Ang tingin niya sa Christianity natin, hindi parang comprehensive na talagang buong-buo na-internalize ng mga tao. Why? The fact that the Missionaries, when they went to the mission field lagi nilang kasama ang sundalo, so talagang napaka clear ang sword and the cross, of course it’s a part coercion, and I am not saying that there is no genuine conversion, there were genuine conversion, but a lot of people also were resisting and some people just accepted, but actually beneath that kind of acceptance there is still a firm clinging to the belief system. One example is the Babaylan, as you all know Babaylan is our priestess and only a woman can be a Babaylan but the Babaylan is one of the most important person in the Barangay. There were three; one is the leader, the chief, who can be a woman by the way, ang ikalawa ay yaong panday na gumagawa ng weapons, and the third is the Babaylan – so the Babaylan is one of the most important parts of a political unit. Pero, when the

Spaniards came here they considered the Babaylan kagaya ng mga witches whom they killed from the 14th to 16th century about two million witches were burned at stake in Europe. I even saw older towers were they were imprisoned, so ibig sabihin sa kanila din the Babaylans is witch, ibig sabihin demonyo. Kaya ang ginawa nila ngayon they would tell the children “Sabihin ninyo sa amin, kapag tinatawag pa ng pamilya nyo ang mga Babaylan” ibig sabihin the people when they really had a problem they do not go to the priest, they go to the Babaylan, they call the Babaylan to their house. Ngayon, kasi sinabihan ang mga bata “Sabihin ninyo sa amin kung nandyan ang Babaylan” edi magsasabi naman ang mga bata sa mga Prayle. Iraraid ngayon ang bahay, tapos kukunin ngayon ang lahat ng ginamit ng Babaylan, pupunta sila sa Plaza. Alam niyo naman ang structure ng ating town, yung may simbahan, tapos may Plaza sa gitna. Doon nila ilalagay ngayon lahat ng mga kagamitan ng Babaylan at yun ay susunugin, ang Babaylan naman paluluhurin nila in front of that tools at puputulin ang buhok, because the hair is the symbol of power. That is why, sabi nga ni Fr. Bulatao kaya hindi talaga masyadong na harmonize, na internalize ang kabuan ng Christian values, kaya yun ang tinatawag na niya na split level Christianity. That is the introduction that I have.

During the Spanish time, the patriarchal values of Spain transferred to the Philippines, the domesticated Filipino woman. By the way, ito pong libro ko na ‘to (*the shadow of light*) if you will buy it ang una niyong babasahin ay chapter six. Kasi ang chapter six, the title is *The Domestication of the Mujer Indigena*. Kasi alam niyo naman na, pantay-pantay tayon noong araw, I am not saying that we are matriarchal, sa akin hindi rin masyadong maganda ang matriarchal. Pero tayo, pantay – egalitarian, which is better than matriarchal I think. Ang nangyari diyan talagang equal tayo sa lahat, sa inheritance, sa freedom of movement, sa gawaing bahay, sa relationship with men, etc. Ang nagyari, nyan matapos dumating ang values ng mga Spaniards na very patriarchal ang mga Spaniards sa Spain, even at that time, walang makakaligaw kung hindi kasama ng nanay. Ang nanay ay nadoon sa sala habang naliligaw ang tao. Hindi makalabas ang babaeng walang asawa kung wala siyang bueña. Itong lahat ng ganung patriarchal values, they transferred it to us at hindi lang yun, marami pang libro silang sinulat na *Avisos a las concilias*– the advices to the young woman and it was really all domesticating ang nangyari, there was a transformation from the Babaylan to the Maria Clara and you all know what Maria Clara is, so from Garbiela Silang went into Maria Clara.

So her main role is to be wife and mother and to be in the home that is what you call domestication and she was no longer active in the other aspect of life. Pinagtuunan niya ng pansin talaga to be active is in the Church, kaya may mga “Manang”. I mean to say, even now, who are the main worshippers in the Church, 80% are women, bilangin niyo nga. Ewan ko sa inyo (protestant) pero alam kosa Catholic Church, kung pupunta sa lahat ng Simbahan at least 80% ng worshippers doon ay mga babae. Since they are deprived of the full ministry of the Church, eh yun na lang peripheral, they cannot even read the Gospel [but] they can read the First Reading, they can put the flower at the Altar, they can do the cleanliness, etc. For a long time, sa bayan ko sa Bayambang, I know very well yung role of the “Manangs” na parang kumakanta ng Gregorian Chant, yun ang kanilang work.

Ngayon, during the Spanish times, ang mga native women were not allowed to enter the convent. Parang masyadong mababa ang ating kultura kaya, parang hindi tayo makaka fulfill ng mga vows. Kaya, hindi tayo pinayagan na pumasok sa kumbento, but they formed certain organization ang pangalan nila *Beaterios* ibig sabihin lay institution parang ganoon. Pero, noong nagkaroon na ng rebolusyon at talagang aalis na ang mga Prayle at Espanyol, na threatened ngayon ang hierarchy. The Protestantism was considered to be a threat to the Catholic hierarchy, at ito pa noon lumalaganap pa ang masonry. Threatened ngayon ang Catholic hierarchy kaya they appealed to Religious congregation in Europe na magpadala kayo. Kasi yung inyong Thomasites yung galing sa America na mga Teachers and they opened public schools in the whole Philippines, kaya takot na takot Catholic Church "Nako, magiging protestante na yung ating mga citizens, Kaya dapat dumating ang ating mga religious congregation, para we can preserve our Catholic faith" or something like that. Actually, many responded to the call, own congregation responded, our Missionary Benedictine Sisters came here in 1906. Kaya almost lahat ng mga religious congregation dito sa Pilipinas in the beginning of 20th century they all came to Europe and America. Wala pa noong native congregation, except isa yung RVM (*Religious of Virgin Mary*). Kasi yung RVM sila lang ang unang tinatag ng isang resident of the Philippines, although she is not an indigenous woman, siya din ay parang mixed race, but this is a Filipina, si Mother Ignacia de Espiritu Santo.

Noong dumating ngayon ang mga religious congregations, anong ginawa nila? The first thing that they did is education, all over the Philippines. Lahat kami we opened schools all over the Philippines. Many prominent women in all sectors came from Catholic schools, may magaling, may hindi. Si Cory Aquino, the first woman president came from us. Thanks be to God, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo did not come to us, but she came from Assumption, which is also a religious congregation of women. Lahat talaga ng prominent women, for example, Mita Parde de Tavera, justice of the Supreme Court, people in the economy, yung first the president ng Cultural Center of the Philippines. Sa education talaga ang religious women talagang naka-contribute ng husto sa pag eduka sa mga kababaihan sa buong Pilipinas, that is one contribution of the religious women. Also with that, the values of the family, they were able to preserve the values of the family because they were educating the women. Kaya also the fact that we have very strong family system, it has a lot of positive element but also some negative because kung minsan, my family might right or wrong, "Basta ok ako, ok ang pamilya ko nevermind the rest of the world." Parang yung family loyalty natinkung minsan para siyang obstacle sa common good. Kaya kung titignan mo, tayong mga Pilipino wala tayong sense of common good or very little sense of the common good, kaya ganoon ang nangyayari sa ating bansa. Kasi nga ang ating mentality, "Pag ok ako, ok ang pamilya, never mind the rest of the Philippines" now that is one thing that we have to do something about, kasi kung ganyan ng ganyan tayo ay talagang wala tayong mararatnan na mabuti.

In the health sector naman lahat din ng congregations nagtayo ng hospital, yung kagaya ng Lourdes Hospital, ng mga Holy Spirit Sisters, kami sa Tacloban, St. Paul's andami nilang mga Ospital. Kung walang hospital man, yung mga clinics, mga health

centers talagang inaddress ng mga religious women ang health problems of the country especially the health of women. Yung Rural Missionaries in the Philippines, yung nireredtag ngayon. That is what you call a collaboration of religious women of different congregations and they focused on the needs of rural people, men and women and they established what they call community-based health program which is very important kasi hindi naman lahat ngrural areas may hospital kaya they have at least yung community-based health program talagang ang nagmomonitor ng health, ang nagbibigay ng first-aid, ang nagrerefer sa hospital ay mga members ng community-based health program na talagang malakas ang contribution doon ng mga women religious.

Sa social pastoral work, without the religious women, Parish would be limited in their services. Usually every Parish will have one or two communities of Sisters and they take charge of the Parish activities, such as parochial schools, organizing and training of catechist and fielding them in the different parts of the Parish, building of basic ecclesial communities. They also arrange the liturgical services and even take care, ito naging handmaid sila especially the local congregation they have to do the cooking, and the housekeeping of the priest's house and the seminary, para silang handmaid of the Diocese. They also take care of the orphanages that is attached to the Parish or Diocese. So lahat-lahat yun, lahat ng pastoral care, kung wala yan sa Catholic Church walang mangyayari sa mga Parishes.

There are many social issues that have become the focus of the commitment of religious women especially of that women issues, yung discrimination of women in all areas of life, violence against women both domestic and societal, trafficking of women etc. lahat-lahat yun, pinapakailaman ng women religious. At saka environmental advocacy, religious women have been very active at the very onset of ecological advocacy in the Philippines. I don't know if you have ever heard of Sister Aida Velasquez, she was my co-sister at ang ecological word ay hindi pa kilala sa Pilipinas, ecologist na si Sis. Aida. Pero during the time noong iniisip palang yung Bataan Nuclear Plant, si Sis. Aida spearheaded the campaign against the nuclear power plant in the 70's, educating a whole village to where it supposed to be built. Ang ginawa nya , she ask our prioress, "Can we have a community of five sisters sa Nagbalayong, Bataan" kasi malapit to doon sa bubuksang nuclear plant. For three years, in their Bible discussions and catechetical activities among the farmers lagging kasama doon ang educational "Alam niyo magkakaroon dito ng nuclear plant, ang ibig sabihin nitong nuclear plant, ito ay isang mechanism ng radio activity at mahirap na to take care of ang waste..." Kaya alam niyo ba noong dumating ang Department of Energy sa Bataan and they were telling the people "Bibigyan namin kayo ng electricity, kasi dito ay bubuksan natin ang Bataan Nuclear Plant" Alam niyo yung mga farmers they did not even reach high school, mga grade five, they started to ask questions "Where will you put the nuclear waste? Alam nyo ba kung hanggang kalian iyang nuclear waste na yan ay magiging radioactive? Alam nyo ba that under this earth of our there are five dormant volcanos?" and one of them is the Pinatubo nga na nag erupt nga afterwards. Kaya takang-taka yung mga [taga] Department of Energy kung bakit alam nitong mga farmers na ito ang threat ng nuclear plant. So, they accused Sis. Aida, kasi nalaman nila "Ah

kasi may madre diyan nagbigay ng data about the nuclear plant". Sabi nila kami daw ay against development kasi we are against nuclear plant. Ang ginawa ni Sis. Aida kinuha nyang lahat ang mga dokumento niya na galling sa America, and she was in contact with the anti-nuclear in America and she sent them all to the DENR. We are not against development, we are against development that will harm our country. Alam nyo ba she has picture now with the United Nations, as one of the environmental activist of the world, so nandoon ang picture ni Sis. Aida. Anong nangyari sa nuclear plant? Walang nangyari because these became a national campaign, which succeeded in the mothballing of the nuclear power plant built in Bataan which has never operated until now, yun nga gusto daw anuhin ni Duterte ulit, pero hindi mangyayari yun, kasi over our dead bodies. Yun nga ang sinasabi nating pananampalatayang pumipiglas, kasi hindi natin babayaan yun.

Many congregation of Sisters have acquired farms, kami ngayon mayroon kami lahat may farm ngayon, lahat ng house namin to promote organic farming and sustainable agriculture. Nagkaroon kami ng general chapter [meeting] we made a promised within two years, each house will plant two hundred (200) trees. So ngayon, hinihingan na kami ng report, ano ang mga pinlant namin kasi mayroon kaming farm sa Pampanga, mayroon kaming farm sa Tanay, meron farm kami sa Tanauan, mayroon kami sa Mendez etc. etc. We have adopted the green construction na pag nagcoconstruct ka ng building, anu-ano ilalagay mo doon. Our schools have included environmental protection in the curriculum in all levels and encourage environmentally friendly practices with regards to waste management, anti-pollution, energy conservation and reforestation.

Ngayon, mayroon kaming tinatawag na mga Cloistered Nuns, I'm sure you know that now. Ako [ay] missionary, but I have a monastic community, meron talaga yung completely cloistered, yung contemplative. Siguro ang ibang mga tao [sasabihin nila] "Anong gagawin ng mga Madre diyan? Anong klaseng objective yan? Paano ba yan nakakatulong itong mga madreng nakakulong lang?" I would like to show that cloistered nuns believe that their vocation is to witness to the primacy of prayer in the Church, to serve as a reminder of the contemplative dimension in all our lives, because all of us have contemplative dimension otherwise we are not alive human beings, and to intervene for others before God. Besides being available to individual persons who seek their help and counsel, they bring the needs and sorrows of the world to God in their life of prayer, they pray seven times a day and they even get up at night. In spite of being cloistered, many contemplative communities have shown interest and concern for the burning issues of society. You will be surprised, if you go there they can discuss with you any issue na nangyayari sa mundo natin, because it is not that they do not even not involve there, they really see to it that they know. They have a one whole report of the newspaper, every time yanna magrecreation sila i-susumarrize anong mga news na nangyayari sa mundo. Kaya hindi sila ignorant at ito ang kanilang dinadala ngayon sa altar, kapag sila ay magdadasal. Kaya napaka importante ng role ng cloistered nuns.

I would like to say this, the special prophetic role of religious women under Martial Law. Alam nyo naman during Martial Law many religious women became aware of the

injustices and oppression of the people and became actively involved in the struggle of the basic masses. Yun pong Association of the Major Religious Superiors naglabas sila ng alternative newspaper, kasi ang mga newspaper noon kasi talagang controlled. So nagkaroon ng parang clandestine newspaper ang pangalan eh, *Sign of the Times* and it came out every week at alamko yung kasi ang editor noon ay professor na nagtuturo sa St. Scho (St. Scholastica College), si Mario Velasco. Everytime pupunta kami dun, magdistribute kami, kukunin namin yung bagong issue at ididistribute namin sa lahat. Kaming lahat, noong hindi pa ako Major Superiors, nagtayo kami ng association ang pangalan ay NOWRP – National Organization of Women Religious of the Philippines na ang tanong ay “Ikaw ba ay ready to be in the side of the poor at kahit na makasama mo diyan ang mga komunista, dapat hindi mo kukundinahan kahit na they are fighting with their arms” Yun ang pinaguusapan nila noon, basta ang importante, tayo makikiisa sa mga manggagawa, mga magsasaka. Two Hundred ang [membership], I remember because I am one of the founders. Tatlong taon kami, parang ano lang muna to see what is possible. On the third year talagang nagtayo na kami and the original members were 200 strong, non-superiors religious women. At ang dali-dali noon magmoblize “andito... may ganito...” lahat na andoon na. In fact, yung mga Metrocom noon kapag may nakita silang limang madre sa daan sasabihin nila “Siguro may rally dyan, kasi may limang madre dyan”

Of course you all know the movie entitled *Sister Stella L.* as shown in many theaters of the Philippines. It was all about a young Sister who typified the religious women who became aware of the social issues and her commitment and involvement in the national liberation movement. I will tell you the origin of that, si Pete Lacaba ang gumawa ng storya na yan at saan niya kinuha ang storya na ‘to? Ininterview niya ang tatlong madre ang isa diyan ay si Sis. Christine Tan, ang isa diyan si Sis. Mariana de Maranan at ako ang ikatlo. Kaming tatlo ang ininterview, tapos pinag mix niya kaya si Sister Stella L is a composite of three sisters of course patay na yung dalawa, ako na lang ang nabubuhay, sa tatlong madre na yaon.

Aside from us mga madre, it safe to say that among Church goers about 80% are women, so the first role of the lay woman in the Church is that of a worshipper and perhaps in the eyes of God that it is important role. But we live in a human society and therefore ther is a need of developing the active role of laywomen, dito sa Catholic Church ang talagang nagudyok ng active participation ng laywomen is the PCP II(*The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines*). It was called to see how lay people can be active in the Church, kaya nagkaroon ng mga mandated organization etc. etc. Tatlo na yung naging ambassador ng Philippines to the Vatican and three are women.

With the rise of migration and migrant labor abroad, a new task for laity especially the women migrant workers emerged. Filipino women, both lay and religious are now missionaries all over the world in reversal of the missionary trend during colonial times. Alam niyo ba sa ngayon, for xample ngayon ang prioress namin sa congregation sa Tanzania is a Filipino – Sis. Ruth. Ang naging prioress sa Namibia naging superior in our many of our houses in Africa are Filipinos. Ang ibig sabihin kami na ngayon ang nagpupunta doon. Ikalawa pa, yung ating mga migrant workers, nung nagumpisa ako

ng isang migrant workers center in Spain sa Madrid. I remember sabi nung isang yaya (kasamabay) sabi nya sakin "Alam nyo sister, na convert ko na yung pamilya ko" ibig sabihin where she is working. Sabi ko "Papano mo nagawa yan?" "Eh kasi po Disyembre pagnagsisimba ako sinasama ko yung anak ko." Ang tawag nila sa alaga nila "anak ko" "Sinasaama ko yung anak ko sa misa. Pagbalik namin ngayon sasabihin ngayon ng aking alaga sa kanyang parents 'Eh kayo ba bakit hindi kayo nagsisimba?'" Eh parang naembarrassed yung dalawang mag-asawa, kaya ngayon sumasama na sa kanila sa pagsisimba, kaya't tuwang-tuwa itong nanny. Siya daw nga ang talagang nagconvert sa kanyang family, and that is true of many families in first world [countries].

Now, I have to talk about the current issues of women in the Church. There is of course continuing gender inequality in the church. Kasama ako dyan sa nagprotesta in front of the St. Peter's Basilica. Kasi talagang the protestant church is already gone ahead of us, you are already ordaining women. Kami we are not even thinking of it. It will not even happen in my lifetime. One time, when I was there during the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, tapos kasama ako dun sa theological group, na nagbibigay ng theological rationalization sa mga intervention ng mga Obispo sa Synod. One time I told yung mga kasama kong theologian na mga lalaki "Excuse me, can you give me one, authentic, good, theological rationalization, why we (women) cannot be ordained priest?" You know they cannot give me because there is none, there is absolutely none. Ang tingin nila, ang laging excuse nila "But is the tradition...tradition kase..." Excuse me, tradition, bakit kung celibacy, yung tradition na yan is flexible, kasi si St. Peter may asawa, may mother-in-law so may asawa. Tapos in the 11th century the rule of celibacy for clergy, tapos ngayon may mga Anglican priest na may asawa are coming back to the [Catholic] Church are now being accepted. So there are two kinds of priest now in Church yung may mga asawang Anglican priest at saka yung wala. What are you talking about tradition? So it's selective, tradition kung may lusot-lusot ka but with regard to the ordination of women tradition is parang absolute. So sabi ko one time I say "Ang kailangan ng Simbahan namin is not theology, logic hindi sila marunong ng logic" because hindi ba ang logic sa syllogism you have a premise and then you have the syllogism and then the conclusion must agree with the first premise. First premise, men and women are equal nobody will deny that not even the Pope, no Bishops will deny that but look at the end of the syllogism about men can be ordained but women cannot so anong nangyari sa action ng syllogism. So sabi ko ka nga maigi siguro kapag ang mga Obispo turuan ko ng Logic 101, I will give the "F" because hindi sila marunong mag logical conclusion.

Many in the Church, I'm talking about the Catholic Church, still hold a conservative view of women, church teachings on family "obey your husband" dictum, battered women are advised to stay marriage, broken family etc. etc. its moral theology focuses on the sin of the flesh, eve the temptress. The cult of virginity that prevails wakes women who lose their virginity even not through their fault feel like garbage. I know that, yung psychological ba ng mga bata, kapag sila ay na rape, parang wala na daw silang kwenta, para na silang basura. I said, no your virginity is not synonymous dignity ay naku talga ang ganyang pagkakamali ng pag-iisip.

Although women are the most active in Church service, functions and activities, they are deprived of participation in the major decision-making processes and are denied full ministry in the Church. Celibate priests continue, in fact, to make rules and prescriptions governing marriage and family life. The structure and hierarchy and clericalism, women have no part in both. Noong pinapalabas yung reproductive rights bill, yung mga Obispo kahit they are politically advance, progressive, pagdating doon ay conservative din sila. Kaya noon I was invited by the French Embassy yung She for She, I am a nun, but I am for reproductive rights because I am a woman. How can I not be for reproductive health of women? They make scarecrow which they demolished, they are talking about abortion but that bill is not talking about abortion, sinabi pa nga na it is still, illegal. They put a scarecrow there para lang malabanan yung buong law but actually it's not true. Sinasabi ko, that is lack of intellectual integrity you are putting there in the law what it is not there, and then you are demolishing what is not there.

The sexual abuse of the clergy, this one make me so sad and make me so angry really. I mean to say, a serious problem in the Church which affects women and girls and in some instance young boys is sexual harassment and abuse by the clergy, and it is going on up to now. Last Month lang yung, siguro nakita nyo sa youtube yung Pampanga priest, di ba nakita nyo dun iniligay sa youtube ng anak kasi parang nilusob nila yung kumbento. Since the priest cannot and will not assume any responsibility for the children they cause to be brought into the world, the responsibility and burden falls on the shoulder of the victims – the unwed, single mothers. They and their children also bear the brunt of the scorn of society and the shame of being victims of sexual abuse or being children of pari. In the Philippines. No priest has ever been imprisoned for this crime and is often just simply transferred to another Parish where often he will begin another abuse. One time, I was being interviewed by the Radyo Bombo, I told the radio "You know, if a priest has a consensual relationship with an adult woman, it is immoral but it's not criminal, but if a priest makes a sexual relationship with a minor that is a crime, that is not only immoral, that is a crime and he belongs to jail." Now do you know of any priest who is in jail? Nobody, so that is the impunity that is happening in the Church.

Another issue pa, is the plight of the local congregation of women, itong finound ng mga Obispo. Congregations of religious women founded by local bishops in many cases are treated like handmaids, talagang maids of their founders. Although they manage many apostolates in the Parish or Diocese they are not given just compensation. They have to depend on the Bishop for board and lodging, and have no funds of their own for on-going formation. In fact, I have a community na nagsabi sa akin "Alam nyo ba ang sweldo namin, ay sweldo ng isang tao lang although apat kaming madre na nagsisilbi dito" at meron pang isang terrible na kaso yung isang Obispo sa Malolos nawala na yung pectoral cross niya, so pinagbintangan ba naman yung housekeeper na madre na hindi lang pinagbintangan kinuha pa yung NBI [clearance] pinakunan ng litrato napaka terrible. Biruin mo natrauma masyado yung madre so she had to take the leave. Afterwards nahanap noong Obispo yung kanyang pectoral cross among his rosaries, terrible di ba? How do you treat people like that?

The challenge to the Church, in order to be credible in condemning sexual abuse, the church must examine, admit, and act on the sexual harassment and abuse that are happening in its own house. It should not condone and not cover up misdemeanors of the members of the clergy in this matter. They have to condemn the different oppression of women, continuing inequality and subordination of women in the home, in the workplace and in society, the ever increasing violence against women in different forms: rape, incest, wife battering, the prevalent trafficking of women on prostitution, mail order brides and in contract work abroad. Positively, the male in the Church should listen to and learn from women. It should improve promote the rights of women and the development of their full humanity. They should be given full participation in the ministry of the Church. It should put its human and material resources to the service of women's empowerment, to the rehabilitation of victims of violence and to the development of their potentials. It should support the women's movement and encourage their leadership in political and social life. It might sound trivial, but it should adopt the inclusive language in its liturgy and in its documents. Unfortunately hindi pa, imagine meron kaming kanta na kaming mga madre ang kumakanta "With God as our Father, brother all are we let us go with our brother..." sabi ko "Sinong brother, wala naman taya ditong brother?" so pinalitan namin "with God as our Father" ok lang naman yun "Family all are we, let us working together..." di ba mas maganda yun, kaya yun ang iniisip ko, it's not trivial at all. Yung inclusive language in the liturgy affects the psychology of women and makes them feel that they are inferior. Huwag nating maliitin yun sabi ko "Tignan nyo nga mga hymnbook ninyo, palitan niyo ang lahat ng mga sexist language sa inyong mga hymns" kayo rin mga protestant churches, kasi meron din kayong mga ganyan.

Signs of hope, women in the church are awakening to the fact that they are equal to the men and they are made to the image and likeness of God. The Church has to make a self-examination and make serious effort, for example yung isang example ngayon ay yung *Fratelli Tutti* ni Pope Francis. I love Pope Francis, pero kulang pa rin sya ng women consciousness, kulang pa rin siya ng gender consciousness. "Fratelli" is lalaki, why can't he say "*Fratelli e Sorelle*" di ba ano naman yun. Pero if you look at the whole encyclical it is for equality it's for inclusive and yet its very title is non-inclusive. What a dichotomy in thinking and in acting. It should really transform itself to make this basic fact a reality in words and in action within its own institution. You know, I'm so critical with my church and some people would say "Eh bakit hindi ka na lang umalis?" sabi ko "Hindi ako aalis, kasi I cannot do that into another woman's womb." The church is my mother, even in my physical mother, I loved her but sometimes I'm irritated with her, sometimes I am impatient with her. I can see na kung minsan may bulutong siya sa kanyang mukha, it's not a lack of love when I point out the bulutong, kasi what I want is that she would be beautiful. That's why I am critical of the church. That is my rationale why I continue being critical of the church and still loving her at the same time.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

1. Ano kaya ang malaking factor bakit masyadong conservative ang mga pari at Obispo ninyo kahit andami nang development sa field ng theology ng Church?

Hindi ba sila exposed sa present reality? Iniignore ba nila yung mga realities of our time? Bakit sa nanantiling konserbatibo, lalo na sa views ng women?

Wala kasi akong masyadong relasyon sa mga ganyang pari at mga Obispo. Ang mga kausap ko po ay mga kagaya ni Pablo David, ni Pabillo, ni Soc. Parang hindi ko masakyan, I don't know their psychology or nabubulag-bulagan ba sila o they don't really see it, so I cannot judge kasi. I am not in their venue, iba yata yung mundo namin yung ganoon, kaya hindi ko sila masagot.

First of all anong ibig sabihin ng conservative, conservative politically? Theologically? Kasi ang tingin ko there are some people na talagang sa Council of Trent pa sila, to mystic theology at hanggang doon lang. They were never exposed about Liberation Theology na mag uumpisa ka sa bottom. Ang tingin ko lang, ang usally mindset ng conservative form up-down. This is what the Word of God is, now what it is that I have going to do because it's the Word of God? How will I practice it in the real life? In Liberation Theology it's the opposite, titignan ko muna kung ano ang nangyayari. Habang nakikita ko ang nangyayari, tatanungin ko, ano ba ang sinasabi ng Word of God about this na nangyayari na mga ito. Para sa akin it's a difference in perspective. They are from up-down, well the theologians like me na katribu ko, are form down to up. I will not judge them, whether they are conservative or not. There is a difference lang on perspective and the starting point.

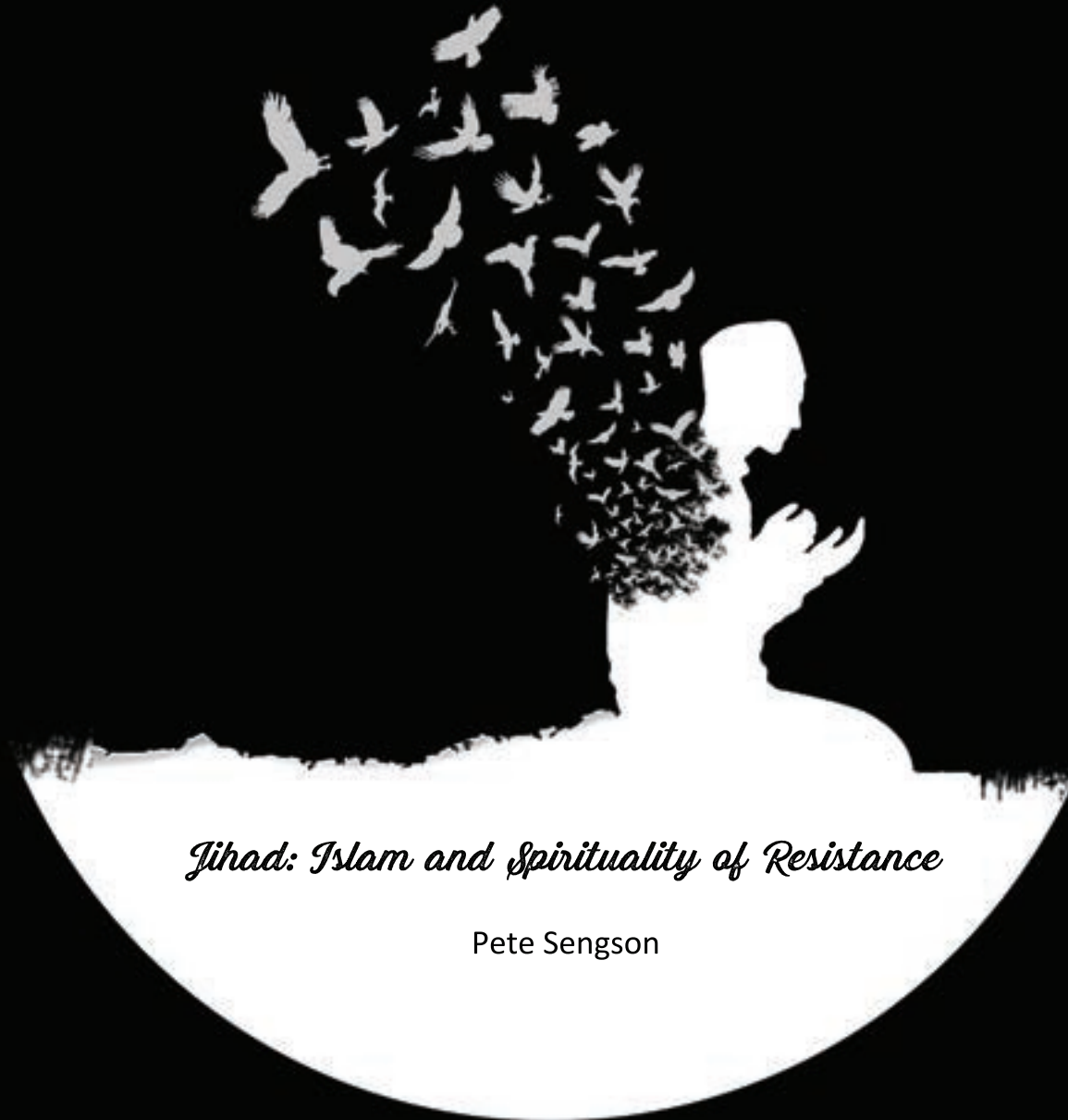
2. How might we accompany our Roman Catholic sisters in the campaign for the ordination of women?

Well, you accompany us with your prayers because how else would you accompany us. There are some very great feminist theologians in Switzerland who have gone out of church because sa kanila wala na talagang hope ang mangyayari. I must say also that it may not, will not happen in my lifetime unfortunately. Ang nakakainis dito, if you will ask individually yung mga pari at Obispo na meron namang integrity, meron namang intellectual honesty, I'm sure they will tell you na wala sila talgang objection diyan. In fact Karl Rahner, he was my teacher, he was my friend and I have 8 letters from him na I'm putting it in our archives and actually the Rahner Archives in Austria is asking for them. In one of his letters it is all there written, "If I were Pope, I will ordain you priest." I have the testimony of the greatest theologian of the 20th century. So talagang walang-walang theological reason at all to prevent women [from ordination]. I mean psychologically speaking lang, my goodness. Who can represent Christ better, men or women? Tignan na lang natin sa real na buhay. Sa mga pulis, ano ang percentage ng corrupt police men, anong percentage ng corrupt women? Sa lahat ng larangan ng buhay, who has the more integrity? Who is less corruptible? I might sounds sexist here, but I am just saying the reality. Even in marriage, do you think men and women, that women are not tempted also? They are both tempted to fall in love with other people. The thing with the women, they will say "what is the consequence of my action?" so they will not get into it. Lahat ng men will say ah "ok" parang instant gratification, hindi

masyadong nag-iisip ano ba ang consequence, tapos mamaya nahuli na sila “It’s a mistake, I’m sorry”. Sa objective speaking lang, who can represent God more, who can represent Christ more, not in a sexist way but in the reality of our life – women. I am not saying that because I’m a women, I’m saying that because that is my observations of ordinary life, so it’s an understandable.

I ask my Jesuit cousin, I ask my SVD(*Societas Verbi Divini*) cousin sa kanila wala sa kanilang problema kung maoordenahan ang women kasi nakikita naman nila wala talaga namang sound theological, rational, why they should not. Ang hindi ko lang maintindihan, bakit it is so difficult for the institutional church for those who make decisions, to act on what they really believe in, that is my question. When will they come to that conclusion that “I have to act according to what I really think?” Tanungin mo si Tagle, tanungin mo si Pabillo, I’m sure if we are talking individually like that, I am sure they have no objection. Eh kung karamihan ng pari mga Obispo ganyan, why is it that nothing is happening? At tsaka ngayon mayroon pa yung mga babaeng nagpapa ordain talaga, so they are criminalized. Ok na lang na sabihin mo na sila ay excommunicated, but do not criminalized them. Do not say that they doing something against God’s law. What God’s law is there? When I’m talking about this talagang kumukulo ang dugo ko.





Jihad: Islam and Spirituality of Resistance

Pete Sengson

Jihad: Islam and Spirituality of Resistance



Pete Sengson, Peace for Life

G. PETE SENGSON [53:12]: Magandang umaga po sa ating lahat – sa lahat ng nakikinig. Pagbati po sa UTS, at syempre sa mga kaibigan nating pastor na nakasama natin sa mga gawain. Ptr. Ferdie, sa imbitasyon – maraming salamat – Ptr. Lizette, Ptr. Connie Mela, and Ptr. Rev yata na nakasama natin sa Face the Facts before. Ang aking presentation ay naisulat ko sa English dahil minsan autopilot, ano? 'Pag nabigyan ng task, gagawin 'yong powerpoint and then later na-realize ko na 'yong invitation pala was written in Filipino. Naisip ko na baka ako'y ini-expect na magsalita in Filipino, so paumanhin agad. Mayroon namang question and answer portion later so kung may mga katanungan ay pwede namang itanong.

Una sa lahat, assalamu alaikum! Sana nasa mabuting kalagayan po ang lahat sa gitna ng pandemya. Ang title po ng presentation ay “Jihad: Islam and Spirituality of Resistance”. Ang 'jihad' po ay isang Arabic word which literally means 'struggle'. Hindi po ito 'giyera' or anything – pero 'struggle' ang ibig sabihin niyan. Ang outline po ng ating paksa ngayong umaga ay tatlong bahagi. Una ay kasaysayan ng mga Moro at ang kapanganakan ng konsepto na tinatawag nating Bangsamoro. Gusto ko pong sabihin na ako po ay hindi Moro. Doon sa introduction kanina, sinabi na ako ay convert. I was born a Catholic, converted in 2009, so I do not claim the Moro identity, pero sana mabigyang hustisya po natin ang talakayan. Pangalawa, what is Islam? So ano 'yong Islam as a religion and ano 'yong kanyang mga basic foundations? Ano 'yong mga rituals? Iyon 'yong sabi sa invitation. And then panghuli, Islam as Liberation or Liberation of Islam. So, actually this is the point where we will discuss 'yong Islamic Liberation Theology pero gusto kong i-tease nang kaunti na baka Islam itself and its current form needs some kind of liberation. So doon natin tatalakayin.

So bago ako magsimula, ito 'yong unang topic. We are doing this lecture series as a Celebration of the 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines pero gusto kong iwan siguro 'yong tanong na: “Kailan kaya unang narinig ang kwento ng buhay ni Hesus sa mga isla ng Pilipinas?” I would argue na Jesus – the life of Jesus was first heard in the islands of the Philippines 640 years ago. When the first Muslim trader had his first contact sa Sulu Archipelago. So dahil syempre ang buhay ni Hesus ay nasa loob ng Qu'ran. At sa pagpapakalat ng mensahe ng Islam, part and parcel po ang pagkukuwento ng buhay ni Hesus bilang isa sa mga kinikilalang Propeta sa Islam. Bago natin palalimin 'yon, ito pong kasaysayan ng mga Moro ay hahatiin natin sa apat na subtopic. 'Yong paghahati na ito ay ayon sa paghahati ng MILF. Kasi 'yong mga colonial historians would remove 'yong continuing struggle ng mga Moro at sa tingin ko 'yon ay isang inhustisya sa kanila.

So when we say 'pre-colonial', medyo parang imposing siya na term kasi parang pag sinabi nating pag may period na pre-colonial, lahat ng nangyari bago ang pre-colonial period ay nasa isang tumpok lang. Whereas, of course, alam natin na dynamic ito at sa kakulangan ng mga pag-aaral syempre hindi natin maitilad pa sa ilang mga bahagi. Pero gusto kong sabihin dito na bago siguro dumating pa ang Islam sa Pilipinas, napakalawak na, napakasagana ng impluwensya ng Hinduismo at Budismo sa Pilipinas. In fact, if one of you is from Butuan and if you'll go to Butuan City there's a

museum there which showcases 'yong rich tradition ng influence by Hinduism kung saan makikita niyo 'yong lalim or galing ng mga Pilipino sa metallurgy – 'yong paggamit ng mga bakal, ng ginto, para gumawa no'ng mga paraphernalias na mahalaga sa Hindu Religion. So ano ang relihiyon ng mga Moro bago ang Islam? Hindi natin alam. Walang malinaw na account, pwedeng animistic din sila or pwedeng influenced din sila ng Hinduism as evidenced in their art forms. Marami sa mga artforms ng mga Moro ay may touch of sanskrit art at syempre ito ay makukuha nila mula doon sa influence din ng insular Southeast Asia – 'yong Indonesia and Malaysia. And then, darating ng 1380's si Sheik Karim Al Makdum sa Sulu archipelago. Ang Sulu archipelago noon ay isa sa kinikilalang empire sa Southeast Asia. Malaki ang sakop niya kasama 'yong Tawi-tawi, 'yong Basilan, 'yong Zamboanga Peninsula, 'yong Sabah etc. Isa sa mga malaking naging negosyo ng Sulu Sultanate noon 'yong pearl. In fact, 'yong mga Badjao na isang tribo in itself ay naging mga slaves ng mga Tausug. 'Yong mga Tausug kasi ang mga people of Sulu. So naging slave sila at sila ay taga-sisid ng pearls ng mga Tausug. At 'yon nga ang isa sa pinakamahalagang trait ng Sulu archipelago. At mayroon siyang rich history of trade with other countries - China, Malaysia, and other Southeast Asian countries. In fact, isa sa mga naging Sultan ng Sulu ay inilibing pa sa China. Mayroon silang memorial doon. Pero 'yong contact na 'yon ng Muslim traders ay mga Sufi o mga Persians, hindi sila necessarily Arabic. Ang katangian – hindi naman pumunta dito primarily para magpakalat ng relihiyon kundi for economic purposes.

So it was actually ten years later pa doon sa arrival ni Raja Baguinda who belongs to a Minangkabau group from Sumatra na doon nagsimula 'yong pagpapakalat ng Islam. At 'yong kanyang son-in-law na si Sharif Abu Bakr, 1450 – doon pa lamang nagsimulang magtatag ng Islamic Sultanate sa Sulu. So mula doon, kakalat 'yong religion. By 1515, si Shariff Kabunsuan, nakapagtatag na rin ng Islamic Sultanate sa Central Mindanao. By 1616 naman si Sultan Kudarat. So maalala niyo 'yong Shariff Kabunsuan ay isang short-lived province noong 2006 to 2008 yata na tinangkang i-create ng ARMM but later on was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Kaya ganito 'yong pagkakahati-hati nyan kasi gusto kong ma-appreciate niyo na 'yong Sultanate ni Shariff Abu Bakr would be the Sultanate of the Tausugs. Ang sultanate ni Shariff Kabunsuan and Sultan Kudarat would be the Sultanate of the Maguindanao. Among the Maranaos, 'yong kanilang grupo walang central authority, binubuo siya ng maliliit na grupo-grupo, na tinatawag nila na Pangampong, at apat doon ang pinakamalaki – Masiu, Unayan, Bayabao at Baloi. 'Yon ang parang naging 'central authority'. But basically the Tausug, the Maguindanao, and the Maranao comprises the three biggest ethnolinguistic groups na Moro.

So mayroong thirteen moro ethnolinguistic groups and we've mentioned Tausug, Maguindanao and Maranao. What are the others? 'Yong Iranun na actually ay in-accept 'yong authority ng Maguindanao, and the Yakans, the Sama and the Sama Laut are all tributaries of Tausugs, and then Kalagan, Kolibugan, Sangil, Jama Mapun, Molbog and Palawan. So Molbog and Palawan are actually in Palawan – nasa isang separate island tapos 'yong mga Palawani ay nasa Palawan.

Iyong mga areas na may deep green na color 'yon 'yong occupied ng thirteen ethnolinguistic groups ngayon. Before it used to be bigger. And in fact, gaano kalaki – umabot ang Islamic sultanate hanggang Ilocos. Ako po ay Kapampangan, at sa Pampanga, isa sa mga sikat na surnames ay Medina, and you will wonder why Medina and we know from geography that Medina is a place in present day Saudi Arabia kung saan historically nag-look ng refuge si Prophet Muhammad noong tumatakas sila mula sa persecution sa Mecca. So 'yong Pampanga noon ay isa ring Islamic

Sultanate. Si Rajah Sulayman, ang Rajah ng Maynila, ay isang Muslim at nagtayo siya ng isang Muslim polity sa Maynila noon. In fact, 'yong Sulayman ay Arabic word for Solomon - the King Solomon in Bible. Of course later on, 1521, we know that the Spaniards will arrive to Philippines, and magkakaroon sila ng maraming expeditions na ang layunin ay sakupin ang mga isla sa Pilipinas so ano ang naging tugon doon ng mga pamayanang Moro – resistance, of course. Pangunahin na dinefend nila 'yong mga pamayanan nila sa Mindanao, sa Visayas. Ang naisuko nila ay 'yong mga pamayanan sa Luzon dahil syempre sa sobrang layo na, ang hirap din namang i-defend. Pero nagkaroon sila – nakakuha sila ng tulong mula sa mga allied neighbors nila from Malaysia and Indonesia. 'Yong mga labanan noon ng mga Moro at mga Kastila ay napaka-intense. In fact, the name Cebu which is from the word 'sugbu' which means 'scorched earth', is actually the technique used by the Cebuanos against the Moros when they were defending their islands. Kasi by that time naman ang Cebu ay Catholics na 'di ba. Pero by 1718, nagkaroon na ng Spanish fortifications in Zamboanga, the Latin City of the South. Later on nagkaroon din ng fort sa Sulu pero 'yong mga forts na ito hindi sila nag-exist in relative peace. Lagi silang nakaka-experience ng resistance mula sa mga Moro groups. 'Yong mga fort sa Sulu – ang mga kwento doon, kapag gabi, binabato 'yon ng mga Moro habang tulog na 'yong mga Kastila. Then after the establishment of forts in Zamboanga, itinatag ng mga Kastila 'yong privateer system o basically sinabi nila na any private army can attack Moro groups. Binigyan nila ng pahintulot ung mga mayayaman na may mga goons na atakihin 'yong mga Moro. Syempre ang layunin noon ay mapasuko 'yong mga Moro. Throughout the 333 years of their existence in the Philippines, of course, nagkaroon d'yan ng mga sporadic local resistance.

Pagdating naman ng mga Amerikano, ang pinakamatingkad dito ay 'yong Kiram-Bates Treaty kasi syempre 'yong pamayanang Moro, 'yong kanyang thinking ay hindi naman siya bahagi ng Pilipinas. Noong nilagdaan 'yong Treaty of Paris, kasama 'yong mga territories ng Moro doon sa binibigay ng mga Kastila na teritoryo doon sa mga Amerikano. So they felt that's injustice. Nagkaroon ng mga sunud-sunod na resistance din against US imperial rule. Ang isa sa mga malalaki dyan 'yong Bud Dajo Massacre – although sa mga references makikita niyo na Battle of Bud Dajo. Ang Bud Dajo ay isang bundok at dito daw nag-si-see ng refuge 'yong mga sundalong Moro kapag sila ay nasa giyera. So there was one time na mayroong nakatipon doon na around 1,000 Moro soldiers. Then of course, alam niyo naman ang Amerika, advanced na sa warfare so 'yong kanilang mga gamit – mayroon na silang naval ships, may mga advanced na baril. Pinaulanan nila ng bala 'yong Bud Dajo. From 1,000 soldiers, ang natira ay anim lamang. Kaya ang assertion doon ng mga Moro — this is not a 'battle' of Bud Dajo kasi kung battle ito more or less pantay tayo ng fire power, but this is actually a massacre. Nasundan pa ito sa Bud Bagsak ng similar massacre din.

And then 'yong Kiram Bates Treaty – si Sultan Kiram – Jamalul Kiram – ay ancestor ng mga Tausug – patriarch ng mga Tausug, at nag-enter siya ng agreement with the United States na titigilan na muna nila 'yong giyera, kikalalanin 'yong rule ng Amerika, i-ra-raise 'yong flag ng Amerika, pero magkakaroon ng respeto sa mga pamayanang Moro. Hahayaan silang i-profess 'yong kanilang faith at hindi babaguhin 'yong kanilang mga cultural traditions. Of course, ang ultimate goal ng US doon – hindi naman para pumatay lang – syempre lupa. Kagaya ng mga nasabi ni Katkat kanina, ang central interest naman ng US or kahit ng mananakop ay 'yong lupa ng mga Moro. Dahil 'yong Mindanao up to today perhaps parang nandoon 'yong natitirang fortress ng Pilipinas. Napakayaman sa mineral, sa goma, sa troso etc. Doon sa loob ng rule ng Amerika sa Pilipinas, nagpasa siya ng maraming acts which basically aims to declare ancestral domains of the Moro as public domains and therefore may sovereignty doon ang Amerika at pwede silang mag-decide kung saan gagamitin ang

mga lupa na 'yon. So when the Philippines gained its "independence", naitatag naman ang Commission on National Integration. Ang layunin nitong Commission on National Integration ay i-integrate 'yong mga Moro sa system basically. So parang sinasabi dito na kung hahayaan natin sila na magparticipate sa nation-building, baka ariin nila 'yong pamahalaan, mag-identify sila as Muslim Filipinos, hindi lamang Moro. Nagkaroon ito ng suporta mula sa mga elite na mga Moro, na naging scholars ng US, pinadala sa abroad para mag-aral. Kagaya nung mga naging scholars din at technocrats na mga Filipino, ang naging silbi din naman nila later on sa pamahalaan ay para palambutin 'yong puso ng mga Moro at hindi na mag-resist. Ang naging epekto ng mga series of acts and laws na nagbuyangyang sa lupa ng mga Moro ay intrusion ng mga transnational companies. Pinakamalaki dyan ang Firestone Tire and Rubber Company sa Cotabato tapos 'yong plantations ng Dole na hanggang ngayon naman ay nag-i-exist pa.

Nagkaroon noon ng cult movement – ang pangalan niya ay Ilaga. Ito naman, parang grupo siya na binuo noong panahon ni Diosdado Macapagal para mag-sow ng unrest doon sa Moro territories so marami silang pinatay na mga Moro. Syempre parang pinapalabas lang kunwari na "rido" o clan war 'yan pero actually kagagawan 'yan ng mga Ilaga. Isa perhaps sa pivotal point ng mga maraming karahasan na na-direct sa mga Moro ay 'yong Jabitah Massacre. Nagsimula ito noong panahon ni Diosdado Macapagal at nag-last hanggang sa panahon ni Pangulong Marcos. Nag-train sila ng mga soldiers at ang unang sinabi sa kanila, itong mga soldiers na ito ay gagamitin para sa pagsugpo ng communist revolution. Pero later on some of the soldier trainees learned na they are being trained para maging soldiers para sa binabalak na pagsakop muli o pag-reclaim sa Sabah. So noong nalaman nila ito, nagkaroon sila ng mutiny – parang disobedience doon sa kanilang trainers. Para hindi na lang kumalat 'yong balita, pinagpapatay na lang 'yong mga soldiers. Subalit may natirang anim, 'yong anim na yon, they would later on tell the story of Jabitah massacre. Noong narinig ito ng Moro community, na-ignite 'yong kanilang resistance – spirit of resistance, at 'yong kanilang nationalism, at ito 'yong magbubunsod ng pagtatatag ng Moro Independence Movement ni Datu Udtog Matalam. 'Yong MIM, siya 'yong parang crucial na movement na mag-a-articulate no'ng desire ng mga Moro to secede from the Philippines. Isa sa mga magiging reader nito, o magiging fan, ay si Nur Misuari. Si Nur Misuari ay nag-aral sa UP kung saan naging kaklase niya si Joma Sison, founder ng CCP-NPA-NDF. They belong to a same organization, 'yong Kabataang Makabayan, which was later on outlawed by the Marcos administration. Pero 'yong KM, mayroon siyang revolutionary goals na pagtatatag ng isang lipunan na sosyalista, basically na malaya sa neokolonyalismo ng US at malaya din mula sa pyudalismo ng mga naghaharing uri sa Pilipinas. So mayroon siyang idea – shall we say influence, ng Marxist ideology – si Nur Misuari. And then makikilala niya si Hashim Salamat na nag-aral sa Cairo, Egypt. Isa siyang Islamic scholar. Pagbalik niya dito sa Pilipinas, ito 'yong nangyayari noong mga panahon na iyon, may unrest within the Moro community. Silang dalawa, itatag nila 'yong Moro National Liberation Front na ang layunin din ay una, syempre, mag secede mula sa Pilipinas at igalang 'yong right to self determination ng mga Moro at syempre magkaroon ng society – bilang bahagi ng influence kay Nur Misuari nung KM – magkaroon ng more egalitarian na Moro society.

Later on itong MNLF, magkakaroon siya ng peace talks with the government. At 'yong Tripoli Agreement o 'yong agreement ng MNLF at ng Government of the Philippines ay malalagdaan pero may mga tsismis dito na – syempre si Marcos yan, at napakatuso ni Marcos, na during the negotiations sa Tripoli (ito mediated ito ng organization of Islamic countries), papapalit-palit 'yong laman ng document. Ang contention nila – aling mga provinces 'yong isasama doon sa gagawing

Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. Ang isang sinasabi, nag-agree sila sa certain provinces, pero nung pipirmahan na - ceremonial signing no'ng agreement - doon na lang nakita ni Nur na napalitan 'yong laman ng agreement. So basically, medyo mayroong panlolokong ginawa doon ang gobyerno ng Pilipinas. Mayroong mga bahagi ng MNLF na magkakaroon ng discontent, either hindi sila nag-agree doon sa pagkakaroon ng peace talks or hindi sila nag-agree sa outcome ng peace talks kaya may segment ng MNLF na titiwalag – basically the Hashim Salamat group at itatag naman 'yong Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Ang isa sa criticism ng MILF sa MNLF is that – one, they find it too Marxist at pangalawa, 'yong pagsuko niya sa gobyerno ng Pilipinas. 'Yong MILF naman, magkakaroon siya ng sarili nyang struggle – i-co-continue niya 'yong armed struggle habang si Nur Misuari later on ay uupo bilang unang governor ng ARMM. So 'yong MILF – very short cut na po ito ano – later on, alam natin, magkakaroon siya ng peace agreement with President Aquino, doon 'yong precursor ng BARMM – 'yong Bangsamoro Basic Law noon pa.

Actually naging staff po ako nung office na nag-create nung Bangsamoro Basic Law. Ang sinasabi ng MILF: “it's high time to talk peace”. Kasi aging na 'yong population ng fighters ng MILF, wala nang kabataan or kumakaunti na 'yong kabataang gustong pumasok bilang freedom fighters or armed fighters nila. So they have to settle. Doon mo ma-a-appreiate 'yong dynamics perhaps ng MILF versus dynamics ng – say for example ng 'left', ng NDFP – kasi dahil 'yong MILF nakatutok siya doon sa preservation ng identity ng Moro, it's more of a struggle of identity, struggle for ancestral domain, whereas 'yong 'left' is struggle for a classless society. So parang kahit na tumanda 'yong mga leaders n'yan, kahit mamatay 'yong mga leaders nyan, mayroon at mayroong papalit. 'Yon 'yong isang pagkakaiba nila. So noong nagkaroon ng peace agreement ang MILF with the Philippine government, of course meron na namang faction dyan sa MILF na hindi makukuntento. That's why kung maaalala niyo nagkaroon ng BIFF na medyo short-lived. Isa sa significant portion din nagtayo ng bagong revolutionary organization which is the Moro Revolutionary Organization (MRO) na nasa ilalim na ngayon ng NDFP. It's not quite surprising kasi in fact, MILF and NDFP has enjoyed mutual respect and cooperation in the many decades of their struggle.

So this is why we say na despite the peace agreements, despite perhaps the establishment of BARMM, masasabi pa rin natin na mayroong continuing struggle 'yong mga Moro whether it is for doon sa realization ng BARMM or doon sa realization ng ipinaglalaban ng mga natitirang Moro na nag-wa-wage pa rin ng armed struggle. Ano 'yong primary na nilalabanan nila? 'Yong gusto kong i-introduce dito 'yong concept ng national oppression – ano ang national oppression? Nakasulat sa (inaudible) violation of indigenous prior rights to ancestral lands, political misinterpretation, non-recognition ng continuing validity of the indigenous socio-political processes of Moro – and actually Lumad, the commercialization and vulgarization of indigenous cultures, historical government neglect, institutionalized discrimination, Christian chauvinism o 'yong pagtingin na 'yong pagiging Kristiyano ay superior sa pagiging Muslim or pagiging Lumad, ethnocide sa pamamagitan ng continued militarization kagaya no'ng mga ginagawa sa mga Lumad, development aggression – 'di ba do'n sa mga lumalaban against pagtatayo ng mga additional plantation, mining etc, non-recognition of the identity of IP and national minorities as distinct people – 'yong pagpipilit ng narrative ng Muslim Filipino although debatable 'yan kasi may mga Moro themselves, they admit that or they accept that they are Muslim Filipinos, and denial and violation of their rights of determination. Sabi nga ng isang scholar, kung ang Filipino – common Filipino, common Tagalog, Kapampangan, Bicolano ay nakakaranas ng neocolonialism, ang mga Moro ay nakakaranas ng multiple colonialism

kasi bukod sa nilalabanan niya 'yong neokolonyang US, China, nilalabanan niya rin 'yong kolonyalismo ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas.

'Yon po 'yong tungkol sa Moro na bahagi. Mag-ta-transition po ako doon sa Islam bilang religion. This is theological school, at alam natin na in looking at religion, we have to consider also 'yong kanyang pagiging intertwined sa kultura. Halimbawa, 'yong Islam, alam natin na nagmula ito sa Arab culture dahil ito ay pinasimulan ng mga Arabo. 'Pag nilapat mo ito sa isang community like the Moros, may mga sariling kultura, maglalaro doon 'yong cultural influences ng dalawa. 'Yong Islam na highly influenced by Arab culture and the local culture of the Moros. Pero dito gusto nating pag usapan 'yong Islam na mula sa Saudi Arabia.

So there is an estimate of 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide – one fifth of the world's population. In many surveys, sinasabi na this is the fastest growing religion today at maraming claims na sinasabing ang growth nito ay without missionary efforts, which I doubt. Well una, kaya ito sinasabi dahil bawal 'yong pag-co-convince na: “oy, ikaw mag-convert ka sa Muslim o sa Islam” gano’n. Bawal 'yon sa Islam. Pero alam natin na maraming mga countries where the state religion is Islam. Marami 'yang mga propaganda bilang bansa na kung saan part and parcel 'yong Islam at syempre 'yon naman ay bahagi din ng pag-promote ng Islam.

Saan nakatira ang mga Muslim? Only 18% (ito mahalaga ito) lang ng mga Muslims ang nasa Arab world. 20% ay nasa Sub-Saharan Africa - Egypt, Libya, Morocco. 30% ay nasa South Asia - Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, the rest po ay nasa Southeast Asia. So ang pinakamalaking Islamic community ay nasa Indonesia. Ang Islam, kagaya ng Kristiyanismo sa napakaraming sekta, so hindi po isa – hindi po monolithic ang Islam. Pag tinanong niyo po ang isang Muslim versus isa pang Muslim, maaaring may pagkakaiba sila ng kanilang pananampalataya. Isa sa common dichotomy 'yong Sunni, Shi'ah. At bakit sila nahati ay dahil nagtalo sila kung sino 'yong rightful na descendant ni Prophet Muhammad. Sinasabi ng mga Shi'ah na dapat ito ay magmula doon sa mga relatives ni Prophet Muhammad – so may concept sila ng holy family. 'Yong mga Sunni naman naniniwala na dapat ito ay elected mula sa mga disciples ni Prophet Muhammad. And the rest is history. So pinakamalaki po 'yong mga Sunni. 'Yong Shi'ah ay nasa Iran mostly at mga kalapit na mga – I wouldn't say country – but mga bayan sa mga countries na 'yon. Pero 'yong mga Sunni, although malaki sila, nahahati pa sila sa apat na schools of jurisprudence – 'yong Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki, Shafi'i. so lahat yan may iba-ibang interpretations ng faith. So makikita niyo pa yan, ang dami. 'Yong Sufi may sariling 'yang box kasi we cannot classify them as Sunni or Shi'ah. So 'yong point ay maraming variations.

'Yong Islam, ang kanyang Messenger or Prophet is si Prophet Muhammad na pinanganak sa Mecca noong 570 AD. Ano 'yong context sa Mecca nung ipinanganak siya? Parang magulo – may inequality – laganap 'yong inequality, magulo, laging may giyera – 'yon 'yong context ng kanyang pagkakapanganak. Marami sa mga tribo doon ay polytheistic, although ung family ni Prophet Muhammad ay mga Zoroastrian. So 'yong Islam actually ay may influence ng Zoroastrianism hindi man i-admit ng ibang mga Islamic scholars. Isa siguro sa hahanguin nila mula sa Zoroastrianism is the belief in one God or monotheism. In fact, influenced din ng Islam ang mga smaller religious sects sa Arabia na nag-wo-worship ng bato. Kaya 'yong Kaaba which is essentially a stone, 'yong black stone box na iniikutan sa Mecca kapag nagha-Hajj ay influence ng mga relihiyon noong panahon ni Prophet Muhammad. Siya ay ulila. Siya ay mahirap. Kinuha siya ni Khadija bilang merchant –

parang nakita ni Khadija – “ay, ulila, kawawa naman, so pagtrabahuhin ko na lang”. Si Khadija ay di hamak na mas matanda kay Prophet Muhammad pero later on naging asawa ni Prophet Muhammad si Khadija at nagkaroon sila ng mga anak.

So 15 years after nilang ikasal nagkaroon ng vision si Prophet Muhammad. Nag-appear sa kanya ang isang angel, ang pangalan ay Angel Jibrīl – sounds familiar – Angel Gabriel in the Gospel. At do’n niya ni-reveal ‘yong mga katuruan ng Islam. Mecca was a community of illiterates. Maraming hindi nakapag-aral, maraming hindi marunong magsulat. Kaya ang revelation ng Qu’ran was through visions at paano naipasa ‘yong mga teachings – through recitation from Prophet Muhammad himself. So ni-recite niya sa harap ng mga tao na marunong magsulat. Itong mga taong nagsusulat na ito, sinulat nila ‘yong salaysay ni Prophet Muhammad. At syempre ang naging central teaching ng religion na ito ay strong social justice and equality – dahil ito ‘yong antithesis nung context sa Mecca noong mga panahon na iyon.

Muhammad slowly began to attract some followers, most of them with modest social standing, kagaya ni Hesus na namiling mamuhay sa common folk. The ruling elite feared Muhammad and his followers and began to persecute them, kaya later on mag-si-look sila ng sanctuary sa ibang mga lugar. Pero ‘yong kanyang prestige ay lumaki. Kasi ‘yong Qu’ran, unlike siguro sa gospel or sa bible na naglalaman ng mga stories – mga anecdotes, ‘yong Qu’ran para siyang instructional book at dahil ang context niya ay giyera, marami sa instructions doon ay kung paano mamuhay sa panahon ng giyera – paano magtayo ng isang community na relatively peaceful at malayo sa giyera. In fact ‘yong laging sasabihin pag Muslim ka: “A, pwede kang mag-asawa ng apat.” Well, totoo ‘yon, allowed ‘yon sa Islamic law currently pero ang context noon was that during the day ang mga soldiers ay lalaki at namamatay sila sa giyera. Dahil ‘yong mga soldiers ang may economic power, political power, kapag namatay ‘yong lalaki, parang namamatay ‘yong household, pag nabibiyuda ‘yong babae. So ang progressive rule noon ni Prophet Muhammad was that you allow surviving men to marry itong mga biyuda, kahit hanggang apat pakasalan mo, pwede, para mailigtas ‘yong family nila provided that you can provide for them equally. Of course ‘yong interpretation n’yan sa modern day ay maiiba pero ‘yon ‘yong kanyang context.

Muhammad's life was cut short by his sudden death – sixty years old namatay siya. Pero after his death, of course Islam would spread to other territories. At in fact, napakalaki na, at some point naging threat ito sa maraming empires sa buong mundo.

What are the sources of knowledge in Islam? Of course, primarily its the Qu’ran, ito ‘yong parang Bible ng mga Muslim including its tafsir. Ang tafsir ay exegesis o ‘yong commentary ng Quran. Hadiths – itong sinasabi ko na ito, with decreasing level of reliability na . So ‘yong mga hadiths ay mga sayings of the Prophets as reported by his followers. Pag may nakikita kayong hadiths kunwari this “blah blah as said by Abu blah blah to Abu blah blah blah to Abu blah blah blah”, gano’n siya. So kailangan may history, kasi kailangan ma-trace na ito ay galing talaga kay Prophet Muhammad, otherwise hindi siya reliable. And then the Sunnah, some religious traditions or sects in Islam would not follow the Sunnah. Pero Sunnah ay cultural practices at the time of the Prophet. Kasi ang sinasabi, if you follow the life of Prophet Muhammad, literally, mas malaki ‘yong chance mo na pumasok sa heaven. So ano ‘yong mga example nito, halimbawa, when breaking the fast, it was customary for the Prophet to eat three pieces of dates. So some Muslims would interpret that literally na today, ‘pag mag-break sila ng fast, kakain talaga sila ng tatlong dates. So bilang Pilipino, you

have to source your dates from the Arab world and then 'yon, you have to make sure na may tatlo ka everyday.

The Qur'an is recitation as I've said, written in Arabic. Mahalaga sa Islam 'yong purity ng translation. In fact you are supposed to read it in Arabic. You are supposed to learn Arabic and the style of Arabic noong panahon na naisulat ito para ma-interpret mo 'yong Qur'an. In length, it is comparable to the gospels, 'yong chapters niya naka-arrange following a descending order so 'yong pinakamahaba, 'yong Surah Al-Baqarah, ay nasa second chapter kasi 'yong first chapter 'yong parang Lord's Prayer in Arabic, and Surah AlFatihah. And then the shorter ones would be 'yong nasa dulo. It contains many commandments as I've said it's more of a practical guide than a story book. Life after death – nakasulat din do'n 'yong life after death, heaven and hell, tapos may concept ng divine reckoning.

How do we view other religions? Muslims believe that God had previously revealed himself to the earlier prophets of Jews and Christians. so merong continuity nung abrahamic tradition kaya nga siya Abrahamic faith, kasi parang ang tingin niya 'yong Islam ay pagtutuloy noong ganoong tradition. So ideally we accept the teachings of jewsih Torah and the christian Gospels. Pero dito tayo magkakatalo. They believe that Islam is the perfection of the religion therefore kung mayroong dispute sa torah sa bible, qur-an will be the basis. Dun tayo mag 'yon 'yong magiging batayan natin sa pag interpret. And some scholars would take that very literally to the point na hindi na nila pinapahalaghaan 'yong torah at 'yong gospels.

What are the five Pillars of the Faith? Medyo alam niyo na ito from Sibika at Kultura pero ulitin natin. First is Shahadah, the profession of faith, basically the belief that there is only one God and Muhammad is a Prophet of God. In fact, 'yong pagbibinyag sa Islam, hindi naman siya binyag talaga kundi 'yong literal na pagsabi mo nung Shahadah - 'yong Arabic translation no'ng "I believe in Allah as God and Prophet Muhammad as Prophet".

And then number two is worship or prayer. It was ordained for Muslims to pray five times a day – dawn, noon, mid, afternoon, sunset, nightfall. Historically, it was actually fifty times a day. Why? Because the followers – the early Muslims noon mahilig silang maglasing kaya sabi ni God: "Hala, magdasal kayo fifty times a day, baka sakali makalimutan niyo 'yong pag-iinom." And later on, sinabi naman na God is a merciful God, hindi niya gustong pahirapan kayo so i-re-reduce natin 'yong number into five.

There is a community gathering every Friday noon, exact 'yon, walang ibang oras, ito 'yong parang Sunday mass sa mga Katoliko at Kristiyano. Ang tawag dito ay Jumuah. Ang required na mag-attend ay males. Females are not required. Of course, patriarchal 'yong religion. You have to consider the context kasi syempre even doon sa panahon na umusbong 'yong Islam ay patriarchal din naman 'yong Arab society kaya ganyan. So it starts with the rituals of prayer and then later on may parang sermon din na tinatawag na Khutbah, at 'yong Khutbah ay tungkol sa issues of the day.

And then Sawm or fasting which happens during Ramadan. 'Yong iba ang alam ang number three ay Ramadan. 'Yong Ramadan, bakit siya ginugunita, kasi ito 'yong pinaniniwalaan na sa Lunar Islamic calendar, ito 'yong panahon kung kailan na-reveal iyong Qur'an. This is the holiest month. Pero ang isa sa gusto kong diinan dito, 'yong practice of fasting. 'Yong fasting po nagaganap siya

from before sunrise to after sunset. Bawal kumain. Bawal uminom ng tubig. Kailangang mag-inhibit sa sexual intercourse and thoughts. Kailangan gumawa ng mabuti. Ano ang rationale dito? Because you have to feel the suffering of the poor. Kailangan may material basis ka para masabi mo na ganito ang paghihirap ng mga dukha. Dahil nakakabit ito doon sa fourth pillar which is Zakat – in modern day English is translated to ‘almsgiving’ or ‘charity’ – but the concept of Zakat is actually revolutionary. It requires Muslims who have excess wealth na sosobra doon sa kailangan nila: “Ibigay yan sa lahat ng mahihirap sa lahat ng kapatid mo na nangnangailangan. Dahil naramdaman mo ang paghihirap nila, ibigay mo yan sa kanila.” At ang layunin ng Islam, of course, is equality.

Number five – Hajj, pilgrimage to Mecca, so 'yong pilgrimage alam natin 'yong pag-visit sa mga holy sites, blah blah, pero 'yong Hajj it's more of a reenactment of pagtakas nila Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina. Syempre ang emphasis doon ay ano 'yong naging struggle ni Prophet Muhamad para lang i-defend 'yong faith.

Dito na po ako sa last part - Liberation in/of Islam. I contend na bago maging liberative ulit 'yong mensahe ng Islam, it needs in itself some form of liberation. Why? Because in the contemporary times, napakalaki po ng naging influence ng Wahabbism or Salafism. And what is Wahabbism or Salafism? Ito po ay - shall we say interpretation ni Muhammad Ibn Abdl Wahhab, its a movement of Islamic movement ni Muhammad Ibn Abdl Wahhab towards a puritanical interpretation of Islam kasi sabi nila during the 1700, Muslims has gone as astray naging polytheistic na sila, hindi na totoong monotheistic 'yong Islam. Itong conservative interpretation nila ng Islam or itong conservative group na ito ay nagkaroon ng ally sa House of Saud. 'Yong House of Saud ay isang political family sa present day Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Ang ginawa nila, nagkaroon sila ng alliance: “Kayo mga Wahhab, kayo ang hahawak ng religious aspect. Kami mga Saud, kami ang hahawak ng political and economic aspect. Tapos bubuun natin 'yong kingdom of Saudi Arabia.” That is why the present day KSA, ang official state religion nila ay Islam and particularly, that Wahhab strand of Islam. Hindi naman sana problema ito. Kaya lang noong 1950's, noong na-discover ng KSA na marami siyang pera, marami siyang oil, nagkaroon ng rise economically within KSA and then nakapagpondo sila ng mga Islamic universities worldwide. At 'yong Islamic universities nila ang magpapakalat ng ganoong tradition ng Islam. Mainly also to counter the interpretation of Islam ng mga Turks. 'Yong Ottoman secularism. Recall that even if Turkey is a majority Muslim country, they believe that 'yong kanilang society should be secular – hiwalay 'yong affairs ng religion at ng state. 'Yong pagtingin doon ng mga Wahhab ay 'yon ay innovation, hindi 'yon Islamic, kaya kailangang labanan.

We move to Islamic Liberation Theology. Ang Islam kasi, unlike perhaps Catholic Church, wala siyang central authority, wala siyang pope, wala siyang isang figure na 'pag kinausap mo ay magkakaroon ng influence sa overall Muslims. Walang gano'n. So it's basically marami siyang community na may iba't ibang paniniwala pero ni-li-label natin sila single-handedly na ito ay mga Muslim, ito ay mga Islam. Bakit ko 'to sinasabi, kasi kung maghahanap ka online ng Islamic Liberation Theology ay wala kang mahahanap na parang isang central stream of thought, academic thought na nagsabing ito ang Islamic Liberation Theology. Marami kang mahahanap na scholars pero walang iisang interpretation. Siguro ang gusto kong sabihin, Islamic Liberation Theology must begin with a scientific worldview, in any religion perhaps, or I would argue. At 'yong scientific worldview na 'yan, noon pa lamang mga 300 years after the birth of Prophet Muhammad, nand'yan na sila Ibn Sina or Avicenna in Latin. Ito 'yong rise ng Arab world because they allowed for the translation of Greek documents, Latin documents, kaya nakakakuha sila ng vast knowledge and so

much so that they pioneered certain fields in Medicine, in Mathematics - 'yong founder ng Algebra - si Al-Jabr, founder ng geometry si Al Khwarizmi, in short, nung panahon na yon, mayroong rich tradition of scientific research, o pag-accumulate ng scientific knowledge. Sabi ni Ibn Sina, "the world is divided into men who have wit and no religion and men who have religion and no wit". Si Ibn Sina, naniniwala siya bilang Muslim na 'yong concept ng heaven, ng hell, 'yong mga commandments sa Qur'an ay mga cultural tools – literary tools para sa mga 'men with no wit' o hindi nakapag-aral para magkaroon sila ng sense of morality o sumunod sila at gawin kung ano ang tama. Meaning to say, if you are educated or if you are enlightened enough to interpret the world, you do not need religion or alam mo na hindi literal yoong heaven and earth. At wala talagang life after death. But it is for you to live a morally upright life doon sa buhay mo na 'yon.

In terms of rights, napakaraming rights po na enumerated in the Qur'an. Mayroong isang human rights activist na gumawa ng libro tungkol diyan at ni-lift ko lamang ito. Nandoon iyong right to life, right to the safety of life, right to chastity of women, justice, equality of human beings. Mayroon pa nga doon na sinasabi na: "When do you pay your workers?" Kung meron silang ginawa para sa iyo at sabi doon na: "You have to pay them just payments before their sweat dries." So hindi mo pwedeng i-delay 'yong pagbabayad, kailangan bayaran mo sila nang tama doon sa tinrabaho nila. Mayroon doong rights of enemies at war kasi ang context nga ng Qur'an ay giyera so bawal i-torture with fire. Kailangan i-protect 'yong wounded. Igalang ang sanctity of a dead body, hindi i-display sa media. I-return of corpses hindi ilagak sa punerarya.

So for contemporary scholars, medyo natuwa ako kasi in recent years na-publish itong libro, 'yong Qur'an of the Oppressed, which is a collection – works of the Islamic Liberation theologians. Three of these people we have worked with sa Peace for Life. Si Farihd, si Asghar Ali Engineer, si Amina Wadud, si Asma Barlas – ay noon ko lang nakilala nung nabasa ko 'yong libro. Kaya lang, kahapon nagrelease ng statement si Tita Menchie na condemning Farihd Esack. Nagkaroon daw ito ng sexual harassments sa kanyang mga apprentices which is sad for the whole progressive Muslim community.

Liberation in the local context – so I hope by now, without telling you what is Islamic Liberation Theology, you have felt that through the lived experience of the Moros and even perhaps 'yong mga Muslims that would identify as Muslim filipinos. Nakita niyo 'yong pagpiglas, 'yong resistance, yearning for liberation. In local context, kasi Islamic Liberation Theology 'yong mga progressive theologies I believe magsisimula 'yan sa margins, eh. So hindi yan magsisimula sa Saudi. Magsisimula 'yan sa mga bansa na mayroong Muslim population na minoritized at napakahalaga noong papel ng mga Moro doon sa pagbubuo ng Islamic Liberation Theology para sa buong Muslim world. Perhaps, the regret would be that walang masyadong nagtutuon nito for academic purposes. This is not to say they are bereft of experience. In fact, napakayaman nung experience nila, ang kailangan lamang gawin ay sumahin 'yon para magkaroon ng proper articulation. Pero in context, you have to consider their struggle for right to self determination at kaakibat noon 'yong kanilang right to their ancestral domains.

Kailangan magkaroon ng dialogue tungkol sa political dynasties kasi marami sa mga – even MILF is led by political families that are elite. At kung titignan niyo 'yong composition ngayon ng Bangsamoro Transition Authority, marami sa mga officers noon ay galing sa political elite ng mga Moro. At syempre kung tayo ay nag-a-aspire ng isang society na more or less ay may pagkakapantay-pantay,

we have to – kailangan nating basagin ang concept ng political dynasty. And kailangan tignan natin 'yong ating spirituality in the context of neoliberal globalization, hindi na lamang ito tungkol sa Philippine government, tungkol sa political dynasties, kundi larger forces in the world that actually has affected our daily lives – yong pag-aagaw ng mga ancestral domains in favor of building rubber plantations, lumber trading, mining etc. Lahat 'yan nagkaroon ng epekto doon sa pang-araw-araw na buhay ng mga Moro – pang-araw-araw na pagtingin nila sa kanilang pananampalataya na humuhubog sa kanilang identity up to this day.

Sa tingin ko, hindi natatapos sa kahit anong peace agreement ang struggle ng Bangsamoro at nananatili itong struggle hanggang sa ngayon. Pinapangunahan ito ng mga Moro na nasa laylayan. Maraming salamat po. [1:54:58]

Question and Answer:

REV. HAZEL JOYCE SALATAN [2:07:54]: Para kay Ginoong Pete, may nakahanda rin pong dumating na mga tanong. “How do you see the concept and vision of Islamic Ummah? Do you consider this as some form of colonialism of a global scale?” At iyong pangalawa, “Is ‘Islam or Christianity’ a sound synthesis or religious discourse?”

G. PETE SENGSON [2:08:25]: Una sa lahat, pwede natin siyang tignan sa maraming – from many angles, eh. Una, ano ba 'yong “Ummah”, ‘di ba? It's just “community”, ‘di ba? Minsan kasi pag nilagyan mo ng foreign Arabic word parang it becomes exclusive to a group. Pero kung paghinilayan mo, Islamic Ummah - Islamic Community - babalikan mo kung ano ang vision ng Islam ‘di ba, society na equal, na may pagkakapantay-pantay. Kung ganoon, do you consider this a form of colonialism of a global scale? Kung gano'n, it becomes an antithesis of colonialism ‘di ba? Pero we cannot deny also that – 'yong mga ganitong concept, ginagamit siya to forward certain causes – political causes. So ang isa pang pwedeng tignan is, minsan kasi isa rin itong form of resistance from the Islamic community. Say for example, dati I used to believe na 'yong pagsusuot ng veil sa mga babae, restrictive siya for women. It's a feudal imposition on them kasi in the Qur'an ang hijab means modesty, it does not mean a piece of “tela” na ibabalot sa ulo. Pero when I asked Moro women, batchmates ko, “Why do you wear the hijab? Bakit ka nag-hi-hijab?” It's an assertion of their identity. At kapag ganoon, syempre nasa context ka na binubura iyong kultura mo, eh. At by wearing this, sinasabi ko na, “Muslim ako kaya kilalanin niyo ‘ko”. So nagiging progressive 'yong interpretation ng gano'ng act. So pwede rin siyang pagpupumiglas, ika nga. So babalikan natin, Islamic Ummah – sino ang proponent? Ano ang kanyang purpose? Bakit? So doon natin malalaman if this is colonialism of a global scale. Isa din sa nauuso ngayon iyong Islamic Financing. Well, we can talk about that buong araw pero basically wala kasing concept of interest sa Islam. Bawal maningil ng interes. Nauso itong Islamic banking as a form of progressive financialization. Pero of course 'yong nag-fo-forward ng mga ganitong concept, itatanong mo, “Bakit mo ito ifoforward? Anong gain mo dito? Totoo ba na walang interes? Kung walang interes, paano gumagana 'yong mga bangko?” They gain some form of profit pero hindi sa porma ng interes.

Kung ako ang tatanungin, una, philosophical theological level, there shouldn't be a divide between Islam and Christianity. However, we cannot deny the fact that during the long years of practice, 'di ba pinaghati-hati tayo, naging very specific iyong mga rituals etc. To the point na people of today would emphasize more on the rituals than the commonality of our religious traditions. Is it a sound synthesis? Yes, it is a sound synthesis pero it's our role as theologians – people of faith – at perhaps mga tagapakinig ng mga ganitong webinar, na hikayatin 'yong mga kapwa natin Muslim, kapwa natin Kristiyano na tignan 'yong ating pananampalataya from the point of view doon sa kung ano ang common sa atin. Both in our spirituality and our lived experiences as Filipinos.

REV. HAZEL JOYCE SALATAN [2:13:01]: Meron po tayong tanong mula sa isang estudyante ng UTS. From Timor Leste po siya. “You mentioned that Jihad is ‘struggle’ or ‘giyera’, does it mean that Jihad are the fighter of Islam or fighter in justice? Because sometimes they kill innocent people as well. Can you give some more thought on this? Thank you.”

G. PETE SENGSON [2:13:30]: Napaka-controversial ng tanong. Noong ako po ay nag-co-convert, syempre medyo kaunti pa ang alam ko noon, pinapapili ako ng pangalan. Sabi ko ang gusto kong pangalan ay Jihad. Hindi ko alam, it sounds cool to me - Jihad. And then the officer said, “You cannot choose that, it's very controversial, you will be tagged blah blah blah”. So I chose another name which is Mujahid which means ‘the one who struggles’ or in some instances they would interpret it as a ‘freedom fighter’. So literally, Jihad would mean ‘struggle’, and the one that undergoes Jihad is a mujahid. Then the question is: “What is the struggle?” The struggle could be interpreted as ‘your individual struggle as a faithful to perfect the traditions of Islam to contribute to the vision of Islam’. So ayon, that could be a Jihad. You could be a ‘freedom fighter’ or that. Although of course we know that religion is also being weaponized by groups who have different interests so for example 'yong ISIS, they proudly called their fighters as ‘mujahids’ and the war that they have waged over territories in the Middle East and even in the Philippines is a Jihad. And they are doing this in the name of Islam. But if you are critically to look at the purpose of ISIS and their actions, you will pose the question na: “Is it Islamic even?” “Is this how Islam envisions our society?” Ibang usapan pa iyong historical entanglement nila sa US-CIA blah blah blah. So that's for another discussion. I hope I answered your question.

REV. HAZEL JOYCE SALATAN [2:15:56]: Anong masasabi ni Katkat sa pag-red tag ng gobyerno sa mga Lumad at ganoon din sa pagtingin sa mga Muslim na ‘terorista’ or 'yong ‘extreme’ na pagtingin sa mga Muslim? Ano po ang ating mga komento or masasabi sa mga pagtingin na ito sa atin?

G. PETE SENGSON [2:16:29]: Sige po. Well we cannot deny the fact that – sabi ko nga, there are certain groups that have used Islam in those purposes. At siguro mabanggit ko na rin na, bakit kaya nag-gain ng traction iyong ISIS sa Pilipinas? Very briefly, imagine a community that has experienced a historical injustice. But at the same time, was not given the opportunity to develop and was not given the access to education. So doon sa ganoong platform, madaling magpakalat ng ideologies that would lead people astray – that would lead them to believe that this fight is a just fight - is a just war, etc etc. So iyong mga ganitong instances coupled with the already ongoing chauvinism against Lumad and Muslims, ina-amplify ng state kasi kalaban niya eh. Pumipiglas eh, diba? Ina-amplify

niya to - gawing demonyo iyong image ng mga Muslim, ng mga Lumad, at ma-win niya iyong common sentiment ng mga tao at sila mismo ay kamuhian nila iyong mga kapwa nila.

REV. HAZEL JOYCE SALATAN [2:23:49]: Dahil wala na ring tanong na pumapasok sa atin, baka pwede po tayong makarinig ng huling pananalita para sa gawain na ito mula sa ating mga tagapagsalita. Pwede po nating unahin si G. Pete.

G. PETE SENGSON [2:24:12]: Siguro ang nakalimutan kong banggitin kanina is – in connection doon sa huling tanong, 'yong pag-portray sa mga Muslim bilang extremists. Nasabi ko na it is true that some have gone to that extent but you have to see the context – 'yong kawalan nila ng access sa basic social services at iyong historical injustice. At ano iyong solution para mabago iyong ganoong pagtingin sa kanila? Well, una iyong paglilinaw ng common misconceptions kagaya sa ginawa natin ngayong umaga. Pero ultimately, ang magpapabago noon ay iyong pagbibigay sa kanila noong right to self determination at pagkakaroon nila ng gobyerno na kikilala sa mga karapatan nila bilang tao, sa karapatan nila sa access sa social services, iyong makapag-aral sila, makapamuhay sila na healthy at malayo sa pangamba na magkakaroon ng giyera etc. So kagaya din ng mga kapatid nating Lumad, kagaya rin ng mga kapatid nating manggagawa, magsasaka, mga Pilipino, iyong common struggle natin para doon sa, bare minimum na nga ito eh ng isang gobyerno diba? Iyon ang magbubukas ng isang common point of unity para sa ating lahat, para mas magkaunawaan tayo at mabago iyong pagtingin natin sa isa't isa. Ayon, salamat.



*The Pakikibaka Tradition
and the Filipino Christian:
A prologue to a liturgical
re-reading of the Filipino story*

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The *Pakikibaka* Tradition and the Filipino Christian: a prologue to a liturgical re-reading of the Filipino story

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The three-decade period from 1970-2001 was marked by the social convulsions of the 1970 *Unang Sigwa* (First Quarter Storm) and the 1986 and 2001 "people power" upheavals. This period was made epochal not only by the events that unfolded within it but also by the very movement that underwrote its history, a people's *pakikibaka* (struggle) for identity and self-determination. This essay briefly reviews the historical development of the politics of resistance among Filipinos, particularly its roots in the Spanish and American colonial periods, and how this links with the contemporary practice of *pakikibaka*. Central to this review is the location of religion and Christianity in this struggle, a key to seeing the "liturgical" in the very anatomy of resistance rituals. The following is thus a build-up toward the emphasis on the liturgical theological re-reading of the Filipino story.

The *Pakikibaka*: A Tradition of Resistance

The Katipunan and the politics of *Kalayaan*.

On August 23, 1896, following the discovery of its clandestine existence, the revolutionary society, *Katipunan* or *Kagalanggalangan Kataas-taasan na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* (Most Noble and Highest Association of the Children of the People), gathered in Pugadlawin near Manila. Led by the self-schooled plebeian Andres Bonifacio, its founder, and *supremo*, the *Katipunan* declared the country's independence from Spain. To dramatize their final separation from "mother" Spain, the *Katipuneros* brought out their *cedula* (certificate of citizenship) and tore them to pieces amid their cries, "long live the Philippines!" The event, now celebrated as "the cry of Pugadlawin", launched the revolution against Spain, one of the earliest anti-colonial wars in Asia. The revolution was declared in haste and was rushed to war by the betrayal of the secret society by a recruit.¹ The consequent rounding up and arrests of hundreds of suspected members forced the Katipunan to make the premature declaration of war. Unprepared and under-armed, the revolutionaries lost most of their initial armed engagements with the colonial forces.

Until the emergence of the Katipunan, the Philippines was a landscape of sporadic, uncoordinated, and unrelated pockets of revolts. Some lingered for decades like the Dagohoy rebellion in Bohol (1744-1829), but they were local revolts lacking the ideological and organizational sophistication, political program, and resources necessary to challenge the colonial establishment. The Katipunan, in contrast, was a

¹ While rumors about the existence of a revolutionary society and their impending uprising were rife, it was not until August 19, 1896, when Teodoro Patino, a worker of a printing shop betrayed the Katipunan to Father Mariano Gil of Tondo that the authorities were convinced and immediately made searches, arrests, and executions. See Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, Eighth Edition (Quezon City, 1990), p. 170-171; also Renato Constantino, *A History of the Filipino People*, (Quezon City, 1975), p. 169-170.

thoroughly organized revolutionary society that has in its later stages spawned republican ideas among its more political and ambitious members. It was from this “democratic and nationalist” struggle,² however untimely its irruption that the “Filipino” as a nation emerged.³ In his/her rising, the colonial *Indio* (the Spanish name for the natives of the Philippine archipelago) has crossed a socio-political rubicon to assert a new postcolonial national identity. The word “Filipino” until this time was used to refer exclusively to creoles, or Spaniards born in the Philippines.⁴

Integral to this narrative of “crossing” and “emergence”, is the dramaturgical accounting of the masses themselves. According to Filipino historians “from below”, most notably the influential Reynaldo Ileto, Philippine revolutionary history was lived and perceived as a dramaturgy, a story of passage, a life-rite from a state of *pagkaalipin* (slavery) to *kalayaan* (freedom), a story the Filipino sought to live in a new historical stage, that of resistance.

Decolonization “from below”

The Katipunan revolution also publicly signaled a state of *pagkamulat* (enlightenment=decolonisation) of the Filipino mind.⁵ Until the Katipunan, the influence of and calls to reform by the *Ilustrados* (enlightened Filipino middle class), mostly European-educated *Indios*, were not as widespread and relatively limited within the confines of the reading public. Mass organizing in the Katipunan, in contrast, has exposed the level of the population's state of decolonization, or the level of the *masa's* separation from colonial society. The hundreds of peasant revolts in the past were, indeed, indicative of widespread discontent as well as an emergent tradition of resistance against colonial and feudal rule. Filipino historians like Vicente Rafael observed elements or traces of this resistance in the process of Christianization, that is, in the colonizers' most potent means and form of subjugating the natives themselves.⁶ In the course of accepting, translating, and appropriating the Hispanic Catholic language and rituals, the *Indios* were at the same time discovering ways to articulate their resistance to the colonizing power.⁷ The de-colonization of the Filipino mind was thus a consummation of a process that has been taking off from below with a consciousness that directly addressed the issues of nationhood or peoplehood vis-à-vis the realities of colonialism. Hence, two polar sources of decolonization found convergence in a peasant revolt that has assimilated the radical potentialities of *Ilustrado* reformism. In this synthesis, the “assimilationist” agenda [i.e., the making of the Philippines as a province of Spain and entitling it a representation in the Spanish Cortes⁸] of the reformers became, in

²This historical analysis is primarily the contribution of A. Guerrero's Marxist re-reading of Philippine history. See Amado Guerrero, *Philippine Society and Revolution*, 5th Edition. Aklat ng Bayan, 1970.

³ Perhaps the gist closest to the historiography of Agoncillo, the most eminent of postwar (WWII) Filipino historians. See Teodoro Agoncillo, *The Revolt of the Masses*. Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 1996; and *A History of the Filipino People*. Quezon City, 1960.

⁴ 'From Indio to Filipino' was how Agoncillo presented the accounts from the local revolts to the build-up of the Propaganda and Katipunan movements. See Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, Eight Edition. Quezon City: C&E Publishing, 1990, 102-126.

⁵ Renato Constantino, *Insight and Foresight*. Quezon City: Center for Nationalist Studies, 1977, 117

⁶ Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule*. Durham, 1993.

⁷ Rafael, 7.

⁸ Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 130-148.

The revolution, a clamor for national independence.

Fusing the more radical direction of the Reform Movement and the peasant's assent to the ideals of *kalayaan* (freedom),⁹ the *Katipunan* has signaled the birth of nationalist and democratic consciousness. More importantly, it has re-launched a tradition of resistance that will survive the politics of compromise the revolution entered and evolved into under its later leadership.¹⁰ In a violent political maneuver in 1897, the elite faction under the leadership of General Emilio Aguinaldo was able to wrest the leadership of the revolution from the self-schooled proletarian Andres Bonifacio.

The Katipunan was a culmination of a long history of armed uprisings that now constitute what South East Asian historiography assigns as the "little tradition".¹¹ A tradition of defiance emerged as early as 1564 when Raja Sulayman led a resistance against the Spanish occupation of what is now the country's capital, Manila.¹² Local revolts exploded intermittently through the more than three centuries of Spanish colonial rule (1565-1898). The reasons for the uprisings vary. Historians attribute these to religious motives (ex., Magtanggaga, 1718; Cofradia, 1832-71), personal grievances (ex., Tamblot, 1621-22; Dagohoy revolts, 1744-1829), resistance to Spanish-imposed institutions (ex., Silang, 1762-63; Samal, 1787), peasant unrest (ex., Cavite, 1745; Parang and Upay, 1822-35) the Moro resistance, 1718-62, 1850-78),¹³ and host of other causes. This long line of peasant and *babaylanes* (native priestesses)-led nativistic revolts paved the way for the popular acceptance of the *Katipunan* revolution;¹⁴ and the said movement's merging of the peasants' grievances and common aspirations for *kalayaan* with the *Ilustrado* movement for reforms [and to some extent, independence]. Expectedly, the *Katipunan*, being primarily a peasant revolution, outlived the dictatorial (May 1898) and "Malolos" republics (September 1898) of General Aguinaldo.¹⁵ It continued to wage the war against the new American colonizers even after the arrest and consequent capitulation of the leaders of the short-lived republic (1899-1901).¹⁶ A closer scrutiny of these "little" and "big" traditions, however, uncovered a pattern: the wars and revolutions they have waged were fought with a religious mindset. In the

⁹*Kalayaan* was conceived and idealized by the *masa* as more than a state of freedom. It was also a state of well-being and wholeness. See Reynaldo Ileto's *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*. Quezon City, 1979, and Rafael's *Contracting Colonialism*.

¹⁰ Agoncillo assigns this as the "second phase" of the revolution when from a revolutionary society, the newly installed leadership started to pursue a more republican aspiration. See Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 187ff.

¹¹The phrases 'Little' and 'Great' traditions that were first applied to Asian history by Harry Benda (1965) were also used by Ileto to make a distinction between the peasant revolts and the elite-led movements for independence in the Philippines. Reynaldo Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*. Quezon City, 1979, 8ff.

¹²Richard Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*. New Haven, 1989, 4-5.

¹³Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 102ff.; also Renato Constantino, *A History of the Filipino People*. New York, 1975.

¹⁴...or the cultural preparedness of the masses for revolutionary upheaval. See Rosanne Rutten, 'Popular Support for the Revolutionary Movement CPP-NPA: Experiences in a Hacienda in Negros Occidental, 1978-1995,' in *The Revolution Faltered: The Left in Philippine Politics After 1986*, ed. Patricio Abinales. Ithaca, NY, 1996, 110-153 at 127.

¹⁵Andres Bonifacio, the Katipunan's supreme, while a proletarian exposed to liberal ideas and Masonic thought and ritual, identified himself more with the peasant discourse and aspirations. See Patricio Abinales and Donna Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*. Oxford, 2005, 111.

¹⁶Samuel Tan, *A History of the Philippine*. Manila, 1991, 81.

“big tradition”, *Illustrad* nationalism and republican ideals may have been rhetorically prominent but the narrative from below, that of the masses, the revolution's fighting force, was more suffused with religion anchored on a quasi-religious vision of *kalayaan* (freedom).¹⁷

The Continuing Struggle.

A widespread, popular resistance re-emerged in the late sixties, and most robustly, during the first quarter of 1970, when students, intellectuals, and the urban working class gave an urban face and form to the anti-establishment struggle. This period in contemporary political history was immortalized in Jose Lacaba's journalistic accounts as the *Unang Sigwa* (“First Quarter Storm”).¹⁸ Before this “storm”, nationalist voices have been marginalized in public discourse. After its peak in the immediate post-war (Second World War) period, especially as represented in the politics of Claro M. Recto,¹⁹ nationalist discourse was conspiratorially forced on the defensive.²⁰ Outside the academe, and a small circle of nationalist politicians (Lorenzo Tanada, Jose Diokno), the only public voice and form of dissent was the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* (Communist Party of the Philippines)²¹ and the peasant-based *Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan* (People's Liberation Army), or millenarian peasant groups like the *Lapiang Malaya* (Freedom Movement) (1967).²² During the post-war reconstruction period nationalist politics was marginalized by modernization and developmentalist politics; and a little later, as the cold war raged, the promotion of the national security state in the Third World started to demonize nationalism or national liberation discourse and politics as communistic. This was a time when Philippine “nationalism” as waged “from below” has redefined itself as “mass nationalism” and a movement for ‘social liberation’.²³

The country's crisis following the Second World War was precipitated by an aggressively interventionist U.S. policy²⁴, initially through blatantly intrusive treaties like the Philippine Trade Act of 1946 and the Military Bases Agreement of 1947.²⁵ A quasi-legislated subservience of the Philippine government to American neo-colonial interest was established and brought about a sociopolitical condition that has all the more bred and heightened popular resistance. Moreover, the ballooning external

¹⁷ Reynaldo Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 197ff., Abinales and Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, p. 111., Richard Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 23ff.

¹⁸ Jose Lacaba, *Days of Disquiet, Nights of Rage*. Quezon City, 1982.

¹⁹ Renato Constantino dedicated an entire chapter on Claro M. Recto's ‘nationalist crusade’ in his book, *The Philippines: A Continuing Past*. Manila, 1978, 269-301.

²⁰ Constantino, 340ff.

²¹ ‘Re-established’ in 1968 as the Communist Party of the Philippines. See Amado Guerrero, *Philippine Society and Revolution*.

²² The latter was a ragtag group of impoverished peasants wearing red and yellow capes, and with an eightyish self-declared high priest, Valentin de Los Santos as their leader. The massacre of this group in a street leading to the presidential palace was made as the building block of Reynaldo Ileto's influential *Pasyon and Revolution*.

²³ Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*, 342-344.

²⁴ Robert Youngblood, *Marcos Against the Church: Economic Development and Political Repression in the Philippines*. London, 1990, 16.

²⁵ Daniel Schirmer and Stephen Rosscamm Shalom, ‘Independence with Strings’, in *The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship and Resistance*, eds. Schirmer and Shalom. Quezon City, 1987, 87-103 at 89 and 96.

debt and the liberalization of the national economy crippled the Philippine economy and pushed a great portion of the population to the margins²⁶

Furthermore, alongside economic bankruptcy and the socio-political crises was a systematic cultural uprooting of the population.²⁷ Colonial historiography, established as the standard, has significantly contributed to the process of subjugation by helping cultivate among Filipinos a negative historical consciousness. It put the accent on the so-called 'pre-historic emptiness' or 'out-of-history-ness' (i.e., the total absence of a pre-colonial history),²⁸ of the *Indios* and where colonization was presented as a creative and benevolent force. This national cultural re-orientation through public education was a fundamental U.S. strategy aimed at both subjugating the Filipino nationalist consciousness and will to self-determination. This colonial historico-cultural strain however did not deter the welling of a nationalist consciousness that streamed alongside the colonial construction of an official Filipino story.²⁹ Thus, what ensued was a *pakikibaka* not only for the institution of social justice and the reclaiming of national freedom but also that of national identity.

The national liberation movement that emerged out of the crises was a movement embracing leftist radicals, students, peasants, workers, urban poor, middle-class intellectuals, church workers, and other marginalized groupings.³⁰ Soon, the voices within the resistance included the women,³¹ the *Bangsamoro* (Muslim Mindanao) struggle for a homeland and the resisting indigenous communities of the Cordillera region.³² As forwarded by Randy David, a Filipino social scientist, and activist, these communities of resistance were generally defined by their common concern for justice, human freedom, and identity, their critical attitude toward the status quo, their assailing of its assumptions, and denouncement of its oppressive outcomes, and their commitment to the long-term goal of structural change.³³ In brief, the nature of the post-second world war struggle remained significantly unchanged from what transpired through the centuries. Freedom from foreign bondage, social equality, identity, and self-determination remained the *pakikibaka*'s undying quest.³⁴ In the period following the September 1972 declaration of Martial Law by Ferdinand Marcos, this quest became more historically pronounced.

Repression and Resistance: the tale of two EDSAs³⁵.

²⁶Robert Youngblood, *Marcos Against the Church*, 16

²⁷ Like the supplanting of the stories of the lives and struggles of nationalist heroes of the past and their replacement by images of benevolent America. See Renato Constantino, *The Filipino in the Philippines and Other Essays*. Quezon City, 1966, 35-39.

²⁸ Hedman and Sidel, *Philippine Politics And Society in the Twentieth Century*. London, 2000, 106- 107.

²⁹ A story constructed around the 'dependent rationality' of the country's pensionados (U.S.-trained bureaucrats and mainstream intellectuals). See Edgardo San Juan, *Crisis in the Philippines* Massachusetts, 1986, 88.

³⁰ Philip Shabecoff, 'The Growing Protest Movement,' in *The Philippines Reader*. Boston, 1987, 158.

³¹ ...at least, of the socialist feminist variety. See Edgardo San Juan, *Crisis in the Philippines: The Making of A Revolution*. Massachusetts, 1986, 49-51.

³² San Juan wrote extensively on these 'interventions beyond class' in *Crisis in the Philippines*, 29-49.

³³ Randy David, 'The Fight Against the Left,' in *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, June 18, 2006.

³⁴ Richard Kessler, *Repression and Rebellion*, 4-5.

³⁵ Edsa is the acronym for Epifanio delos Santos Avenue, the stretch of road in Quezon City where the

The contradictions in post-war neo-colonial society were further intensified under the authoritarian regime of Marcos (1965-1986). Riding on the crest of U.S anti-communist aggression in South East Asia, Marcos pursued a program to prolong his rule by declaring Martial Law on September 21, 1972. Citing the resurgent Communist revolution, the Muslim secessionist war, oligarchic rule, and rising criminality, Marcos established a national security state that secured both the interests of his 'constitutional authoritarianism' and that of its U.S. sponsors.³⁶ Under this regime, Marcos' political enemies were locked in (most notably, Benigno Aquino, his most vocal critic), critical media were gagged, and activists were hunted, detained, tortured, and summarily executed.

On the cultural sphere, Marcos declared the day of Martial Law proclamation as 'National Thanksgiving Day', launched his *Bagong Lipunan* (New Society) program of ideological and political control, and promoted an 'official nationalism'³⁷ that rationalized the institution of the national security state. All these efforts were made to buttress the ideological makeup of the regime in power. Martial law was narrated and celebrated in public rites as a revolution that is bringing about the "New Society (*Bagong Lipunan*)". The "hailing (*ating itanghal*)" of the *Bagong Lipunan* became a daily public ritual, especially in public schools. During that period, all the anthems, jingles, murals, and slogans recited, displayed, and performed in public ceremonies robed the Martial Law-enforced New Society regime with an "eschatological" mantle. As portrayed in a commissioned mural that was copied and mass-produced for distribution, the 'conjugal dictatorship' (of Marcos and his wife, Imelda Romualdez Marcos) depicted the Marcos couple as the mythical first man (*Malakas*) and first woman (*Maganda*), embodying the primeval vision of ultimate strength (*lakas*) and ultimate beauty (*ganda*)³⁸ as well as the consummation of the nation's future hopes.³⁹ Feliciano Carino, a Protestant theologian and social critic, further noted the extravagant use of Christian symbols and liturgy in many civic ceremonies that exalted Marcos and his regime.⁴⁰

But all these enthronement rituals, cultural engineering, ideological formation, and repressive martial measures, however intense and sustained, failed to contain popular defiance of Marcos' authoritarianism. The dictatorship bred more resistance, and this time around uniting a broad spectrum of dissenting groups. Alongside the growth of the Communist-led peasant war was the resurgence of the nationalist agitation among students and intellectuals, the radicalization of the church sector, unrest in the labor front, and the closing of ranks among political elites

Popular revolts of February 1986 ('Edsa Uno'), January 2001 ('Edsa Dos'), and May 2001 ('Edsa Tres') mainly took place. The 'People Power Revolution' is also called the "Edsa Uprising"

³⁶The Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base were then two of the largest U.S. military facilities outside the U.S. mainland. They were crucial to the prosecution of the Vietnam War and other U.S. military engagements in the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Chinese regions during the Cold War.

³⁷ See Hedman and Sidel, *Philippine Politics and Society in the Twentieth Century: Colonial Legacies, Postcolonial Trajectories*. London, 2000, 158-159.

³⁸ The Marcoses commissioned a painting that portrayed themselves as the first man (*Malakas* [strongman]) and first woman (*Maganda* [beautiful]) in ancient Filipino mythology. *Malakas* and *Maganda*, according to the myth, emerged from a bamboo pole split by the pecking of a primeval bird. ³⁹See Primitivo Mijares, *The Conjugal Dictatorship of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos*. San Francisco, 1976.

⁴⁰Feliciano Carino, *The Suffering of the Innocent*. Kowloon: CCA, 1984, 55-59.

disenfranchised by one-man rule. When his long-time detainee, the ex-senator Benigno Aquino was assassinated in August 1983, the isolation of Marcos became complete. In his death, Aquino, a member of the political elite, became a popular symbol of resistance against the dictatorship.⁴¹ Protests and campaigns for civil disobedience intensified. The armed insurgency gained even more momentum and influence. Feeling the pressure, Marcos called for a snap election in February 1986 and ran against a reluctant candidate, Aquino's widow, Corazon Aquino. The snap election was marred by charges of massive election fraud, cheating, and widespread violence by the administration. These included the mass walkout of the Commission on Election's technical staff involved in the final tallying of votes. On his orders, Marcos and his running mate Arturo Tolentino were declared winners by the rubberstamp *Batasang Pambansa* (National Parliament). But even before Marcos could be sworn in to office, his defense minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Armed Forces Vice Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos, backed by the officers and men of the rightist Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) announced their withdrawal of support for the president. It was originally a coup plotted by RAM officers under the tutelage of the defense minister. But the premature discovery of the plot and the fear of an imminent crackdown by Marcos forces led Enrile and Ramos to make the announcement of withdrawal and reach out to the church and opposition groups for support. The calls of the influential prelate Jaime Cardinal Sin for people to go out and mass up at Camps Aguinaldo and Crame where Enrile, Ramos, and the mutinous soldiers dug themselves in were immediately responded to by people in massive critical numbers. This was the start of the four-day (February 22-25, 1986) 'People Power' revolt. The ensuing carnival of resistance called "People Power", "Edsa Uprising", or "Yellow Revolution" brought together people from all walks of life, the social establishments (military, church, academe, media, entertainment, business, etc.), personalities, parties and groupings with different ideological persuasions. The scale and even global impact of the event were unprecedented. Popular and theological literature described the event lavishly as a "miracle", a "preternatural", and an "eschatological" event ⁴². The dominance of this popular and official Catholic interpretation was topped by the erection of a shrine and a monument to the chief Catholic icon of the revolt, "Mama Mary".⁴³

Other readings insist that there was no real consensus among the social forces that aroused, organized, and mobilized "people power".⁴⁴ Amoroso and Abinales, for example, cite views of the revolt as sparked by Marcos himself when he mistakenly called for a snap election; that it excluded other opposition forces; that it was also of little relevance to the Muslim insurgency; a defeat of a sort for the revolutionary left; and was not politically sustainable and formally revolutionary;⁴⁵ or simply, a case of America abandoning its erstwhile ally to thwart what is then perceived as a threat to its long term interests.⁴⁶ But still another view is that, revolutionary or not, the "Edsa

⁴¹Richard Kessler, *Rebellion and repression in the Philippines*, 27; also Reynaldo Ileto, 'The Past in the Present,' in *The Philippines After Marcos*, eds. Ronald May and Francisco Nemenzo. London, 1985, 7-16.

⁴²Editorial, 'No Regrets,' *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February 24, 2005.

⁴³See Figure 1, pp. 29

⁴⁴See Donna Amoroso and Patricio Abinales, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 231.

⁴⁵Amoroso & Abinales, 230-231.

⁴⁶At this time Marcos was feared to be helping fan rebellion and increase the threat of Communist takeover, thus making his rule a liability to the United States which then maintains two of the largest military bases outside of the US in the country.

revolt” is one of those events and stories that make up the tradition of resistance in the Philippines. It is one of those “uprisings that didn’t fail”, but “a step in the right direction”.⁴⁷ This view also proceeds from a reading that the build-up to people power has its beginnings not in the waves of protests following the death of Benigno Aquino, but in the organized mass resistance of the preceding decades. This ongoing upheaval and the persecution of Aquino and the political opposition were what led to the 1986 conflagration. It was the political

⁴⁷ A paraphrase of Salud ‘General’ Almagro, a woman leader of the *Sakdal* (to accuse) Uprising (May 1935), “No uprising fails. Each one is a step in the right direction”. It was her response to a question as to where she went ‘after the uprising failed’. See David Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840-1940* (Ithaca, NY, 1976), pp. 288-299.



Figure1: The “EDSA Miracle”. A scene at Camp Aguinaldo: Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile (center) and Armed Forces of the Philippines Vice Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos (left) were jubilant with the crowd upon receiving news of Marcos's departure from Malacanang Palace on February 25, 1986. Prominent in the background is a Mary statuette towering over two of the revolt's primary actors.

Left who resisted and suffered most during the Martial Law years.⁴⁸It was ironic that

⁴⁸See Ediciodela Torre, ‘The Philippines: Christians and the Politics of Revolution,’ in *Theology, Politics, and Struggle*, Tugon Vol VI, No 3, Quezon City: NCCP, 1986, 63-73 at 72.

it was "left out" and "marginalized" by the events that developed after the snap election it decided to boycott. But there is no arguing the claim that it was its years of unrelenting defiance that defined people power and helped set the stage for this successful, albeit "transformist", social upheaval. "Without the resistance before August 21, 1983", wrote Conrado de Quiros, "there would have been no Edsa".⁴⁹ Fifteen years later, after two presidencies besieged by a litany of coup attempts, tainted with gross human rights violations and accused of sovereignty sell-out, another people power revolt took place.

"Edsa Do'", the ousting of President Joseph Estrada (1998-2001) in January 2001, unfolded like a re-run of the 1986 Edsa revolt. The circumstances were different, launched as it were by an impeachment trial, but almost all the ingredients of the 1986 event were operative. The same forces and patterns of intervention were present, except that this time, it was the military that came to the "aid" of People Power. This time, too, the Left was at the forefront, the presence of the church was still as prominent, and the Protestants were as "liturgically" visible as their Catholic counterparts.

President Estrada was still being tried in the senate for plunder and culpable violation of the constitution when public outrage flared up.⁵⁰ This was triggered by a senate vote narrowly defeating the motion to open an envelope that may or may not contain evidence of Estrada's wrongdoing.⁵¹ With the protest resignation of the senate president and the walkout of the prosecution panel, the indignant public who were viewing the whole impeachment proceeding from television rushed to where the Catholic Church called to hold a prayer vigil—at the Edsa shrine. In two days, millions massed up at the site, and on the third day, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police withdrew their support for Estrada and joined the Edsa crowd. On the fourth day Estrada left the presidential palace, and the constitutional successor, Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, was sworn in as president by the chief justice.⁵² Like in Edsa 1986 the revolt built up from the protest community's intensifying activities and marches, initially, against militarization and state terrorism, including president Estrada's turnaround on the issue of poverty alleviation and the Visiting Forces Agreement with the United States.⁵³ However, it was not until the expose of the president's involvement in the illegal number game

⁴⁹ Conrado de Quiros is one of the country's most influential columnists ('There's the Rub', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*). The quote is drawn from one of his columns on the 19th anniversary of the 1986 "Edsa- People Power Revolution". See "Two-way Street", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February 23, 2005.

⁵⁰ The charges he states that President Estrada is accused of bribery, graft, corrupt practices, betrayal of public trust, and culpably violating the constitution he was sworn to uphold.

⁵¹ The senate voted 11-10 to block the opening of the envelope. The eleven senators were mostly avowedly pro-Estrada and at least two were beneficiaries of the president's cash gifts from his gambling winnings. With the impeachment trial discontinued due to the resignation of the prosecution team, and the parliament of the street gaining ground, the constitutional process was derailed, and "people power" mobilizations commenced.

⁵² Then Vice President Arroyo gave inconsistent signals as both a plotter and a loyal member of the Estrada cabinet (the Vice President being concurrently the secretary for social welfare). Soliciting the support of the Catholic Church, Macapagal-Arroyo later claimed that her decision to defect from the Estrada government was prompted not by People Power but by her meeting with Pope John Paul II during a visit to the Vatican shortly before the revolt. She made these remarks when the same People Power that ousted Estrada was starting to build up against her administration.

⁵³ The Visiting Forces Agreement is a treaty that supplanted the Military bases agreement with the U.S. that was terminated in 1991.

(*jueteng*) by a close friend and associate that the public took notice of the lackadaisical character of the populist regime.

Toward a tradition of *pakikibaka*.

Historically, the dissident community has not been remiss in its vocational tasks. It has continually and religiously fanned the embers of struggle.⁵⁴ Through its ritualizations in the "parliament of the streets" and in various campaigns against the establishment, the protest community has kept alive the tradition of defiance. Through rites and symbolization, the communities of resistance also continue to connect themselves to a larger narrative. They portray themselves as heirs to a tradition or, according to one American Embassy document, as "a force of destiny capable of leading the Filipino masses to victory in their long struggle for *kalayaan*".⁵⁵ Not unlike their Latin American counterparts, the Sandinista and "Bolivarian" revolutionaries, Filipino activists have been very conscious and vocal about themselves and their *pakikibaka* as a continuity of an unfinished revolution, or their struggle as an act of living an age-old tradition of resistance.⁵⁶

The word *pakikibaka* (struggle/ resistance) belongs to a family of words associated with fighting (*pakikipaglaban*, *pakikihamok*), warfare (*pakikidigma*), revolt or uprising (*paghimagsik/himagsikan*). But while *pakikipaglaban* and *pakikipagdigma* are act descriptive and are more of material expressions, *pakikibaka* is the more comprehensive, conceptually discursive, and constitutive of the psychosocial dimension of the mass movement. *Paghihimagsik* on one hand is a profoundly subjective idiom of *pakikibaka*. It means, literally and primarily, an internal revolt (*paghihimagsik ng kalooban/ loob* [the human will —the seat of one's humanity]). *Paghihimagsik*, nevertheless, is reactive and inchoate but is the idiom that initially brings the *loob* into the *pakikibaka*. *Pakikibaka* is what harnesses *paghihimagsik ng kalooban* (the will to resist or revolt) into a more rational, coherent, and sustainable response to an unjust existential condition. *Pakikibaka* in this instance is the integration of *loob* and *kamalayan* (consciousness); of individual interiorized revolt and a gathering consciousness and collectivization of revolting *mga saloobin* (individual wills).

Pakikibaka or "the struggle" is the word that most coherently and comprehensively captures the Filipino story and revolutionary consciousness of the past three decades (1970 to 2000) of the twentieth century. The resistance movement that it engendered has dramatically shaped the social and political landscape of contemporary Philippine society. In a manifesto, Christian social activists states that "protest and struggle" have been the characteristic features of contemporary

⁵⁴Historically, as observed by Niels Mulder, reader of Southeast Asian politics and Philippine political culture, "the most important contribution toward the development of the present public debate on society and its problems on social justice and the common weal, has been made by progressive intellectuals and socialist parties. See Niels Mulder, *Inside Philippine Society: interpretations of every day life*. Quezon City, 1997, 89.

⁵⁵ The quote is lifted from a classified 1981 American embassy report on the state of communist insurgency in the Philippines. See Richard Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, p.5.

⁵⁶ The now oversubscribed concept of an 'unfinished revolution' was a theme that post-war nationalist historiography has forwarded. See, for example, Renato Constantino's *The Philippines: Past Revisited* and *The Continuing Past*. This, too, was the theme of Iloeto's influential work, *Pasyon and Revolution*.

Philippine history and that no area and social grouping in the country has not witnessed its unfolding.⁵⁷ This reading corroborates the widely subscribed Constantino thesis of a 'continuing past' that highlights the *pakikibaka* stream in the Filipino story.⁵⁸ Renato Constantino, the national historian writes that "the most fundamental aspect of Philippine history is the history of the struggle of its people for freedom and a better life".⁵⁹ Other students of politics and religion in the Philippines specify this struggle further vis-à-vis the context of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and dictatorship.⁶⁰ From his perspective as a long-time detainee of the Marcos regime (1974-80, 1982-6), the SVD priest Ediciodela Torre described the *pakikibaka* lucidly as the struggle of those "people who suffer and therefore struggle", and "those who struggle and therefore suffer".⁶¹

Christian Participation in the Struggle.

Christian participation in the past forty years came in at least two waves. The first was the Catholic social apostolate and Protestant "JPIC (justice, peace, and integrity of creation)" ministries that were introduced in the late sixties through the martial law years (1972-1981).⁶² The second wave was the Catholic hierarchy's participation and the politicization of several urban Evangelical communities following the assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino in August 1983. Situated in a repressive and revolutionary condition, the first set "national liberation" and the radical re-ordering of society as its agenda. The second, confronted with an authoritarian dispensation, was more focused on the fight for the restoration of civil liberties and democratic order.⁶³ Representative of the first were groups such as the clandestine Christians for National Liberation, a group of radicalized priests and nuns, pastors and deaconesses, as well as lay workers and seminarians. Cardinal Sin, the Catholic bishops, and Protestant leaders, on the one hand, represented the second more conventional form of pastoral intervention.

The contemporary participation of Christians in the struggle has its ground prepared by the quasi-religious revolts of the colonial period.⁶⁴ This religious politics of

⁵⁷From the Christians for National Liberation orientation booklet, 33.

⁵⁸Renato Constantino. *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*.

⁵⁹Constantino. *The Philippines*, 85.

⁶⁰ Frank Samson. *The Philippines and its Theology of Struggle: A Gramscian Analysis*. Stanford University, 1999, 1. Also, a reader on Philippine history sums up 'colonialism, neo-colonialism, and dictatorship' as the historical setting for the tradition of resistance. See Daniel Shirmer and Stephen Shalom's *The Philippine Reader*. Boston, 1987.

⁶¹ Edicio de la Torre is also a sociologist. He was associated with the founding of both the underground Christians for National Liberation and the National Democratic Front. Both clandestine groups were established in 1973. See Ediciodela Torre. *Touching Ground, Taking Root*. Quezon City, 1986, 156.

⁶²See Ecumenical Writing Group (EWG), 'Basic Christian Communities: Catalysts for Liberation,' in CCPD's *Moving Heaven and Earth*. Quezon City, 1982, 40-52. Also, the EWG's 'Protestants and the Challenges of Society', a short essay in the same book (13-38), is now a common source in the historical study of Philippine Protestantism's response to the national security state.

⁶³ A case for a 'third wave' can be made of the post-2001 mass mobilizations involving church groups that used to be radically a-political. However, the pattern, motive, and content of this phenomenon, especially among Evangelical groups like the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches and the Jesus is Lord Church is pronouncely of the more triumphalist and messianic if not right-ward variety. ⁶⁴ See Kathleen Nadeau. 'Peasant Resistance and Religious Protest in Early Philippine Society: Turning Friars Against the Grain,' in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41(1), March 2002, 78-85.

politicized religion established footholds for spiritualities of dissent in Philippine Christianity. The post-Vatican II calls for reform, the WCC pronouncements on social ministry from 1966, the recovery of the concept to the church's "preferential option for the poor", and political theologies from the West⁶⁵ were important influences, but Christian participation, in the main, self-evolved. It emerged out of a lived situation where the profane and the sacred cohabit. External influences functioned more as providers of formal ecclesial-theological sanction and language to resistance politics.

The presence of the church in the two people power upheavals derived largely from years of painstaking community and institutional work by Christian activists. It was this work that helped the church open itself up to the politics of its time. It was a readiness that was there for the picking when the charismatic and politically astute Jaime Cardinal Sin thought it was time to intervene. The result of these interventions by church workers, basic communities, and the hierarchy were actions that restore a sense of religion and ritual in radical politics. In this, the Catholic Church made more impact, not only for its influence and traditional power base but also for its visible "liturgical presence". The Protestant, a minority and empty of any religious marking, dissolved easily in the crowd while Catholic "priestly presence", robed with "otherness", instilled solemnity and reverence. Patches of Protestant protest services were however held side by side or in communion with some sections of the crowd.⁶⁶

The liturgical aesthetics of ecclesial presence made a big difference. What became the icons of the people power revolts were the robed priests, nuns, the crucifix, rosaries, Mama Mary statuettes, Cardinal Sin himself, and a monument to the religious and "miraculous" experience of the event, the Shrine of Our Lady of Peace. Perhaps an unintended consequence, the Catholic Church from thereon regained its influence and power, a development that, ironically, blunted the revolutionary edge of ecclesial presence in the politics of struggle.

Protestants in the Struggle

Philippine Protestantism, in particular, engaged the politics of its time right from the beginning. The agenda of national independence rocked Protestant bodies and local congregations early.⁶⁷ Fuelled by strong nationalist sentiments, the Methodists were convulsed by at least three schisms. The first happened in 1905 and led to the organization of *Iglesia Evangelica de los Cristianos Vivos*. More serious ones followed in 1909 and in 1933. These gave birth to the *Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas* and the Philippine Methodist Church, respectively. Also, in 1913 among Presbyterians, groups of churches in Manila and surrounding provinces seceded when the nationalist fire was stoked by a "distortion" of a report on the

⁶⁵In an interview, EdiciodelaTorre, one of the prime proponents of radical political theologizing in the Philippines, acknowledged the influence of European (Catholic and Protestant) political theology in his theological work. See Ediciodela Torre. *Touching Ground, Taking Root: Theological and Political Reflections on the Philippine Struggle*. Quezon City, 1986, 179&192.

⁶⁶ See Richard Swenck's *Onward Christian Soldiers: Protestants in the Philippine Revolution*. Quezon City, 1986, or Douglas Elwood's, *Towards a Theology of People Power*. Quezon City, 1988 especially Melba Maggay's accounts and reflections, 'Signs of the Presence of the Kingdom in the February Revolution', 62-71.

⁶⁷ This is detailed in Valentino Sitoy. *Several Springs, One Stream: Heritage and Origins, 1898-1948, Volume 1*. Quezon City: UCCP, 1992), 179-185.

Philippine church by the pioneering Presbyterian missionary, James B. Rodgers.⁶⁸ But as indicated by Rev. Rodger's response to the schism, some missionaries did promote the cause of autonomy and independence of the Philippine church⁶⁹-- and with this movement for greater autonomy, the larger politics of national independence.⁷⁰ From the beginning, Filipino Protestants have shown their critical independence and enthusiastic ecumenical and prophetic engagement with liberation politics.⁷¹ Earlier ecumenical endeavors were also orientated toward both conciliar and organic forms of union. The major streams of this "ecumenical" flow eventually led to the May 1948 founding of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), and a little later, the Philippine Federation of Christian Churches [now the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP)].

The UCCP is but one movement within Philippine Protestantism but its story is undoubtedly representative of "mainstream" Protestant work. As Apilado states, "the Gospel brought to the Philippines by the pioneer Protestant missionaries continues essentially as the Gospel message of the UCCP".⁷² It is on this basis of continuity and representative-ness that the UCCP and the NCCP [a conciliar body that also includes among others, the United Methodist Church (UMC), the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC) and the Episcopal Church of the Philippines (ECP)] are, in this essay, referential of Philippine ecumenical Protestantism.

An organic union entered into by the United Evangelical Church of the Philippines, the Philippine Methodist Church, and the Evangelical Church in the Philippines, the UCCP marked a milestone in the maturation and political evolution of Protestantism in the Philippines. The movement for unity was pushed primarily on liturgical ground, the worship of God, and the "unity of spirit and life" that that very act of worship demands (not unlike the *raison d'être* of the Hebrew exodus as interpreted by the Mosaic narrative [Ex. 5: 1-3]).⁷³ Secondly, it was an act driven by self-examination and the resolve to reform a fragmented witness based on a common confession in the "Lordship of Jesus Christ" and "fidelity to the cause of God's kingdom".⁷⁴

Unity in Christ and fidelity to the politics of God's reign are the *politeia* of the church. This "politics" can be seen as a challenge to what Bernd Wannenwetsch describes as the reign of public/private, freedom/necessity, and *vita activa/vita contemplativa*

⁶⁸The said report, the cause for the schism, is unspecified in Valentino Sityo. *Several Spring*, 184-185.

⁶⁹Oscar Suarez, *Protestantism and Authoritarian Politics*, 33.

⁷⁰This connection between the autonomy movement of many Protestant churches and the larger struggle for national independence was treated comprehensively in Mariano Apilado. *Revolutionary Spirituality*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1999.

⁷¹'Ecumenical' and 'prophetic' are, as presented in a book bearing a similar title, the two primary characteristics of the life and ministry of the Protestant United Church of Christ in the Philippines. See Melanio La Guardia Aonan, *Ecumenical and Prophetic*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1998.

⁷²Mariano Apilado. 'The UCCP: A Historical and Theological Essay,' in *Commitment and Struggle: The Life and Ministry of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines*, eds. Hilario Gomez and Leomyrde Jesus. Quezon City: UCC, 1997, 13-31 at 17-18.

⁷³Articles One and Three of the 'Declaration of Union'. See *UCCP Statements and Resolutions* (1948-1990), 10.

⁷⁴Article three of the 'Basis of Union', and article two of the 'Declaration of Union'. *UCCP Statements and Resolutions*. Quezon City: UCCP, 2 & 10.

antinomies.⁷⁵ As “*politeia* in its own right”, the church and its politics of worship, in particular, has wider, more radical implications in its relationship to society.⁷⁶ For one, worshipping ecumenically is a form of ecclesial self-insertion and self-assertion.⁷⁷ As hinted in the UCCP opposition to martial law, self-assertion also means the overcoming of what Suarez pointed to as the political marginality of Protestants in society.⁷⁸ Suarez, who proposed this prophetic-pastoral move for the future of ecumenical witness in the Philippines⁷⁹ was thus, in a way, trying to import or propose the re-living of the UCCP legacy. Self-assertion is a “decisive posture” that he says would witness “to the fact that the voice of the sacred must not be assigned merely to the edges of human participation, and hence, must be seen as an essential reality in the ordering of nations and societies”.⁸⁰

The UCCP as a quest for a united worshipping community, indeed, proved to be a testament to the assertive prophetic character of the ecumenical project. As reflected in the statements and resolutions penned in 1952, the UCCP declared early its intent to address issues that concern the social, political, and economic well-being of Filipinos.⁸¹ Its 1960 Statement on Social Concern stood out as outlining the expanse of the united church’s pastoral concerns.⁸² It is this statement that, arguably, defined the UCCPs “thinking and action” vis-à-vis its interventions in Philippinesociety.⁸³ Despite “dissonant” Protestant voices concerning the martial law regime,⁸⁴ the UCCP in its 1974 and 1978 general assemblies repeatedly called for the restoration of civil liberties and martial law’s dismantling. The calls were unprecedented and they launched a new face to Protestant witness in the Philippines.

From its first calls for the lifting of martial law⁸⁵ to the present, ecumenical Protestantism has participated in varied ways, even exceeding the voice proportionate to its minority status in Philippine society. Despite their initial critical collaborative stance,⁸⁶ the Protestants managed to eventually convey their critical prophetic stance vis-à-vis martial rule. They have spoken and issued statements that have legitimated and publicized the voice of the subordinate and subjugated groups in Philippine society. They have helped sharpen formal and popular theologies that articulated the passion, hopes, aspirations, and struggles of the common people. Visibly and more dramatically, Protestants have also provided the communities of

⁷⁵ Bernd Wannenwetsch, ‘Liturgy,’ in *Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, eds. Peter Scott and William Cavanaugh. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, 76-89 at 76.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ See Oscar Suarez, *Protestantism and Authoritarian Politics*, 168.

⁷⁸ This marginality of Protestantism is the one problem Suarez addressed in his mapping of the future of ecumenical witness in the Philippines. See Suarez, 168.

⁷⁹ Suarez, 168-169.

⁸⁰ Suarez, 168-169

⁸¹ *UCCP Statement and Resolutions*, 25ff.

⁸² Ibid, pp. 36-45. On the further implication of his statement, see Melanio Aoanan, *Ecumenical and Prophetic*, pp. 65-67.

⁸³ See ‘A Statement of Social Concern (1960),’ in *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 36-45 at 37.

⁸⁴ Oscar Suarez, *Protestantism and Authoritarian Politics*, 50ff.

⁸⁵ ‘Minute of the (NCCP) Executive Committee Meeting’, 10 March 1973, ‘A Statement on Martial Law and Expression of Concern on Related Issues’, *UCCP General Assembly*, 20 May 1974. The confusion in the leadership of ecumenical Protestants vis-à-vis Martial Law’s rally for support was one major topic in Suarez’s *Protestantism and Authoritarian Politics*.

⁸⁶ Suarez, 52ff.

resistance company in their dissident ritualizations in the parliament of the streets. The last one may have been a divisive issue within the Protestant community and in UCCP local congregations in particular. But such tension is precisely what lies at the heart of this essay's intent, that is, to re-present the "dissident" stream of the Christian activist narrative as a liturgical reality alongside the "mainstream" and "traditional" (—where the Christian is safely "apolitical"). While a case can be made for a more confrontative juxtaposition, the tone of mutual cancellation is less helpful, if not a step toward further liturgical alienation.

Setting the liturgical direction of *pakikibaka* ritualizations is itself a doing of theology in the context of struggle. From this mode of theologizing, one can navigate through the popular theological narrative and various articulations of Christians engaged in transformative politics. These are some of the sources that make the "liturgies of struggle", or "theology of struggle" political and the political "liturgical" all over again.





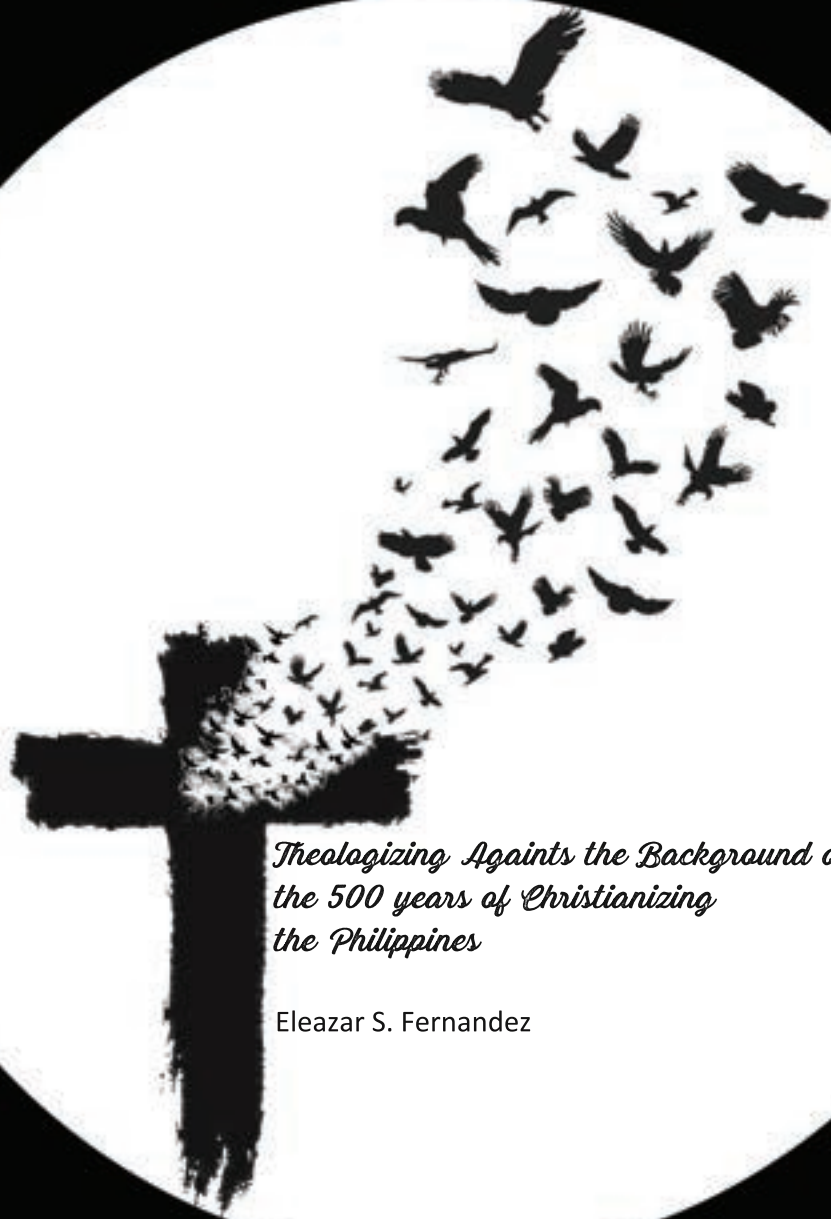
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*Theologizing Against the Background of
the 500 years of Christianizing
the Philippines*

Eleazar S. Fernandez

THEOLOGIZING AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE 500 YEARS OF CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

Eleazar S. Fernandez

“Until the lions have historians, tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter.” African Proverb

On March 16, 1521, the Philippines was so-called “discovered” by Fernando Magallanes (Ferdinand Magellan). This may be the case if we see it from the point of view of the Spaniards or the conquerors, but not so if we see history from the point of view of the early Filipinos.

Synonymous with the birth of modernity is the birth of the European “I”. Outside of this European “I” is the “faceless other” that must be conquered and civilized. Rene Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am” (*ego cogito*) is also the “I conquer/discover, therefore I am” (*ego conquero*). This *ego cogito* is the theoretical undergirding of the *ego conquero*, and the *ego conquero* is the practical expression of the *ego cogito*.

Discovering and conquering others, for the colonial masters, is an assertion of their existence. The act of “discovering” assures the colonial masters that they, indeed, are “thinking” and “existing” subjects. While it is the selfhood of the “discoverer” that is parasitic to the “discovered,” by curious alchemy it is now the parasite that grants selfhood to the “discovered.” The existence and identity of the “discovered” is established as derivative of the “discoverer.” In effect, the “discoverer” is saying to the “discovered” and the “conquered,” “I discovered you, therefore you exist.” It is only at the point of “discovery” that the history of the “discovered” begins to unfold. History has begun for the “discovered,” but only insofar as it is beneficial to the “discoverer” and colonizer. In effect, what is considered history is not the history of the “discovered” and conquered, but the history of the triumphant.¹ Only the history of the triumphant counts as history, and the reigning “regime of truth” has established it to be so.²

Christianity and colonization are not the same if we think of abstract definition. Let us not confuse these two: they are “two different things,” says Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo.³ Nonetheless, while colonization and the Christian faith are distinct, their history in the Philippines is closely wedded. We can sanitize their distinction at the level of dictionary definition, but in real life or history they intertwine and intersect through the interlocking dynamics of religion, politics, and economics, which is constantly mediated by the dynamics of power relations. It would not do us any good, or to Christianity in particular, if we are oblivious of their imbrication and interlocking connections and transactions because we want to protect Christianity. If we love our faith and are grateful for our Christian heritage, we must expose this imbrication and interlocking connections. This is our way of liberating Christianity and of “liberating Jesus from a Christianity,” which in some ways may have been alienated from the Jesus of Nazareth.

¹ See Eleazar S. Fernandez, *Toward a Theology of Struggle* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994).

² Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 51-75.

³ https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/adw_welcom/philippine-church-500-years-of-christianity/.

True gratitude and appreciation of a gift (the Christian heritage) does not mean that we shut-off our critical and inquiring minds. True gratitude demands creative appropriation, which entails critical reading and reflection. A self-critical reading of the history of the Christian faith is necessary if it is to truly become a gift, of which we are also called to give or share. It is in the spirit of critical engagement that we must see our Christian heritage, warts and all, of 500 years.

The arrival of Christianity in the Philippines is wedded to this checkered and violent history. Religious/theological accounts must take this checkered and violent history seriously if it is to serve in the liberation and well-being of the Filipino people. It is with this historical background that I attempt to articulate the emerging religiosities, spiritualities, and theologies in the Philippines.

Out of the depths of the Filipino people's rich and challenging life experiences have emerged theological articulations that speak of their understanding of who they are, their plight, their hopes, and their journey toward a new and better tomorrow, and various approaches or ways of doing and articulating theology. These approaches are not exclusive. Instead, they manifest varied contexts, interests, and expressions, which mutually inform and enrich each other. They come in various theological genres, such as popular religiosity or folk Christianity and liberation theology, including the theology of struggle, feminist-*babaylan* theology, theology of inculturation, and indigenous theology. Because of its closeness to the natural response or adaptation of the Filipino people to the coming of Christianity, I would like first to take account of the emergence/development of popular Christianity before I proceed with the more intentional theological articulation of theologians.

The Making of Filipino Popular Christianity

Miguel de la Cruz, a *jeepney* driver in Metro Manila, sets aside a portion of his meager daily income to buy a garland of *sampaguitas* (jasmine) every day to decorate the image of the Black Nazarene that is mounted on the dashboard of his *jeepney* as a *panata* (vow). Also, every Friday Miguel goes to Quiapo Church (Manila) to light a few candles, recite the rosary, and wipe the feet of the Black Nazarene with his towel which he wraps around his neck all day. Another towel (also used to wipe the feet of the Black Nazarene) he keeps at his house. The towel, he believes, has received some power from the Black Nazarene that can bring both protection and good luck for him and his family. Miguel's form of religiosity is not uniquely his. He shares this kind of piety with many Filipinos, particularly those classified by the Philippine society as the common *tao* (person) or the lowly ones.

As in most socio-historical accounts, the history of the common people often remains unarticulated. This is particularly true of the religious experience, thoughts, and practices of the vast number of ordinary Christian believers. It is ironic that the day-to-day Christianity that informs the lives of common people does not fall within the orbit of the dominant theological discourse. A clerical and class bias against the religious worldview and practices of the common people seems to persist. By no means does this suggest that this kind of religiosity is totally absent among the upper class. Mostly trained under the dominant Enlightenment paradigm, it should not be a surprise if clergy and theological scholars—whether Roman Catholics or

Protestants—manifest certain distrust toward the more effusive, spontaneous, emotional, symbolic, mythic, and cultic practices of the common people. Many of the liturgical renewals continue to reflect this bias against common people's religious expressions. Even those who claim to articulate a people's theology often fail to take into serious account the religious worldview and practices of the common people. Liberation theologies are not exempt from this peculiar bias against popular religious expressions.⁴

What is happening in the larger theological discourse is also true in the Philippines. The general Enlightenment and class bias against the religious expressions of the common people, often labeled as *ignorantes y pobres*, is present. To be sure these religious expressions have been tolerated, if not given blessings by the church hierarchy, but the church hierarchy continues to view them as inferior to official Christianity. They are prevalent in the day-to-day lives of the people, but official Christianity confines them to the periphery. However, despite official Christianity's attempt to marginalize the religious expressions of the common people, these expressions have not only continued to exist but also have gained vitality. Thus, alongside official church teachings, the religious expressions of the common people exist. The Philippine literature calls it "folk Christianity." I concur with Rolando Espín that popular Christianity can be understood as a vehicle of the people's "faith-full intuitions" or as "cultural expression of the *sensus fidelium*."⁵ In other words, popular Christianity is an expression of the common people's religious experience. Underlying popular Christianity is an implicit theology, a concrete expression of a transcendent God that points to a way of understanding as well as doing theology.

Filipino popular Christianity is a product of the encounter between Christianity and indigenous Filipino culture and religion. One may view this encounter as an *encontronazo* (clash) between a more powerful force and a less powerful one, but the "clash" did not result in the total acceptance of everything foreign or in the abdication of everything indigenous.⁶ The Filipinos, says historian John Leddy Phelan, were no mere passive recipients of the socio-religious and political package imposed on them by the Spanish colonialists.⁷ No doubt Christianity was brought to them, if not imposed on them. But, under the circumstances, they had considerable freedom in selecting their responses to Hispanization, ranging from acceptance to indifference and even to rejection. If there was considerable freedom under the circumstances, then the Filipinos' acceptance of the new and foreign faith suggests openness on their part. Scholar of

⁴ Orlando Espín, "Tradition and Popular Religion: An Understanding of the *Sensus Fidelium*," in *Frontiers of Hispanic Theology in the United States*, ed. Allan Figueroa Deck (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 62.

⁵ Espín, "Tradition and Popular Religion: An Understanding of the *Sensus Fidelium*," 63.

⁶ See Fernando Segovia, "Aliens in the Promised Land: The Manifest Destiny of U.S. Hispanic Theology," in *Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenges and Promise*, ed., Ada María Sasi-Díaz and Fernando Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 16.

⁷ John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 1959), viii.

religion Aloysius Pieris attributes this openness to the prevalence of “cosmic religion” (a form of religion whose main foundation is the cosmic elements or forces of nature, pejoratively referred to as “animism”) and the absence of “metacosmologies” (e.g., notions of “salvation” or of the highest good—*summum bonum* (such as nirvana) among indigenous Filipinos before the arrival of the Spaniards, except in some places in the south (Mindanao) where Islam had taken earlier and stronger root. This is not the case in other parts of Asia, for example, when non-Christian “metacosmologies” constituted the main edifice of the people’s worldview due to the strong presence of Islam, Buddhism, and to some extent Taoism.⁸ Whatever theoretical framework one uses to take account of this openness, Christianity found general reception among early inhabitants of the Philippines.

It appears from the consensus among scholars that the Christianization of Filipinos is not a one-way imposition but a double process of conversion. The adoption of Christianity by the early Filipinos, contends Steffi San Buenaventura, involved a “conversion process that was more complex than simple procedure of removal and replacement of faith.”⁹ James Alexander Robertson argues for a similar point: “[T]he readiness with which the early Filipinos embraced the Faith does not mean that the old forms and beliefs were discarded in their entirety, nor that they have yet altogether disappeared.”¹⁰ This complex double process of conversion has given birth to Filipino popular Christianity. Lest it be interpreted as a finished product, popular Christianity continues to develop new forms in response to the contemporary socio-economic and political challenges. Filipino popular Christianity has even traveled with the Filipino *diaspora* in this era of heightened globalization.

Filipino Theology: A Way of Doing Contextual and Postcolonial Theology

Filipino theology is an expression of a theological movement known as contextualization. As an explicitly contextual theology, one cannot do Filipino theology without being intentionally attentive to the Philippine context and the Filipino people’s cultural idioms. Here, contextualization is understood not simply as a mode of communication (finding cultural vehicles for the universal and essential Christian gospel) but a mode of apprehending the world. This way of understanding contextualization does not simply see the context as a stage or a passive receiver of the social agent’s action; instead, the context is active in informing and shaping the agent’s interpretation of the world. To engage in theological construction, the theologian must not limit herself or himself to appropriating cultural media from her or his

⁸ Aloysius Pieris, *Asian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 69-86.

⁹ Steffi San Buenaventura, “Filipino Religion at Home and Abroad: Historical Roots and Immigrant Transformations,” in *Religions in Asian America: Building Faith Communities*, eds. Pyong Gap Min and Jung Ha Kim (Walnut Creek/Lanham/New York/Oxford: Altamira Press, 2002), 147.

¹⁰ James Alexander Robertson, “Catholicism in the Philippines,” *Catholic Historical Review* 3 (1918):382-383, cited in San Buenaventura, “Filipino Religion at Home and Abroad: Historical Roots and Immigrant Transformations,” 148.

context but must discern and articulate the theological message in and through the complexities of the context. There is no theological message apart from context. This makes the discernment and articulation of theological message fraught with danger but a necessary task for those who seek to do contextual theology.

The birth of Filipino theology cannot be separated from the nationalist struggles of the once colonized nation from imperializing powers. Following this line of thought, a Filipino way of doing theology can only be anti-imperial as well as anti-colonial in sentiment and must be committed to the liberation of the colonized, marginalized, and diasporized subalterns. Its direction is liberation not only of the Filipino people but also of the subjugated and exploited earth. Because the Filipino is not a generic whole but is composed of real flesh-and-blood people with varied gender, sexuality, and ethnic identities that intersect, it is important that this theology be attentive to the plight and voices of those minoritized by such constructed categories. These include the voices of women, children, LGBTQ+, and the indigenous people of the land (*Lumads*).

Caught in the vortex of imperial geopolitics, a postcolonial discourse is a critical lens for doing Filipino theology. Postcolonial criticism offers help in making the “Critical Asian Principle” be critical enough, which applies to the Philippines, being a part of Asia.¹¹ The post in the postcolonial, which is not identical to the formal event of decolonization and independence, provides critical discursive ammunition for the critical principle. Postcolonial critique of power exposes hegemonic categories and ways of seeing, whether embodied in the Global North’s discourse or by citizens of the Global South. Employing contrapuntal reading and the musical strategy of fugue, postcolonial criticism alerts us to muted voices in the text and it equips us to read simultaneously the imperial imprint and the spirit of resistance.¹² Also, the post in the postcolonial subverts any easy and lousy identification of what is called “distinctively Asian” or “distinctively Filipino” within the bounded space of national boundaries.

Pursuing postcolonial criticism, the Philippines as the context for theological reflection should be viewed in a much broader sense. There is no such thing as the Philippine context apart from the wider context of which it is a part. This context cannot be properly understood apart from its connection to the wider context. The choice of the Philippine context is more a matter of focus and not a way of sealing it off from the rest of the world. A physical boundary defines the Philippines, but what makes the Philippines and what makes a Filipino are shaped by forces beyond its geographic boundaries. This means that the context that shapes Filipino theology is not confined to its geographic boundary, much more so in the era of globalization.

Furthermore, the Filipino is not only the one who is physically present in the Philippines but wherever Filipinos are and wherever discourses about the Philippines are happening, especially as we think of the ever-growing Filipino diaspora. Also, the Philippine context must be understood in a dynamic sense. Attempts to trace the truly Filipino by rooting it to its ancient

¹¹<http://atesea.net/accreditation/doing-theologies-in-asia/>.

¹²Edward Said, *Musical Elaborations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

and indigenous expression do not do justice to the dynamic character of the ever-changing Filipino context and Filipino identity.

Discerning the Divine Spirit in Context

From a theological point of view, we cannot say that we know God if we do not know our context; conversely, we know our context if we know God. This is based on the understanding that God's presence is mediated through the world. In this case, understanding one's context is not a prolegomenon to theology but an integral part of doing theology.

Given the history and the challenges that the Filipino people have faced up to the present, some salient features that have given shape and hue to Filipino theological articulation can be identified. Depending on one's hermeneutical lens, Filipino theology is a theology that springs from the history of suffering of the Filipino people and their longings and struggles for a new and better tomorrow. Why this history of suffering and struggles for a better tomorrow?

In the wider background, the Philippines has a long history of colonization. One cannot continue theologizing without taking account of this. From the early beginnings of the formation of the Filipino nation, the narrative fabric of suffering started to take shape because of the so-called "liberation" projects of the colonial masters and their local allies.

Unfortunately, the religion that carried the name of the one who was crucified by the imperial power of his time played a crucial part, wittingly or unwittingly, in the subjugation and colonization and continuing suffering of the Filipino people. The cross came along with the sword and cannons of the *conquistadores* as the Bible came along with the guns of modern imperializing nations. Mission and colonization were inseparable: to colonize was to missionize, and to missionize was to colonize.¹³

The missionaries and the Bible played an important role in the colonizing project and taming the people's minds. Christian imperial scripturism came along with the rise of Western imperial powers. The British and the Foreign Bible Society took the axiom seriously both theologically and politically: "Protestants without Bibles are soldiers without weapons, ready neither for conquest nor for defence."¹⁴

Peoples' native wisdom and religiosity have suffered much from the imperializing use of the Bible. Oblivious of the cultural context of the Bible and its interpreters, imperial powers and their native informants have claimed universal normativity and exclusivity of the Bible and their interpretations to oppose and denigrate indigenous wisdom and religious practices.

¹³David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis, 1991), 303.

¹⁴R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 52.

Succeeding imperializing forces came to colonize and exploit the nation, again parading to the world their noble intentions. When direct colonization is no longer acceptable and beneficial, the oppressive and exploitative forces came with a more benign face: neocolonialism. More recently, they are riding on the rising tide of economic globalization; underneath, however, is the specter of neoliberal capitalism or centralized capitalism.

Hoopla and euphoria are everywhere. Development projects, especially infrastructures, are sprouting here and there, and the GDP, we are told, has gone up. But the question is, whose income or profit has gone up? GDP is not an accurate indicator or measure of the economic well-being of the people. GDP does not expose the inequality in the system. The plight of the common people must be the gauge that has to be used to measure the nation's wellbeing.

If the economic situation is going strong and vibrant, why is it that many Filipinos leave the country every day, facing dangers and loneliness in foreign lands to have a reliable income to support their families? Many are working in what is called 3day jobs: demanding, dirty, and dangerous. In the past few years, this author has been privileged to listen to difficult and challenging stories of im/migrants, stories that are normally, when possible, kept in the im/migrant's heart. *"Every time I go to work, I kneel in front of toilet bowls to make them clean and spotless. The toilet bowl has become my altar,"* says a Filipino domestic worker in Rome.

An anecdote about a child crying because he was so hungry is a reminder of how seriously precarious the situation is. To quiet the child, the father tried to scare him: *"Huwag kang maingaydiyan, may bampira"* (Keep quiet, there's a vampire.) The hungry and irritated child responded, *"Kahit bampirakakainin ko"* (I'll eat even a vampire). The poverty and suffering of people have become so acute that not even a threat of a vampire could silence a hungry child.

Sweet and soothing words that have circulated in the time of the pandemic, like "we are on the same boat," ring hollow in the experience of the many, if not a mockery on the intelligence of the common people. Maybe, a more appropriate one would be to say, "people are facing the same storm, but they are on different boats." Some are in luxury liners, but many are in their outrigger motorboats and smaller "bancas" or "barotos."

When global wealth soars to an enormous height but leaves many in squalor and dying in abject poverty, something is terribly amiss. There is a deep crisis when nation-states use more of their resources in policing dissent and military armaments against education and health care. When the ecosystem is sacrificed to pursue short-term economic benefits, usually for the few, such as large-scale mining, deep crisis or deep darkness is present.

The country is in a deep socio-moral crisis. Graft and corruption, and impunity have engulfed the land. A story had circulated that when Pope Francis visited Sri Lanka, he was greeted by elephants. When he arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), he was welcomed by crocodiles (crocodile is a metaphor for power-hungry and corrupt politicians). This circulated on Facebook: "Welcome to the Philippines where the spread of corruption is much faster than the speed of internet connection."

Cancer has been used as a metaphor to speak of this social crisis. We know what cancer does; it attacks the system and spreads quickly. Graft and corruption undermine the political system at the very core. The integrity of the whole body politic is at stake. People lose faith in the system when its integrity is compromised, and more corruption and criminality spread like cancer. While the entire nation suffers, the onus falls heavily on the already disempowered and impoverished population.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only exposed the fault lines in our socio-political, economic, and health care system, a system driven by the pursuit of the “bottom line”—profits. It has unveiled the destructive path we have taken for quite some time. If we continue with business-as-usual, worse catastrophic socio-political and ecological unraveling is to be expected. When profit becomes god, deciding what matters and who will live or die, the “essentials” will be the “sacrificials” and the “front-liners,” as well as the “backliners” will be cannibalized by the vulture-like, carcass-hungry “bottom-liners.” Resources earmarked for COVID-19 treatment and help alleviate the economic misery of the people have not escaped from being devoured by the vulture-like bottom-liners. Even while in pandemic crisis, a political humor has circulated: *“Dumatingna ang Delta, hindi pa ang delata. Atpaanomakarakaring ang ayuda kung may-nakaharangnabuwaya. At kung makarakaring man, imbisnaapatnaliboapatnaligo.”* (Delta has arrived but not the government’s canned goods assistance for the needy. And how can the assistance arrive if a crocodile is blocking the way? Even as some goods have arrived, instead of P4,000.00, the people received 4 *Ligos* [four canned sardines]).

Compounding the misery, at the height of the pandemic, the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte passed and executed one draconian measure after another, such as the war on drugs, anti-terror law, and book purging. Since President Duterte launched the war on drugs, bodies of victims have littered the streets, mostly the poor peddlers and users, and even as his term is about to end, drugs continue to fester the land. Others who see the drug problem as social and psychological are calling to “stop the killing and start the healing.” Meanwhile, the main targets of the anti-terror law have been those individuals and institutions tagged by the administration to be in cohort with communists, the New People’s Army, and political activists. Those critical of the system are red tagged, which is tantamount to a death warrant. Reinforcing the anti-terror law is the campaign to purge or ban books from libraries considered “subversive” materials by the government.

Time and again, we have witnessed how wielders of power, both state and powerful elites, use whatever cultural, legal, and military power at their disposal to block or silence the message they do not want to hear. If silencing the message is not enough, they go after and silence the messenger. This was the plight of the early Filipinos when they resisted the Spanish and U.S. occupation, and this silencing has continued in the banning of those considered subversive books and in the killings of *Lumad* leaders who speak up against the exploitation of extractive industries and the journalists, priests and pastors, and lawyers who defend the people’s rights.

Proudly, Philippine history is not only a history of suffering and silence but of struggle. The peaceful Pacific is not that peaceful; it is also a turbulent Pacific. Despite its brutality, the pacification campaign did not completely pacify our people; it did not silence the Filipino people

completely. The people took the courage to trouble the waters, and they were charged as troublemakers for doing this. Many of those who resisted paid dearly for their refusal to be silenced; they paid dearly for troubling the waters.

Theological Articulations from the Crucible of Suffering and Hope

What kinds of questions are the interlocutors of Filipino theology asking in relation to the theological task? What urgent concerns are they grappling and wrestling with today? How are the Filipino theologians dealing with them in the task of theological construction?

The questions that the suffering and struggling Filipinos bring to bear on the theological task are not the result of the gradual erosion of the religious world they inhabit because of the assault of modern science and the growing secularization of society. The springboard of their questions is their empty and growling stomachs, emaciated bodies, and the continuing betrayal of their dreams by political leaders. Starting from this location where God's seeming absence calls out for divine justice (theodicy), they have raised their anguished questions: How can we believe in a just and loving God when we are suffering from terrible injustice? How can we worship the Lord of all when we must deal with those who lord over us, deciding who will live, starve, and be tortured? How can we grapple with trinitarian God-talk when we are grappling with another form of the unholy trinity—the absence of breakfast, lunch, and supper?¹⁵

These questions point to the pervasive and dominant pattern that runs through the narrative fabric of the lives of common Filipinos. The dominant pattern that has emerged from the warp and weft of the people's experience is the narrative fabric of suffering, struggle, and hope.

Suffering has become so pervasive that it has created a culture of suffering. Beyond the glaring and pervasive poverty, a culture of suffering can be discerned in the day-to-day conversations, songs, poems, and stories that people share. When life is perceived as a narrative of suffering and with no end in sight, it is not a surprise that fatalism has been woven into the social fabric. Caught in what appears to be an inevitable cruel fate, they can only think of *kapalaran* (literally dictated by the lines on one's palm) or *gulong ng palad* (wheel of fortune).

It is not a surprise that the image of a suffering Christ Jesus is popular among Filipinos. The Jesus who suffers occupies a central place among the marginalized Filipinos because they see in Jesus' plight their very own plight. With suffering a pervasive narrative in people's lives and the Crucified or the Suffering One a pervasive icon, it is not a surprise that Holy Week occupies a central place in the church's calendar. More than Christmas Eve mass, the Good Friday event draws a much larger crowd—many of whom do not go to church on regular Sundays—on an extremely hot summer day. This is generally true also of the Protestant Churches.

Several Holy Week activities vividly portray the suffering and agony that the Son of God endured. The *pasyon* (re-enactment of life and death of Jesus through plays and readings) portrays the poor, lowly, and beaten Christ. This practice is more prevalent in certain parts of the Philippines, where the *sinakulo* (Passion play) and *pabasa* (readings) have long histories. But the

¹⁵ Fernandez, *Toward a Theology of Struggle*, 7.

most vivid, if not gory, depiction of Jesus' suffering is the practice of self-flagellation during the Holy Week by those who have made *panata* (vow). The penitents (almost always male) walk barefoot in procession with faces veiled and lash their backs with rope or bamboo sticks until they bleed. In some places, others are commissioned to do the lashing.

But suffering woven with fatalism is not the only narrative. Though many have accepted their plight with resignation, the Filipino people have a long history of struggle. Filipino history is not only a history of suffering, exploitation, and betrayal to local and foreign powers; it is also a history of resistance and struggle. "*Ibon man may layanglumipad*" (like a caged bird that longs to fly for freedom), the Filipino people have refused to be caged forever. They have struggled to set themselves free; they have reclaimed the Christian faith into a "*pananampalatayangpumipiglas at nagpapalaya*" (a faith that struggles and liberates).

True, the image of the suffering and crucified Christ is prevalent and is often interpreted through the lens of passive acceptance and endurance of suffering, but a tradition of *suffering that struggles* is also present. With theologies of atonement in mind, it is easy to conclude that the penitents do this as an act of penance for their own or others' sin. Penance may not be totally absent but, as Benigno Beltran's study suggests, the penitents do the self-flagellation primarily as a form of *damay*—sympathy with or participation in Jesus' suffering.¹⁶ Self-flagellation, for the penitents, is an act of solidarity with the suffering Jesus. Penance for sins is not the main focus of popular Christology, but *pakikiramay* or identification with the suffering of Jesus, who in the first place embodied this quality. And closely associated with *pakikiramay* (sympathy or maybe empathy) is *malasakit* (suffering with). Following Beltran's point: "To make the truth of Jesus one's own is to have *damay* and *malasakit* with him, to be his disciple and share his destiny."¹⁷

Pakikiramay and *malasakit* with Jesus is a fitting response of the common Filipinos to Jesus because he embodied these qualities in his very own life. They belong to the attributes of Jesus, which can be observed in his life, ministry, and death. Indeed, for the suffering and struggling common people, Jesus was a person for others. Even with all the risks involved, he pursued God's cause of bringing the reign of God amid human destruction. Because of Jesus' love for the world expressed through his *pakikiramay* and *malasakit* with the disenfranchised, like many Filipinos who have raised their prophetic voice, he earned the ire of the power wielders and suffered a violent death. While *bahalana* (What will be will be) seems to be associated with *kapalaran*, the *bahalana* intertwined with the *malasakit* of Jesus forms into a *bahalana-malasakit*, taking risks in struggling with the disenfranchised of society.¹⁸ Moreover, as embodied in the life of Jesus and the tradition of the little ones, there is not only a *bahalana-malasakit* but also a *bahalana-sapakikibaka* (taking a risk for the people's struggle).

¹⁶ Benigno Beltran, *The Christology of the Inarticulate: An Inquiry into the Filipino Understanding of Jesus the Christ* (Manila, Philippines: Divine Word, 1987), 247.

¹⁷ Beltran, *The Christology of the Inarticulate*, 115.

¹⁸ José M. de Mesa, *In Solidarity with the Culture: Studies in Theological Re-rooting*. Maryhill Studies 4, (Quezon City, Philippines: Maryhill School of Theology, 1987), 147–177; de Mesa, *And God Said, "Bahala Na!": The Them of Providence in the Lowland Filipino Context* (Quezon City, Philippines: Jose M. de Mesa, 1979), 81–161. Also, Theresa Dagdag, "Emerging Theology in the Philippines Today." In *Kalinangan*, vol. 3. no. 3a, 7. September 1983.

While the resurrection tradition is not totally absent in popular religious expressions, it is weak compared to the crucifixion tradition. We can cite some reasons: People are already exhausted from the Good Friday event, and the weather (hot summer) does not suggest the emergence of a new life from winter to spring. Nevertheless, if the Holy Week celebration has the *pasyon*, the resurrection celebration has the *salubong*. *Salubong* is the reenactment of the dawn meeting of Jesus and his mother, in which the statues of the Risen Christ and the Sorrowful Mother are unveiled by a girl in the attire of an angel, singing the *Regina Coeli*. Then the removal of the veil during the meeting is accompanied by the release of doves and *bati*, a dance of joyful celebration.¹⁹ In a situation where the forces of death continue to reign, the *salubong* celebration is a source of inspiration, vision, and hope. It is founded on the belief that, like Jesus, the Filipino people will someday have their resurrection. The *salubong* points to the dawn that ushers in the new day for the suffering people. Or, in the idiom of the people: (Tagalog) “*Ang arawbagosumikatnakikitamuna’ybanaag*” (Early dawn precedes the sunrise).

The common people’s desperate situation and the Christian tradition have given birth to the *salubong*. Any faithful interpretation of the common people’s resurrection tradition must be rooted in the people’s desperate situation. It is out of the banality of crucifixions that the common people speak of resurrection. The notion of a grand resurrection somewhere and someday may not be totally absent in the people’s common discourse understood either as hope or escape, but this grand resurrection makes sense only when we reinterpret resurrection as that which happens to people on the other side of the various kinds of deaths in the here and now.

Resurrection amidst the various kinds of deaths may be hard to find in the lives of the little people, but they are not totally absent. The story of Aling Maria gives us a glimpse of what resurrection is in the experience of those who are living at the edge. She has lived in the North Cemetery (Manila) since 1955. In the 1960s, at her son’s request, who had acquired a small piece of land and house at a relocation site, she joined him. But the situation in the relocation site was so desperate that, in the words of Aling Maria, “I couldn’t stand it anymore. I came back to the cemetery after a month—and have not left since. I think I might stay here—forever.”²⁰ Living in the cemetery, where there was peace, was, for Aling Maria, a resurrection experience.

Indeed, it is difficult to find grand moments of resurrection. For those who are barely making it in life, survival is already a foretaste of resurrection. It is in this most banal experience of resurrection that we need to see Jesus’ resurrection. With Jesus’ resurrection embodying their very own resurrection, the common people have been enabled to read their history with new eyes, seeing it as a history of survival, struggle, and of not giving up whatever little ray of hope is present. With this lens of reading history, the struggling common people have liberated the past from being a prison house. They engage in the retrieval of the past because they know that it is necessary for the journey toward a new and better tomorrow. Looking back to one’s past is a way of forging a new tomorrow through dedication to the present in acts of transformation. Here *kasaysayan* (history) is not only an *alaala* (memory) but also has become a *pangako* (promise).

¹⁹ *People’s Participation for Total Human Liberation* (Pasay City, Philippines: Alay Kapwa, 1982), 36.

²⁰ Ed Gerlock, “The Living and the Dead,” in *Signs of Hope: Stories of Hope in the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian, 1990), 75.

What is this *pangako*? For Filipinos, it is liberation from the clutches of patriarchy; for the gay communities, it is liberation from the culture of heterosexism, “othering” and homophobia.²¹ For the fisherfolks, it is not about the apocalyptic vision of sea or ocean disappearing (Revelation 21:1). That would not be a *pangako*, but a *bangungot* (nightmare) for those whose daily life depends on the sea. A more appropriate image of *pangako* for the lowly ones is that of a banquet—a popular image of Jesus’ eschatological vision. For those who have barely enough to survive, like those who depend on *tilapia* (a kind of fish more affordable to the common people), *daing* (dried fish) and *bagoong* (salted fish) for food, what could be the best expression of the *pangako* if not a banquet—a fiesta? The fiesta is characterized by abundant food—*lechon* (roasted pig), *embotido*, *hamonado*, *pancit*, *calderita*, and various kinds of desserts. In God’s eschatological fiesta, everyone is welcome to the table; it is an egalitarian meal. The outcasts and marginalized from various forms of “isms” are welcome.

An abundant harvest or catch leads to a fiesta celebration, but even an ordinary meal is a sacrament. When there is little harvest or catch, they still make it enough for the family. In a Filipino idiom (Tagalog): “*Kung maiksi ang kumot, matutongmamaluktot*” (literal translation: If the blanket is short, one must know how to curl up). Poor families with lots of children always ensure that every member is present during mealtime and that everyone has an equal share. Maybe because they barely have enough to get by, necessity has taught them that eating, more than filling one’s stomach, is a communal event. One does not eat alone. Eating is an occasion for sharing not just food but life. Eating is a mark of relationship, of connection. A true meal happens when there is a “unison of hearts.”²²

Deep connections among Filipinos are often expressed through the language of food and internal organs. The word *kapatid* (brother or sister), suggests Melanio Aoanan, is a contraction of “*patid ng bituka*” (connected by a single intestine). Other Filipino languages, such as the Cebuano *sumpaysatinaian* and the Ilocano *kapugsatitibagis*, speak of this intestinal connection. Filipino theology, continues Aoanan, is truly an incarnational and, more specifically, an intestinal theology—a *bituka* (intestine) and *pagkain* (food) theology.²³ Without romanticizing poverty, it is ironic that those who have more material goods in life eat alone more often than those who have less. They may be eating more nutritious food, but not necessarily a communally and spiritually nourishing meal.

Giving birth to the *pangako* of an eschatological fiesta is not easy, and one must not give up hope amidst many challenges. There is a story of the life of Mang Juan, a poor peasant from my hometown. Like many peasants in that area, he struggles to eke out a living. On some days, he

²¹Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, Muriel. “Christology from a Filipino Woman’s Perspective,” in *Christologies, Cultures, and Religions: Portraits of Christ in the Philippines*, eds. Pascal D. Bazzell and Aldrin Penamora (Metro Manila: OMF, 2016), 56–57.

²²Luis Antonio Tagle, *An Easter People: Our Christian Vocation to be Messengers of Hope* (Quezon City, Philippines: Jesuit Communications Foundation, 2012), 51.

²³Melanio Aoanan, *Bituka Theology: Seven Essays on Filipino Contextual Theology* (Mandaluyong, Philippines: Merryland Publishing, 2021), 26–39.

walks with a sack of rice seeds (*palay*) on his back. Looking at Mang Juan and his sack of seeds, he symbolizes the dreams of his people. Juan is a dreamer; he is a dream-keeper. More than that, he walks the dream: he is a dream-walker. His feet are grounded in the stark realities of his native place even as his head is in the clouds. Day and night Mang Juan is living by a dream that things can be different for him and others.

The Filipino people have carried their own sack of seeds—seeds of dreams and seeds of new life. Their feet are grounded in the realities of our globalized localities. They stay close to the ground to feel the soil's life, yet they also remain close to their dreams so they can feel the seeds longing and struggling to break forth from the ground to what they can be. Are our dreams closely connected to the ground on which we walk, they ask?

Birthing the *pangako* demands so much from the people; it calls for their transformation. The common Filipinos know that it requires a transformation of *loob* (core or center), a fundamental concept. They recognize that hardness of heart (*katigasan ng loob*), more than dullness of thought, is the greatest obstacle to transformation, which requires *pagbabalikloob* (repentance). For the lowly ones with diminished agency, transformation means the empowerment of *loob* to develop *lakas ng loob* (courage). While human effort is crucial, the common Filipinos believe that the transformation of *loob* is a *kaloob ng Dios* (gift of God) who has the attribute of *kagandahangloob* (compassionate, willing the wellbeing of the people).²⁴

However, the development of *lakas ng loob* can come only through a long gradual work of faith development and people empowerment. Only empowered people can effect transformation. The only antidote to the power of organized money is the power of organized people. Organizing the “critical yeast” is essential to develop the “critical mass.” The yeast, the tiniest ingredient, when mixed correctly with other ingredients, and when the right environment is provided, is the only ingredient that has the capacity and power to help others grow.²⁵

Moreover, birthing the *pangako*—a new and better tomorrow—requires faithful companions along the way. As the root of the word companion (Latin: *cum panis*) suggests, it means sharing the life-nourishing *tinapay* (bread) or *baon* (meal prepared for the journey) for the common journey. The common people are aware that their dreamed-for new tomorrow can only come through the help of companions. They know the essence of communal endeavor through the *bayanihan* spirit (spirit of helping one another). Beyond dreaming individual dreams and making these dreams rooted in the hard facts of our contexts, the challenge is for the Filipino people to dream and walk together toward a new and better tomorrow. Giving birth to a hopeful tomorrow requires committed and courageous people who are willing to take risks to make their hopes and dreams come true.

Filipino theology is an intentional articulation of the journey of the Filipino people—their quest for who they are, their plight and struggles, and their hopes and dreams—toward a new and

²⁴ Beltran, *The Christology of the Inarticulate*, 241.

²⁵ John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 89-94.

better tomorrow. It seeks to illumine the faith-praxis of the people even as it continues to be informed and transformed by the same faith-praxis. As the journey of the Filipino people continues, so does its theological reflection continues to evolve and grow.

Conclusion and Commencement

If religious and, more specifically, theological accounts are reflections on the faith praxis of the people, any reflection must always find expressions in acts of faithfulness. In the context of a long history of colonization and continuing exploitation by contemporary power wielders, theological accounts must serve the interest of social transformation. This must be our direction as commemorate the 500 years of Christianity in our beloved country!

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*Theological Tapestry:
Unmasking the Distinctiveness of Hebraic and Filipino
Body Theology Amidst Western Christian
Influence in the Philippines*

Connie Semy P. Mella

THEOLOGICAL TAPESTRY: UNMASKING THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF HEBRAIC AND FILIPINO BODY THEOLOGY AMIDST WESTERN CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES¹



Connie Semy P. Mella

*Bodily Theology is not merely a theological description of the body, a set of admonitions or rules about the proper use of the body, or an understanding of the body as an expression of, or housing for, the spirit or soul. Rather, for a bodily theology, it is the body that is a "donum." It is the body that is given to us to experience, given for us to experience, and given as our experience.*²

The Philippines is known as the Pearl of the Orient Seas.³ It is a group of at least 7,100 islands with mountainous areas. It has a very strategic location. It serves as a bridge between the cultures of the East and the West. The Filipino people come from several races, most of whom are from the Malay and Indonesian races. Some came from Chinese, Spanish, American, and other races. The presence of such diversity is due to the fact that the country experienced a series of colonization. This series of colonization, especially the Spanish colonization, which brought Christianity to the Philippine soil, has had a profound and lasting impact on the Filipino psyche. The Spaniards introduced Western culture, religion, and language to the Philippines. The introduction of Catholicism by the Spaniards shaped the religious landscape in the Philippines. Today, the Philippines is predominantly Catholic, which influences the moral, ethical, and spiritual values of Filipinos. Many

¹Some parts of this article were taken from the writer's doctoral dissertation entitled "From Tsela She Was Created: An Investigation of Genesis 2:18-25 and Its Implications For Filipino Body Theology," presented to the ATESEA Theological Union in 2017.

²John Y. Fenton, "Bodily Theology" in *Theology and Body* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1974), 130.

³Sonia Zaide, in the book *The Philippines: A Unique Nation*, 2nd ed., 5, explains that the romantic name "Pearl of the Orient Seas" has already been used to describe the Philippines as early as 1751. It was first used by Fr. Juan Delgado, a Jesuit Historian. In 1871, Manuel de Azcarraga y Palmero used the same term to describe the Philippines as the latter became an "emporium of wealth" because of its commercial prosperity. On September 24, 1892, Dr. Jose Rizal, the Philippine national hero, called the Philippines the "Pearl of the Orient" in his article published in *The Hong Kong Telegraph*.

cultural practices, festivals, and rituals have Catholic roots.

One of the major effects of colonization is the erosion of the cultural values of the Filipino people. Women in the pre-Spanish era enjoyed a unique position in society. They could own and inherit property, engage in trade and industry, succeed to the chieftainship of a barangay in the absence of a male heir, had the exclusive right to give names to their children, and as a sign of deep respect, the men, when accompanying women, walked behind them.⁴

Whereas, in the indigenous perspective, there was no dichotomy between the taga-patag (people of the plains), taga-dagat /dumagat (people of the sea/seashore), and taga-ilog or tagalog (people of the river), our colonizers conditioned us that one tribe is superior to the others. Whereas, our indigenous holistic and cosmic belief system, as embodied by the babaylan (shaman) taught us the unity of the material and the spiritual as the tiniest atom as well as the nature is matter- spirit/energy,⁵

our colonizers taught us the contradiction between material and spiritual. People were taught that the spirit is more important than the body. Mortification of the flesh and even self-flagellation were introduced to cleanse the spirit from bodily impurities and impulses. Whereas our indigenous spirituality taught us of a loving Bathala who emphasizes blessings and blessedness, our colonizers introduced to us an all-powerful male God who emphasizes sinfulness and would punish us when we don't go to Mass on Sunday. Whereas our indigenous culture taught us of collective leadership among the babaylan (woman religious leader), datu (political leader), and panday (economic leader)⁶ and that "what is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine" as we are "kapwa" or "kaparehongkaluluwa" (shared self), our colonizers taught us the monopoly of leadership and family dynasties and that "what is mine is mine and what is yours is still mine." Whereas our indigenous spirituality taught us that our every breath is an expression of prayer, spirituality, and communion with God (hingalangin), our colonizers taught us that God is high and lofty up who dwells in heaven and that we need to be good so that when we die, we would finally dwell with God in heaven. Whereas,

⁴Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Milagros C. Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, 4th ed. (Quezon City: R.P. Garcia Publishing Co., 1973), 41.

⁵Agnes Miclat-Cacayan, "Telling Our Own Story, Re-inhabiting our Foremothers' Heritage" in *In God's Image: Journal of Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology*, vol. 32, No.2, December 2013, 46.

⁶Lizette Tapia-Raquel, *Crying Out, Resisting, Asserting, Celebrating: Proclamation and Poetry*, (Cavite: Union Theological Seminary, 2015), 16-17.

our indigenous spirituality taught us to respect the earth because we came from the earth, the colonizers taught us to leave the earth and go to heaven while they claim the earth and exploit the land. From an egalitarian household, the Filipino family became a patriarchal⁷ household. The father became the head and the supreme authority figure not only in the household but even in communal life. The destruction of indigenous socio-political, economic, cultural, and religious life was massive. Greek thinking of dualism that highly characterized Western Christianity, which looks at the matter as evil and spirit as good, crept into the Filipino consciousness. However, the Filipinos were not totally hispanized. Despite the more than three hundred years of Spanish domination using the Sword and the Cross, Spain was not successful in completely Hispanizing the Filipinos.

In Search of the Filipino

Who is a Filipino? What is a Filipino? NVM Gonzalez, Filipino novelist and one of the National Artists of the Philippines, describes the Filipino as a "mythic (hu)man." This poetic term describes the mythic person as one who is "Content with Being-at-Home-in-the World-and-Being human."⁸

He explains this concept as that "Filipinos are a people whose past is rooted in the cyclical time of their ancient myths and that during this era of wandering seas and strange storms, life went on in cycles of planting and reaping, sailing and arriving, walking and finding. He describes these times as innocent times of primordial oneness with the world, where the sky was so near that people could touch it with their hands and that the ancient ones were able to connect to anyone and everything at all times. Gonzales says that the mythic (hu)man remained free always to tap into this expanded consciousness of 'sacred time and space.'"⁹

Gonzalez explains that linear time came into existence for the island dwellers only when the Spaniard colonizers came and enforced the Catholic belief. "The ancient time-bound history of

⁷Patriarchy is a social-economic-political system in which the head (the father or the male members) is seen as the divinely established and absolute owner and ruler of the social unit, including all its members and parts.

⁸N.V.M. Gonzalez, *The Novel of Justice. Selected Essays 1968-199* (Pasig: Anvil Publishing, 1996), 65-77. Katrin De Guia has also cited the work of Gonzales in her book, *Kapwa: The Self in the Other, Worldviews and Lifestyles of Filipino Culture Bearers* (Pasig: Anvil Publishing, Inc. 2005, rep. 2008) 4-7.

⁹ Ibid.

Christianity caused the natives to lose touch with their ancient mythic self progressively."¹⁰

However, Gonzales continues, the islanders as a whole would still remember their sacred time, which enables the people to rediscover their roots over and over again. "It is a memory they would never forget."¹¹

The Filipinos are noted for their adaptability, endurance, and resiliency. "Throughout the ages, they have been lashed by all kinds of suffering— invasions, revolts, revolutions, wars, earthquakes, typhoons, volcanic eruptions and epidemics...Filipinos can assimilate into any civilization and thrive in any climate. Against the winds of adversity, they simply bend but never break, for they have the durability of the Narra tree and the resiliency of the bamboo."¹²

A. Distinctive Constituents of Filipino Pagkatao/Katauhan (Personhood)

Dr. Virgilio Enriquez, a Filipino social psychologist, established a framework for understanding the ways of Filipino culture-bearers. He introduced the term personhood to psychology to characterize the unique feature of the Filipino personality, as the most blatant difference between the Filipino personality theory and its Western counterparts is the distinction between personhood (pagkatao/katauhan) and personality.¹³ Enriquez chose the English suffix 'hood' to underpin his reasoning. When this hood is added to a root word, it draws attention to the state, quality, or condition of this person or thing. They convey essences that are shared by many. He said that the hood concepts are deeper, wider, more generic, and more complex than those suffixed with an -ity. "The ity words point to personalized or individual domains (generous-generosity); such ity words mark characteristics that separate one person or thing from another. Pagkatao/Katauhan (personhood) asserts the shared humanness of a people while personality is confined to the individual viewpoint of an outsider observing an Other."¹⁴

The following are some of the distinct characteristics that constitute the Filipino Pagkatao/Katauhan (Personhood).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Sonia Zaide, *The Philippines: A Unique Nation*, 23-24.

¹³ Virgilio G. Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology*, (Quezon City: UP Press, 1992). Cited by Katrin De Guia in Kapwa- The Self in the Other: Worldviews and Lifestyles of Filipino Culture Bearers, 26.

¹⁴ Ibid.

A.1 Pakikipagkapwa

The notion of KAPWA, a Tagalog word that roughly translates into "shared being," is fundamental in Filipino personhood. Taken from the phrase "kaparehongkaluluwa" (same/shared spirit) the Filipinos believe that an individual is a social being whose existence is interdependent with others. The Filipinos believe that their existence is inseparable from the people around them. According to Felipe De Leon of the University of the Philippines, the strongest social urge of the Filipino is to connect, to become one with people. De Leon concluded that after a decade of research, Filipino culture is the most inclusive and open of all those he has studied. Unlike the Western culture, which emphasizes privacy, personal fulfillment, and individualism, and the Confucian societies, which emphasize tight collectivistic cultures that value hierarchy and face, the Filipinos emphasize the interplay of the individual and social, the inner and the outer being and the complementary nature of things around them.¹⁵ Kapwa is a sense of "shared self"; that "I am in you" and "you are in me." The notion of "kapwa" or "shared self" is a declaration that "we are connected."

A.2 Inclusivity and Equality

Inherent in Filipino personhood is the affirmation and celebration of inclusivity and equality of men and women. As articulated by Sr. Mary John Manansan, in the pre-colonial era, males were not superior to females; they were equal but different. This concept is alluded to in the simultaneous emergence of Malakas and Maganda from the bamboo in the Filipino mythic narrative. Male and female are complementary in nature, even the roles of the father and the mother. The father is the "haligi ng tahanan" (pillar of the home) that gives strength and foundation, while the mother is the "ilaw ng tahanan" (light of the home) that provides enlightenment and direction. Foundation connotes stability, while direction connotes dynamism. The Filipino family, where our pagkatao or personhood is being molded, nurtured, and developed, is, therefore, both stable and dynamic because it is guided by an empowering, creating, and life-giving presence that makes people equal and inclusive.

A. 3 Element of Diversity

Agnes Miclat-Cacayan, in her article, "Telling our own story, Re-inhabiting our Foremothers'

¹⁵<http://www.living in the Philippines.com/art-whyfilipinos.html> (accessed: June 16, 2015).

Heritage," said that the combination of our (pre-Western contact) ancient mystical tradition that is rooted in our Austronesia origins and our Western-influenced religiosities has resulted in a spiritual "cocktail" so distinctively Filipino: "a mixture of East and West."¹⁶ True to this description, the Filipino is indeed marked by a blend of cultures. There is something Oriental and Occidental, Eastern and Western both in the features and culture of the Filipinos. Running in the veins of the Filipinos are the blood of the Malays, with a sprinkling of Chinese, American, Spanish, and Arab. The Filipinos took the spirit of kinship and camaraderie, the warmth, sensuality, and mysticism from their Malay ancestors, the close family relations from their Chinese foreparents, the piousness and the legacy of Christian faith from the Spaniards who introduced the Christian religion in the 16th century; the dash of western flavor from the Americans; and the fondness to commune with the sun and the soil from the Arabs.

Even the Tagalog language (which the Filipino language is basically based on) is said to have an elegance of the mixture of four languages. "Father Pedro Chirino, writing at the beginning of the 17th century, said of the Filipinos: 'I found in this language [Tagalog] four qualities of the four greatest languages of the world— Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Spanish. It has the mysticism and difficulties of the Hebrew; the distinctive terms of the Greek not only in the common but also in the proper names; the fullness and elegance of Latin; and the civility and courtesy of Spanish.'"¹⁷ Hospitality or *pakikipagkapwa* is a common denominator in the Filipino character, and this is what distinguishes the Filipino.

A.4Loob (Inner self)

A professor in the seminary once said, "If there is one word that would describe a Filipino, including his/her perspective, ideals, aspirations, beliefs, and struggles, the word is "loob" (inner self)."¹⁸

¹⁶Agnes Miclat-Cacayan, "Telling Our Own Story, Re-inhabiting our Foremothers' Heritage," 46.

¹⁷Pedro Chirino, *Relación de las Islas Filipinas*, (Rome: 1604; second edition: Manila, Imp. de Esteban Balbas, 1890), 52. cf. Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Milagros C. Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, 60.

¹⁸During a conversation with Prof. Redentor Molina at St. Andrew's Theological Seminary on March 16, 2005.

In times of hardship, they go back to their inner self (loob), hence the phrase, "humugot ng lakas ng loob" (drawing out strength from one's inner being). If a person is ingrate, he/she "walang utang naloob" (no debt of gratitude); if a person is virtuous, he/she is a person that has "magandangkalooban" (has a good inner being or good-natured). Loob is the inner self of a person, the very depth of one's very self where one could find life. Any attempt to analyze the human person as Filipino will be inadequate unless it focuses on the kalooban of the person. Loob points to our whole being. Loob is the true essence of our being Filipino. As long as we do not know the niloloob of the other person, we will never know that person—the truth of who the other is in his or her loob. From one's loob springs forth feelings, thoughts, and actions.

A. 5 Love for Freedom

The love for freedom also constitutes the Filipino katauhan (personhood). This is evident as symbolized by the bird who freed Malakas and Maganda in the Filipino mythic narrative. This is also proven in the history of the Filipino people, who have bravely and courageously overthrown and are continuously overthrowing their oppressors. Stories of Filipino heroes who are called "Bayani" are etched not only in the pages of history but even in the memories, hearts and consciousness of the Filipinos of today. Surprisingly, the love for freedom, bravery, dignity, and courage of the Filipino people are the very foundations of the Filipino homes as the word "bayani" which is from the root word "bayan" is essentially related to "bayanihan," the communal exercise of moving home that has become the symbol of Filipino togetherness.¹⁹

The Filipino people can move out from situations that dominate, oppress, subjugate, and exploit. In essence, the Filipino personhood is characterized by freedom and dignity.

A.6 K'buohan (Wholeness)

In the "Elements of Filipino Philosophy," Leonardo N. Mercado articulates that indigenous Filipino spirituality does not think in "either-or" categories. Filipino spirituality is "both-and" in their spirit of wholeness or K'buohan. There is no dichotomy between withinness- wholeness. "K'buohan is an Ilonggo term for wholeness or fullness. The concept of k'buohan (wholeness) stands for a union

¹⁹<http://www.living in the Philippines.com/art-whyfilipinos.html> (accessed: June 16, 2015).

with the life force, as well as harmony with others and the environment."²⁰

It has been said that the Filipino would be best understood not through words but through sensing or pakiramdam. This sensing/intuitive culture involves not only thinking but all of the bodily senses. It must be underscored that there is no dichotomy between pakiramdam or feeling/sensing without words and heartily laughing out loud. Spirituality is both being in silent awe, as well as joy and celebration.²¹

In addition to pakiramdam, what makes the Filipino pagkatao/katauhan as "whole" or "buo" are the elements of "malay" (awareness) and "dama" (sensitivity or the "pathic" component of personality). Dionisio Miranda underscored these elements as among the distinctive constituents of Filipino Pagkatao/katauhan. However, Miranda also emphasized that there is not, nor will be, such a thing as a one-hundred Filipino thought (due to the interdependence of countries on each other, the continuous exchange of cultural elements the intercultural tradition in every philosophical and theological thought today) but there is still a point in trying to make philosophy and theology as Filipino as possible.

UNMASKING THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF HEBRAIC AND FILIPINO BODY THEOLOGY AMIDST WESTERN CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES

A. Anthropology from the Hebraic Perspective

The Hebraic's view on humans holds that there is only a whole person animated (alive) by the breath of God. It is rooted in the creation accounts in the Book of Genesis. In the first creation account (Genesis 1), God created the world through the power of the WORD. The series of "And God says..." and everything that God declares come into being. The climax of the creation process is when God created humans from God's own image, male and female. God created them. In the second creation account (Genesis 2), God made the heaven and the earth, the plants and the animals, and other things. Then YHWH Elohim formed ādām (human/earthling) of the dust of the ground and breathed into the

²⁰Katrin De Guia, Kapwa: *The Shared Self in Others*, 318.

²¹Agnes Miclat-Cacayan, "Telling Our Own Story, Re-inhabiting our Foremothers' Heritage," 54.

human's nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living being. This human being was later differentiated while sleeping to simultaneously create the *îš* (man) and the *°iššah* (woman). Humans have been entrusted the care of the whole creation. Because humans were created by God's own hands and were breathed by God's own breath, the totality of their being is sacred. Dennis Bratcher explains that biblical writers could certainly distinguish between different aspects of humanity but never developed dualistic notions of a person being made up of divisible parts. Bratcher explains that,

"The person was the whole. Anything less than the whole was not a person.

This extended even to how they conceptualized death. While for us it is a biological fact, for them, anything that diminished life was a form of death; there cannot be a person without a body." ²²

Roberta Hestenes articulated the same thought by saying that it is not that human beings are souls that have bodies. The Genesis story tells us that human beings are embodied persons, so there is no dichotomy between body and soul. ²³The ancient Jews differed from the Greeks who taught the mind/body dichotomy and offered instead a holistic view of human nature. The ancient Jews certainly believed that there was a spiritual dimension to human nature in that they thought that something of God was "breathed" into every person from the first day of creation on--giving to each human being an infinitely precious sacredness (Genesis 2:7). For the Jews, God so permeated our bodies that the two could not be separated. Human is flesh animated by God's breath (*ruach*), who is thus constituted a living soul (*nephesh*) (Gen. 2:7; 7:22). ²⁴*Nephesh* (Soul) is not a part of humans; it is human him/herself viewed as a living creature. It can be used for human him/herself and indicate human as a person, and also become a synonym for "I" and "Myself." ²⁵

Nephesh is human seen in terms of his/her appetites and desires (Eccl. 6:2, 7) or in terms of his/her emotions or thoughts (Hos. 4:8; Ps. 35:25; Gen. 34:8; Ps. 139:14; Prov. 19:2)

"The bodies of every human being were always to be viewed as saturated with the presence of God,

²²Dennis Bratcher, *Body and Soul: Greek and Hebraic Tensions in Scripture*.

<http://www.crivoice.org/bodyand soul.html> (accessed: June 16, 2016).

²³Bill Moyers, *Genesis: A Living Conversation, companion to the public television series*, 32.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵Ps. 34:2; Gen. 27:35, lit., "that my soul may bless you," Jer. 3:11, "herself" equals "her soul."

therefore sacred. Hebraic anthropology freed sexuality from the denigration so common in Western theologies and established the sexual act as something that could create intimacy between persons rather than just as an unholy biological function promoted primarily for reproductive purposes."²⁶

Fundamental to Hebrew thought is the belief that God is the Creator. Because the world is God's creation, therefore, the world in itself is good. Because human beings are created in the image of God, human beings are good, and human life is sacred. Though there is wrong in the world, the Hebraic view is that it is not found in materiality but in human sin. In the article, "The Greek View vs. the Hebrew View of Man," George Eldon Ladd explains that for the Hebrew people, the fact that humans are physical creatures in the world is neither the cause nor the measure of human sinfulness and thus a state that he/she must be delivered from. Sin does not result from the burdening down the soul or clouding the mind; it results from the rebellion of the will. "The root of sin is found not in succumbing to the physical side of his/her being, but in the intent to lift him/herself out of his/her creaturehood and to usurp the place of God."²⁷

The earth, all together, is seen neither as an alien place nor as an indifferent theater on which a human lives out his/her temporal life while seeking a heavenly destiny. Humans and the world together belong to the order of creation, and in a real sense of the word, the world participates in human fate. Salvation does not mean deliverance from creaturehood, for it is an essential and permanent element to human beings. Moreover, "ultimate redemption is never seen as a flight from the world or escape from earthly, bodily existence. It is not the freeing of the soul from its engagement in the material world, but rather, ultimate redemption."²⁸

John Shelby Spong, in his book, "This Hebrew Lord" articulated the Hebraic view of reality as follows:

"If I could draw a diagram that would adequately depict for me a Hebrew view of reality, I would draw two circles: a smaller one within a larger one. The smaller circle would represent the world; the larger circle would represent God.

To the Hebrews, God and the world were not antithetical, nor were they identical. God was the Creator; the world was the creature. God was bigger than the creation, but the creation revealed the Creator's glory. The Hebrew creation story affirmed the goodness of life. God

²⁶Anthony Campolo, Hebraic Anthropology, [http://enx.org/content/m15871/hebraic theology](http://enx.org/content/m15871/hebraic%20theology). (accessed: June 16, 2016).

²⁷George Eldon Ladd, *The Greek vs. The Hebrew View of Man, an extract from The Pattern of New Testament Truth* (1968), 13-40, <http://www.presenttruthmag.com/archive/XXIX/29-2.thm> (accessed: September 15, 2015).

²⁸ Ibid.

made it all, and when it was complete, God surveyed it and pronounced it good indeed. Material things were good; they were meant to be used. Physical things were good; they were meant to be appreciated. Life was good; it was meant to be lived. The world was good; it was the object of divine love and was, therefore, meant to be engaged. With great joy, the Hebrews could sing of God's world and God's creation."²⁹

For the Hebrews, God was always revealed in life, in history. If people wanted to find God, they turned toward life and stepped boldly into the future. To have faith is to have the capacity to enter life, confront the unknown, venture forward, and find affirmation of one's own being.³⁰ To be spiritual meant to be alive to God and alive to the world. To have faith is to have the courage to enter life, for that is where God is to be found, always calling us into tomorrow.³¹ History is the arena of God's revelation. The Hebrew prophets were those who could perceive the meaning of the present moment and interpret from it the purpose of God in history.³² Faith, in the Hebrew perspective, is not an act of the mind or the intellect. If it has to be located in an organ of the body, it would have been in the heart. For faith to the Hebrews was not a matter of belief; rather, a matter of an attitude toward life. Biblically, the person of faith was the person of courage who dared to venture into life.

A.1 The Anatomy and The Anthropomorphic Image of God

Many of the theophanies and expressions about YHWH in the Hebrew Bible are anthropomorphic. YHWH's action is vividly depicted through the use of bodily parts. When YHWH called Moses to deliver the Hebrews from slavery, YHWH was a God who hears (ears) the cry of the people, who see (eyes) their affliction, and who acts (hands) to liberate them. The Psalmist in Psalm 18 clearly described YHWH through YHWH's bodily parts:

"My cry before YHWH came into YHWH's ears (v. 7); a fire burned within Him/Her, a cloud of smoke arose from His/Her nostrils, and bright flames poured forth from His/Her mouth (v.8); thick darkness was under His/Her feet (v. 9); the Most High uttered His/Her voice (v. 13);

The corporeal images of YHWH are also frequent in Isaiah 40:10, following:

²⁹ John Shelby Spong, *This Hebrew Lord* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publisher, 1993), 33.

³⁰ Ibid. 22.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and His/her arm rules for him/her; His/Her reward is with him/her, and his/her recompense before him/her. He/She will feed his/her flock like a shepherd; He/she will gather the lambs in his/her arms, carry them in his/her bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his/her hand.

The Psalmist words in Psalm 139:13-14 "You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are your works, and that my soul knows very well," is a declaration that our body is sacred as it is God, Godself, who delicately and meticulously created every part of our being.

A.2 The Hebraic Perspective on The Human Body

One of the most salient characteristics of Biblical Hebrew is its extraordinary concreteness, manifested especially in a fondness for images rooted in the human body.³³ Human anatomy is not simply bodily parts. The human body is constitutive of the whole human being. Every part has intrinsic cultural meaning. Hans Walter Wolff, in his book, "Anthropology of the Old Testament," presents these principles on how to investigate Hebrew names for human organs, limbs, and appearance as a whole.³⁴

A.3 Human Anatomy and Metaphors from the Hebraic Perspective.³⁵

Meta Linguistic Analysis

1.) Concepts like heart, soul, flesh, and spirit (but also ear and mouth, hand and arm) are not infrequently interchangeable in Hebrew poetry. In poetic parallelism, they can be used by turns for the whole human, almost like pronouns

³³Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, XIX.

³⁴Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 1-73.

³⁵Hans Walter Wolff's book "Anthropology of the Old Testament" is the primary reference of the section on Meta Linguistic Analysis. Biblical quotations used to elucidate the points presented have been taken from the Revised Standard Version. However, wordings have been modified where necessary to render the original meanings of the words translated.

***My soul longs, yea, faints for the courts of Yahweh, my heart and flesh
sing for joy to the living God.(Ps. 84:2)***

(Note: The variants indicate different aspects of the same subject in a way that is sometimes hardly recognizable. Thus, human's organs or members can also be replaced entirely smoothly by pronouns.)

***Wisdom will come into your heart,
and knowledge will be the delight of your soul;
discretion will watch over you; understanding will guard you.(Prov. 2:10f)***

2. In the use of the stereometry³⁶ of expression, enumeration of his/her characteristic organs circumscribes humans as a whole.

An understanding heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.
(Prov. 18:15)

Note: Different parts of the body enclose with their essential functions the person who is meant.

3. Stereometric thinking presupposes a synopsis of the members and organs of the human body with their capacities and functions.

*How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good tidings. (Isa. 52: 7)
It is not the graceful form of the feet that the prophet means, but their swift movement.
My own hand has helped me(Judges 7:2)*

What is meant is Israel's own efforts—its own strength.

Note: To name the parts of the body means to state their functions.

³⁶Stereometry is defined as the measurement of solid bodies; it is the art of measuring and computing the cubical contents of bodies and figures.

4.) Stereometric-synthetic³⁷ thinking sees a part of the body together with its particular activities and capacities, and these, in turn, are conceived as being the distinguishing marks of the whole human.

DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BODY AND THEIR MEANING/FUNCTION:

PARTS OF THE BODY	THEIR MEANING/FUNCTION	COMMENT
BLOOD (dām) דָּם;	Life <i>These men lie in wait for their own blood (dāmām); they set an ambush for their own lives (napšōtām) Prov.1:18 May he save the lives (nāpšōt) of the needy...let their blood (dāmām) be precious in his sight.</i>	As blood symbolizes life, the tasting of blood in the eating of meat is forbidden...blood is to be sprinkled in the altar of Yahweh...human is entitled only to the meat that comes from the earth while life belongs to Yahweh alone
Ear (‘ōzen) אוֹז;	Hearing or listening <i>Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hear (Jer.6:10)</i>	To hear is also synonymous to obey .

³⁷Synthetic as relating to or involving synthesis (made by combining different substances) characterized by frequent and systematic use of inflected forms to express grammatical relationship.

Fingers(אֶבְרָתָא) אֶבְרָתָא	Work of an art <i>When I consider Your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained (Ps. 8:3)</i>	It connotes creativity and the power to create .
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Hand (yād) יָד	Readiness to help <i>Jehu asked for Jehonadab's hand (II Kings 10:15)</i> <i>Thy right hand, O Lord, glorious in power, thy right hand O Lord, shatters the enemy (Ex. 15:6)</i>	The hand also signifies might or power. YHWH's hands, particularly, the right hand, are images of YHWH's power.
Head (rōš) רֹאשׁ	Image of leadership or anything high <i>And the waters decreased continually...the tops (roshe in Hebrew) Gen. 8:5.</i> <i>Now it shall come to pass that the mountain of the Lord shall be established on the top of the mountains (Isa. 2:2).</i>	It also pertains to an authority figure.
Heart (lēb) לֵב	Reason and decision of the will <i>The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouth of</i>	Capacity for judgement and sense of direction

	<i>the fool feeds on foolishness.</i> <i>(Prov. 15:14)</i> <i>A human's heart plans</i> <i>his/her way but Yahweh</i> <i>directs his steps (Prov. 16:9)</i>	
Kidneys (kilyâh) קִלְיָה	Seat of consciousness <i>It is thou who didst form my</i> <i>reins (kidneys). Thou didst</i> <i>knit me together in my</i> <i>mother's womb (Ps. 139:13)</i>	Kidneys are essential organ and the interior self. Hebrews believed that the reins (kidneys) were the first part on the human fetus to be formed...which means, thou hast laid down the foundation of my being.
Leg or Foot (regel) רֶגֶל	Progress according to steps or measures <i>Jacob says to Laban that the</i> <i>Aramean's possessions have</i> <i>increased during his service,</i> <i>Yahweh has blessed him</i> <i>l'raglî (not according to my</i> <i>foot but according to the</i> <i>steps or measures I took).</i>	Sometimes, this is used as euphemism for genitals

	<i>Then it shall be that when he lies down, ...you shall go in, uncover his feet and lie down” (Ruth 3:4)</i>	
LIVER (kābēd) כָּבֵד	Description of measureless grief or glory <i>My eyes are spent with weeping, my innermost parts are in turmoil. My liver is poured out on the ground because of the destruction of the daughter of my people (Lam. 2:11)</i>	As the liver is the heaviest part of the body, it has the greatest capacity for measureless grief. However, kbd is also the root of the word kābōd which means glory, hence, it has also the capacity for greatest joy.
Nostrils (‘ap) אֶפֶס	Metaphor of wrath <i>There comes YHWH’s appearance from afar; His/her nostrils burn,thick cloudsarise. (Isa.30:27)</i>	It pertains to heavy breathing because of intense emotion.
THROAT (gārôn) גָּרוֹן	As the soul or nepeš <i>The underworld wrenches wide its nepeš, and opens its mouth beyond measure.</i>	The synonymous parallel talks about the mouth. As far as the nepeš is concerned, we are told that it is wide open. It

	<i>(Isaiah 5:14)</i> <i>He leads me beside still waters, He restores my</i> <i>nepeš(soul). (Ps. 23: 2-3)</i> <i>As the deer panteth for the</i> <i>water so my nepeš(soul) longs</i> <i>after you.</i>	means that the nepeš here is the gullet, the jaws, or the throat. Water is used to quench the thirst ...thirst is in the throat. Again water and soul are being paralleled here.
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In the Hebraic view, to be spiritual means to be life-giving. Matter is God-made and holy. Ecstasy is a gift of the Creator. Religion is collective (God and us). Creation is good, and we celebrate it by enjoying it and sharing the enjoyment of it. Every experience of beauty is an experience of God, including our appreciation of our very own body and bodily parts. Artistic expression shares the beauty of God. Humankind's relationship with God is horizontal. God is more pantheistic. For the Hebrews, reality was found in God, who makes Godself known in the ebb and flow of both nature and historical events by God's acts and by God's words.³⁸

God comes to people in their earthly experience. Thus, the final redemption is not flight from this world to another world; it may be described as the descent of the other world — God's world — resulting in a transformation of this world. The Hebrew view is not a dualism of two worlds but a religious dualism of God versus human. Human is God's creature; creation is the realm of God's constant activity. Human is not a bipartite creature of the divine and human, of soul and body; in his/her total being he/she is God's creature and remains a part of creation. Therefore, the redemption of humans and the redemption of creation belong together. Salvation consists of fellowship with God

³⁸<http://members.pioneer.net/~tkerns/waol-phi-website/hebwislitsite/gk-hebwvs.html> (accessed: February 5, 2015)

amid earthly existence and will finally mean the redemption of the whole person together with his/her environment. At the heart of the Hebrew Bible's view is God — a living, personal being — who visits humans in earthly existence to establish fellowship with him/herself and who will finally visit humans to establish God's perfect rule and redemption in the world.³⁹

B. Anthropology from the Filipino Perspective

Leonardo Mercado describes Filipino's view of his or her humanity as the convergence of the loob and the body. In contrast with the traditional Western Philosophy, which strictly divides body and soul, the Filipino thinks holistically. Mercado explains that,

"The Filipino looks at him/herself, as one who feels, as one who wills, as one who thinks, as one who acts: as a total whole—as a 'person', conscious of his/her freedom, proud of his/her dignity and sensitive to the violation of these two. The Filipino's holistic way of thinking is expressed in buot/ loob/nakem. It can mean intellect, mind, reason, judgment, and decision. It can mean desire or will, it can mean human-heartedness or (hu)man from the ethical angle as in morally good or conscientious ."⁴⁰

This holistic view extends to the Filipino's non-dualistic worldview. Like the Filipino's oriental neighbors, the Filipino has a total way of thinking that is holistic and non-compartmentalized. Mercado explains that in the Filipino's indigenous culture, politics, ethics and religion are one. Salvation for the Filipino involves the entire human. Mercado enthused that for the Filipino, the sacred and the profane are intertwined. Both the profane and the sacred are so blended that anthropologists do not know where to draw the line between the social and religious.

Like Hebrew thought, Filipino believes that he/she is part of the created order and, thus, must be in harmony with nature. The anthropological view of the Filipino is rooted in the legend of Malakas and Maganda.⁴¹ According to the story, Bathala (the Filipino term for God) created the world and all

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Leonardo N. Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Theology* (Tacloban City: Divine Word University Publications, 1975; reprint: 1975, 1976, 1994), 50.

⁴¹ The legend of Malakas and Maganda is the most popular mythic narrative of the origin of the Filipino people. Although there have been objections to the use of this myth as the deposed Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos and his wife Imelda used to picture themselves as the personifications of Malakas and Maganda, the writer chose this narrative as it presents the essential and substantial messages of mutuality, equality, and partnership between the sexes and between the human and the rest of creation that characterize the inherent ethical beliefs of the Filipino people.

the things therein. When everything was in its proper order, Bathala released a bird, which flew directly to where the bamboo was located. With the use of its beak, the bird opened the bamboo where Malakas and Maganda, the first human beings and the first couple, emerged. From them came the first Filipino family.

Basic also in the story is the Filipino's notion of KAPWA, a Tagalog word that roughly translates into "shared being."⁴² as illustrated by the presence of both Malakas and Maganda. It shows that for Filipinos, an individual is a social being whose existence is interdependent with others. Interestingly, this Filipino non-compartmentalized view of human is basically the same with that of the Hebrew thinking. The word "lēb" (which means heart) is similar to the Filipino's "buot." As "buot" means consciousness or conscience, "lēb" or "heart" also functions as a witness to the moral value of one's act. The heart's function is also deemed synonymous with the conscience.

It is more interesting to note that the Filipino word for "soul," which is "kaluluwa," is also basically the same as the Hebrew's notion of "ruach," a breath from God that was breathed into human to make human a living soul. Anton Postma, who conducted a comparative philological study of Philippine languages, said that "kaluluwa" is not derived from "duha." (meaning two, or twin) as we used to think. (It is a popular belief in the Tagalog region, according to Mercado that every person is born with a double. This double is known as "malay" or consciousness and functions as guardian angel). Postma believes that the real etymology of the word "kaluluwa" comes from the Arabic "ruh" word kaluluwa comes from the Arabic "ruh" (Arabic influenced the Indonesian and Philippine languages), a stem which can variedly mean "breath, wind, spirit, seat of emotion, organ of mental acts." The Arabic "ruh" is also related to the Hebrew word "ruah" which also means "breath, wind, and spirit." (This is very plausible because, in Israel, they are using both the Hebrew and the Arabic languages). Mercado said that Postma's philological theory is quite convincing because, in the Philippines, death is being referred to as "nalagutan ng shining" or "naputlansaginhawa" in Visayan (cutting down of one's breath). Hence, to die means to cease or stop breathing.⁴³

Interestingly, the Visayan word "ginhawa" does not only pertain to breath; it can also mean

⁴²<http://www.livinginthePhilippines.com/art-whyfilipinos.html> (accessed: June 16, 2015)

⁴³Leonardo N. Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* (Tacloban City: Divine Word University Publications, 1974), 160.

comfort, heart, feelings, or food (ginhawaan) – ginhawa therefore means "life."⁴⁴

As life comes from God and as Filipinos look at him/herself in a holistic manner, Filipinos regard life (ginhawa or soul) and their body as sacred, as what is material is also spiritual. The Filipinos regard human as a total person whose God's breath enlivens the body; there is no distinction, therefore, between material and spiritual or body and soul. The Filipino, just like the Hebraic belief, holds that the body is sacred. Different from the Western concept of spirituality as something that refers to an ultimate or immaterial reality or values and meanings by which people live that can encompass belief in immaterial realities or experiences of the immanent or transcendent nature of the world, spirituality for the Filipino people is the wholeness of life. It is to live harmoniously with oneself, with others, and with the rest of the created order. It is the celebration of one's humanity. It is the affirmation that one is being created by BATHALA, the power that liberates and gives LIFE.

B.1 KATAWAN (Body) Metaphors and the Filipino Culture

Dr. Melanio L. Aoanan, in his article, "Toward the Making of Filipino Intestinal Theology," underscored that the metaphor of the body is significant in the thinking and understanding of Filipinos. He said that most Filipino concepts are connected or intertwined with the parts of the human body. "In Western thought, the concept of brotherhood/sisterhood is somewhat abstract. But in the Filipino language, the words kapatid/ igsoon/kabsat (Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilokano, respectively for brother/sister) connote a concrete relational meaning".⁴⁵

When taken literally, the word means that a brother/sister is "cut off from one's intestine." They have a solid linkage, connection, or relationship because they come from one source. Fr. Leonardo Mercado and Dr. Estela Padilla have also highlighted the importance of KATAWAN (body) in their theologizing. Both emphasized the inherent meanings of different body parts' metaphors to describe who we are, our relationship with others, and our collective responsibility. The following are the most popularly used phrases in the Filipino language:

⁴⁴Leonardo N. Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Theology*, 223-224.

⁴⁵Melanio L. Aoanan, "Toward the Making of Filipino Intestinal Theology" in *Anumang Hiram, Kung Hindi Masikip ay Maluwang*, ed. Revelation E. Velunta (Cavite: Union Theological Seminary, 2006), 50.

BODY PART	FILIPINO PHRASE	MEANING
Atay (Liver)	a.) Nakakapagpakulo ng atay (<i>something that causes one's liver to contract</i>) b.) Nakakapagpalaki ng atay (<i>something that causes one's liver to enlarge</i>)	a.) something that causes fear b.) something that causes elation or flattery
Bagang (Jaw)	Kabagang (<i>same jaw</i>)	equal
Bayag (Genitals)	a.) Walang bayag (<i>no balls</i>) b.) Puti ang bayag (<i>white balls</i>) c.) Urong ang bayag (<i>Shrunk ball</i>)	a.) coward or no courage b.) looks pale because of fear c.) hesitant or fearful
Bituka (Intestine)	a.) Malayosabituka (<i>far from</i>)	a.) one's condition is not

	<i>the intestine)</i> b.) Halang ang Bituka (<i>bad or bitter intestine</i>)	serious b.) bad person
Buto'tLaman(Bone and Flesh)	Buto'tlaman(<i>bone and flesh</i>)	totality of one's being
Kamay (Hand)	a.) Kapitkamay (<i>holding hands</i>) b.) Malamig ang kamay (<i>cold hands</i>)	a.) someone you could rely on b.) someone who is good with plants
Katawan (Body)	a.) Kinatawan (<i>embodied</i>) b.) Katawanin (<i>to embody</i>) c.) Pangatawanan (<i>embodying</i>) d.) Katauhan (<i>one's being</i>)	a.) one who represents b.) to take responsibility for c.) to walk your talk d.) wholeness of one's being
Daliri (Fingers)	Ang sakit ng kalingkingan ay ramdam ng buongkatawan (<i>The pain of the little finger is felt by the whole body</i>)	The concern of one is the concern of all
Dila (Tongue)	Kaututangdila (<i>licking something together</i>)	Intimate in a gossip manner
Dugo (Blood)	a.) Mabigat ang dugo (<i>heavy blood</i>) b.) Mas malapot ang dugokesasatubig (<i>blood is thicker than water</i>) c.) Matapang ang dugo (<i>strong blood</i>) d.) Buhay ang dugo (<i>the blood is alive</i>)	a.) someone who is not comfortable to be with, feeling of animosity b.) one's kin or blood relative is more important than others c.) brave d.) someone who is full of life or energy
Ilong (Nose)	a.) Malambot ang ilong (<i>soft nose</i>) b.) Mataas ang ilong (<i>having a high nose</i>)	a.) sensitive to critique b.) someone who is proud
Lalamunan (Throat)	Tiniksalalamunan(<i>bone in the throat</i>)	Hindrance in the way or something or someone that hinders your plan
Mata (Eyes)	a.) Minamata o mapang-mata (<i>make eyes</i>)	a.) to judge, judgmental or discriminative

	b.) Mainit ang mata(<i>hot eyes</i>)	b.) looking intently at someone
Mukha (Face)	a.) Mukhanganghel (<i>angelic face</i>) b.) Makapal ang mukha (<i>thick-faced</i>)	a.) kind and innocent looking b.) person who is shameless
Puso/Dibdib (Heart)	a.) Pusongmamon (<i>cake heart</i>) b.) Kabiyak ng puso/dibdib (<i>the other half of heart</i>) c.) Sasabog ang dibdib (<i>chest will burst either because of joy or anger</i>)	a.) kindhearted, merciful b.) spouse c.) intense feeling, could be very upset or very happy
Tainga (Ear)	Tengangkawali(<i>frying pan ears</i>)	Pretending to be deaf
Ulo (Head)	Pangulo (<i>one who heads</i>)	One who is in the leadership

For the Filipino people, the body is sacred and the very expression of who they are. Matter (body) is not evil, for what God created is good. There is no dichotomy between the body and the soul, between material and spiritual, because katawan (body) means katauhan (one's being). The physical body is the embodiment of one's being, and the human anatomy is an expression of spirituality. Spirituality is not something that refers to an ultimate or immaterial reality, or an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of their being or the values and meanings by which people live that would help them encompass the belief in immaterial realities or experiences of the immanent or transcendent nature of the world. Rather, it is a life force, the awareness of our surroundings, to see the spirit in all things.

Conclusion

It is evident that the Hebraic and the Filipino anthropological theologies are closely related to each other. Both the Hebraic and the Filipino affirm the sacredness of the created order, especially the very being of the human, because God, Godself, created the human. Both the Hebraic and the Filipino believe in the unity of the body and the spirit and that the body and all its parts as sacred. Both the Hebraic and the Filipino believe in a life-giving deity who created both male and female and united them in love to create and propagate life and to live life to the fullest. Both the Hebraic and the

Filipino believe that spirituality is manifested in our engagement with life.

In the Hebraic and Filipino anthropological theologies, the body and the spirit are not antithetical but vital components of the wholistic whole. Human's whole being is celebrated, including his/her sexuality, as sexuality is seen as God's gift to humanity. Human anatomy or the bodily parts are important; they are the very expression of wholeness and spirituality. There is no dichotomy between the body and the soul because katawan (body) means katauhan (one's being). The physical body is the embodiment of one's being, and the human anatomy is an expression of spirituality. Spirituality is not something that refers to an ultimate or immaterial reality, or an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of their being or the values and meanings by which people live that would help them encompass the belief in immaterial realities or experiences of the immanent or transcendent nature of the world. Rather, spirituality is a life force. Spirituality, which encompasses both the body and the soul, is the wholeness of life.

Moreover, the similarities between the Hebraic and the Filipino extend even to the use of human anatomy as constitutive of the whole person. Like that of the Filipino, the Hebrew is replete with the use of human anatomy and metaphors. The convergence of the body and the spirit (breath of God) is the concrete manifestation of life because a body without a spirit is a corpse, while a spirit without a body is a ghost.

We do not just have bodies; we are bodies. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book *Creation and Fall* explained, "Escape from the body is an escape from being (hu)man and escape from the spirit as well. The body is the existence form of spirit, as the spirit is the existence-form of body." Indeed, humans cannot penetrate through reason alone the "great mystery" of the human body. The human body is not only biological; it is also, and even more so, theological. Only to the degree that we know what our body "says" theologically do we know who we really are and, therefore, how we are to live.





The House of EL

Revelation E. Velunta

INTRODUCTION

While doing his rounds Jesus finds St. Peter, at the pearly gates, looking worn out and very, very tired. “Rocky,” he says to his friend, “why don’t you take a break. I’ll handle the processing for you.” “Thanks, Jesse,” Peter replies with glee and leaves with his rooster. Jesus takes over and as he looked down the long line of people being processed, he noticed an old man who looked very, very familiar. Jesus felt he knew the old man. Eventually, he was face to face with the old man. Jesus asks, “Sir, what did you do when you were back on earth?” “I was a carpenter,” the old man replied. The reply got Jesus very excited. “What made your life very special then?” he continued. “I had a very special son,” was the reply. A carpenter who had a special son? This got Jesus more excited! “What can you tell me about your son?” Jesus drew closer as he asked. “Nails and wood!” the carpenter answered. Nails and wood? Jesus was beyond ecstatic. He blurts out, “Father?” The old man responds, very surprised, “Pinocchio?”

Diversity is a gift. Difference is a fundamental fact of life. God created everyone and everything different. No two people are exactly alike. No two fingerprints are exactly alike. No two readers of this essay. The same goes with experiences. Plurality is God’s gift.

Father and son, nails, and wood do not always point to Jesus. They can also point to Pinocchio.

All our relationships are founded on our differences. Unity is grounded on difference! Love comes alive because we care for people different from us! If we thought, spoke, prayed, did everything the same way, we would not be here today. Ian, my younger son, when he was 6, agreeing with my point about

the gift of diversity, quipped: “You’re right, Tatay! Because if everyone looked like you, the world will be a creepy place.”

There is always more than one way of doing anything. There is always more than one way of reading any text. Actually, there is legion. Interpretation is always particular and perspectival. Good news is always relative. When David killed Goliath, it was good news to Israelites, bad news to Philistines, and tragic news to Goliath’s mother!

FORCING A SINGLE TRUTH UPON A PLURAL WORLD

Difference has never been the world’s problem. Our collective problems, woes, and pains arise when we force a single truth upon a plural world. We have a name for this: imperialism.

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (formerly the World Alliance) in its 2006 Manila Declaration pronounced:

The first one thousand years of Christianity was one millennium of war and destruction in the name of Jesus Christ. And those “civilizing missions” have not stopped. Even today, the most oppressive and dehumanizing societies are led by “Christian” centurions who have no qualms maiming and destroying those who are not “one of them.”

Western Christianity has been closely related to empire since the Roman days. Since then, it has spread throughout the world, and now it is being used to provide ideological legitimization for today’s empire. Globalized Christendom and the ‘crusades’ it embarks upon today are symbiotically intertwined with global capital and the power of the global empire. In its triumphalistic pursuits, it discounts if not condemns all other religious faiths and cultures. The indigenous religions of many communities are destroyed and Islam is vilified. The convergence of Christian religion with Western modernity has destroyed the religious and cultural life of

peoples and their communities throughout the world. The powers and principalities of the global market and empire are being baptized by these theological distortions of 'Christianity', which promote religious conflicts and bigotry globally.

The Christian religion of empire treats others as 'gentiles' to be conquered; as the 'evil empire' to be destroyed; or as the 'axis of evil' to be eradicated from the earth. The empire claims that the 'goodness' of the empire must overcome these 'evils'. Its false messianic spirit (ormessianic complex) is imbued with the demonic. These false claims destroy the integrity of faiths, and radically erode the identity of Christian faith in Jesus Christ. As the spirit of empire penetrates souls, the power of global empire possesses the bodies of all living beings. Lord of its domain, it builds temples for the global market to serve Profit (Mammon).

The empire uses 'democracy' as an umbrella term for the kind of political regime that it would like to see installed all over the world. Bringing 'democracy' to countries that do not yet have it is claimed as the defining purpose of US foreign policy. For the US, democracies abroad are regimes that support or follow its dictates.¹

Imperialism is forcing a single truth upon a plural world.

And it is primarily a textual project. The Bible remains imperialism's most effective text. Biblical interpretation in many Asian countries continues to privilege the centers of power within, behind, and in front of the text. Biblical studies, particularly in the Philippines, remain a stronghold of colonial scholarship especially among churches and their formation centers. Denominations refuse to become autonomous and continue to depend on their mother institutions in the United States, Europe, or elsewhere in the First

¹ An Ecumenical Faith Stance Against Global Empire for A Liberated Earth Community available at <http://www.peaceforlife.org/resources/statement/partners/325-an-ecumenical-faith-stance-against-global-empire-for-a-liberatedearth-community>, accessed 5 October 2015.

World. Church buildings and institutions are named after benevolent foreign church leaders and missionaries.

Many seminaries continue to depend heavily on foreign teachers (who are usually paid in US dollars or Euros by foreign boards) than natives (who are usually paid in the local currency and, oftentimes, significantly below the living wage). Libraries are filled with books written by European and American scholars and continue to receive donations of old throw-away books from the First World. Traditional historical-critical methods remain the key reading paradigm. Establishing what the Bible meant in the past is the required, the correct, and the first step toward discerning what it means for today.

Fr. Carlos Abesamis, one of the founders of EATWOT (Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians) remarked that nothing is the matter with foreigners doing foreign theology (for themselves). The issue is that Filipino theology is a photocopy of Euro-American theology.² It is not uncommon to hear the work of many Third World and minority scholars described as “interesting” while the work of a lot of European-American, mostly male, scholars described as “scholarly.” Kwok Pui-lan in many of our conversations have repeatedly asked: “Why do we accept the work of less than 1% of the one-third of the male population, the European-American third, as normative for all?”

But the reality is this: no two interpretations are exactly alike. Those of us here who are students of biblical writings know that, right now, there are over 5,700 manuscripts of the New Testament in Greek. No two are exactly alike. There are over 24,000 manuscripts of the New Testament in other ancient languages. And no two are exactly alike. Hermeneutics is plural.

The wealth of diverse interpretations in the former colonies in Asia can be summarized into three categories: those that locate meaning “behind texts,” those that locate meaning “in the texts,” and those that locate meaning “in

² Carlos Abesamis, *What is Inside the Wooden Bowl?* (Quezon City: Socio-Pastoral Institute, 1997), 23, 33.

front of the texts.” Those interpretations that fall under the first category presuppose that scripture serves a referential function, the text is a “window” to a privileged past—to Israel, to the historical Jesus, to the gospel writers and their intentions, to the early Christian communities, etc.—that could be recovered. Interpretation is therefore aimed at first establishing what the text meant in order to arrive at what it means for today. The task of the interpreter is to recover meaning from behind the text to the historical setting from which it came. Traditional historical critical methods like form,³ source,⁴ and redaction criticism⁵ would fall under this category.

The second category of interpretations employ “closed reading” focused on plot, characters, setting, discourse, structure, implied authors and implied readers in order to get at “what is in the text.” If the first category privileged the past that the text referred to as the source of meaning, the second category privileges the text itself. This category would include most literary methods like narrative,⁶ structural,⁷ and rhetorical criticism.⁸ In such cases interpreters presuppose scripture as “story,” a text that “has life all its own.” And this “living” text is able to create or conjure up communities of readers/hearers.

The third category would include readings that privilege social location. Meaning, in this category, is not located in the past or in the text, but in parts of the text that point “beyond the text” or “in front of the text”: its rhetorical features as well as all the signs of ideological tensions, whether these are socio-economic, political, cultural, religious tensions that are recognizable, despite the fact that the text seeks to suppress them, for instance by *marginalizing* characters, institutions, or events that would manifest these tensions. These

³Edgar McKnight, *What is Form Criticism? Guides to Biblical Scholarship* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969)

⁴ F. Neirynck, *The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism* (Leuven, Belgium : Leuven University Press :

UitgeverijPeeters, 1993).

⁵ Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969).

⁶ Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

⁷ Daniel Patte, *Structural Exegesis for New Testament Critics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

⁸ Phyllis Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism* (Augsburg: Fortress Press, 1994).

retorical features and ideological tensions are textual features that point “beyond the text,” in the sense that they are recognizable by the ways in which they powerfully affect readers in situations similar to those suppressed by the text. Thus, these “in front of the text” textual features are most directly recognizable when they are activated by present-day readers.

After all, interpretations are, as Mark Taylor puts it, “constructs of socially located flesh-and-blood readers.”⁹ Scripture then serves as a “mirror” that helps inform—not *define*—concrete life settings. Most advocacy approaches—feminist (like the Women’s Bible Commentary¹⁰, *Searching the Scriptures*¹¹, and the Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible¹²) liberationist¹³, womanist¹⁴, reader-response criticism¹⁵, cultural¹⁶, post-colonial studies,¹⁶ and queer¹⁷—would fall under this category.

My proposal, as an example of a “reading in front of texts” takes into account the primary role of culture and socio-political context in interpretations of the Bible, and in the process elucidates dimensions of the text that otherwise would remain hidden. Simply put, I am a Filipino and this project is one Filipino’s reading of the Bible. It is akin to Dolores Williams’s argument, in *Sisters in the Wilderness* (Orbis, 1995), that her construction of Christian theology or god-talk is informed by the statement: “I am a black WOMAN.” More specifically my proposal shows how Filipino perspectives generated in

⁹ He shared this during a seminar at the SBL-AAR meeting in Orlando, Florida, November 1998.

¹⁰ Carol Newsom and Sharon Ringe, eds., *The Women’s Bible Commentary: Expanded* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

¹¹ Elizabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, *Searching the Scriptures* (Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997).

¹² A. Brenner, *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible* (Routledge, 2001).

¹³ Norman Gottwald, *The Bible and Liberation* (Orbis, 1993).

¹⁴ Dolores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Orbis, 1995).

¹⁵ Jane Tompkins, *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-structuralism* (John Hopkins University Press, 1980), Brian Blount, *Cultural Interpretation* (Augsburg: Fortress Press, 1995) and Lizette Tapia-Raquel, *The Gospel According to Lualhati Bautista* (unpublished Master of Theology thesis, SEAGST, 2010).

¹⁶ Musa Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Christian Board of Publication, 2000).

¹⁷ Theodore Jennings, *Jacob’s Wound: Homoerotic Narrative in the Ancient Literature of Israel* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2005) and Marcella Althaus-Reid, *Indecent Theology* (Routledge, 2001).

resistance to imperialism and colonialism highlight certain aspects of the biblical texts and of their historical contexts that remain hidden when they are read from European-American perspectives.

What I am proposing is another “Canaanite” reading¹⁸ that I am offering as a contribution to the developing archive of resistance and liberation discourses from the Third World and Fourth World, a reading aimed to disrupt and challenge the hegemony of Western discourses, especially in plural Asia. These discourses are so normative and pervasive that most people, including Filipinos, do not know that the American occupation of the Philippines sent over one million Filipinos to heaven.¹⁹ Most people, including Filipinos, do not know that the occupation forces called the natives niggers, injuns, heathens, pagans, tail-less brown monkeys, and Canaanites.²⁰

R.S. Sugirtharajah rightly argues that historical-critical methods were not only colonial in the sense that they displaced the norms and practices of our indigenous reading methods, but in that they were used to justify the superiority of Christian texts and to undermine the sacred writings of others. These methods are colonial because they insist that correct readings are mediated through the “proper” use of historical-critical tools alone. He laments, “Look at the opening of George Strecker’s ‘The Sermon on the Mount: An Exegetical Commentary’ (1988): ‘No proper exegesis of the Sermon on the Mount can ignore the research of more than two hundred years of historical-critical research into the New Testament.’”²¹

¹⁸ For one of the most comprehensive collection of “Canaanite Readings” please see *Semeia 75: Postcolonialism and Scriptural*

Reading, edited by Laura Donaldson (Society of Biblical Literature, 1996) and James Treat, *Native and Christian* (Routledge, 1996).

¹⁹ Read E. San Juan, *An African American Soldier in the Philippine Revolution*. Available at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/SanJuan.pdf>, accessed October 15, 2015.

²⁰ Jim Zwick, *Confronting Imperialism: Essays on Mark Twain and the Anti-Imperialist League* (Infinity Publishing, 2007).

²¹ Laura Donaldson, *Semeia 75*.

Kwok Pui-lan in another conversation has argued that in theological education, a large part of the curriculum has been the study of the lives and thoughts of white, male, EuroAmerican theologians, to the exclusion of many other voices. More importantly, the theologies done by these people are considered normative, which set the standards and parameters of what “theology” should be.

Musa Dube reminds us that when it comes to the connection of the Bible, its readers, and its institutions to Western imperialism, there is no call for special pleading.²² Laura Donaldson asks: “What civilization invented the most brutal system of conquest and exploitation the world has ever known? Christian. Who made slavery the basis for capitalist expansion? Christians. What religion has been the most responsible for the genocide of aboriginal peoples? Christianity. In my view, the Christian church has a much more substantial record of pure evil than any final good.”²³

Canaan Banana posits that the Bible is an important book of the church and that it includes liberating messages; nevertheless, there remains the sense in which, unless one embraces the Christian concept of God, one is not fully a person of God.²⁴ Mary John Mananzan in many of her lectures has pointed out that the Bible in spite of all the reinterpretations, remains a book written from a patriarchal, dominator, imperial perspective and thus must be used to inform and not define life and its struggles.

Robert Allen Warrior’s essay, “Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians,”²⁵ argues that the liberationist picture of Yahweh is incomplete. In the conquest narratives, Yahweh the liberator becomes Yahweh the conqueror. Warrior rightly points out that the obvious characters in the Exodus and Conquest narratives for Native Americans to identify with are the Canaanites, the people

²² Musa Dube, 14.

²³ Laura Donaldson, 7.

²⁴ Musa Dube, 15.

²⁵ Warrior, in Treat’s *Native and Christian*.

who already lived in the Promise Land. He also argues “that the Canaanites should be the center of theological reflection and political action. They are the last remaining ignored voice in the text, except perhaps for the land itself.” The conquest stories, for Warrior, with all their violence and injustice must be taken seriously by those who believe in the God of the Old Testament. Unfortunately, biblical critics rarely mention these texts and when they do, Warrior points out, they express little concern for the indigenes and their rights as human beings and as nations. Especially ignored are the passages where Yahweh tells the Israelites to mercilessly annihilate the indigenous population. He then notes that oppressive narratives of conquest, anti-Semitism, sexism, heterosexism, imperialism, and racism remain in the canonized text.

READING THE BIBLE AS CANAANITES

Warrior, who turned Hebrew Bible scholarship on its ear, argues that there might be something wrong with the Christian god, something requiring conversion and repentance. He notes that in the Matthean narrative²⁶ the “little bitch” does not become a follower of Jesus. She seeks him out because he has something she needs. She receives what she came for and walks away, never to be mentioned again. She changes Jesus. Maybe she went back to her people and fought against the colonizing Romans in her own way with her own gods. The importance of her story is not whether she followed Jesus but that, without her, Jesus would have remained a narrow-minded bigot who viewed indigenous people as inhuman.

Warrior is part of the Osage Nation, a people constructed as “Canaanite.” As a member of a colonized and occupied people, so am I. This Canaanite reading presupposes the following statements of fact:

1. The Bible is an ancient Palestinian library which was written over two thousand years ago in Ancient Hebrew and Koine Greek.

²⁶ Matthew 15: 21-28

2. Like many ancient libraries, the Bible reflects the theologies, ideologies, and biases of the ruling classes.
3. It was not written for you or for me or for anyone who believes it was written for them.
4. It has been co-opted by empire for over 1700 years to colonize, occupy, subjugate, and erase peoples, nations, and cultures.²⁷
5. It has been translated and continues to be translated to read like the text is talking to us.
6. It remains, to this day, the primary source of the empire's dominant "software" that perpetuate a monotheism that is essentially patriarchal and frequently misogynistic.²⁸

Historians tell us that the Bible was put together or compiled over one thousand years. Its latest materials are about 2 thousand years old; its oldest over three thousand. Take Paul's Letter to Philemon. It is a personal letter from Paul to Philemon. Paul and Philemon are both dead. What we have is a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a two-thousand-year-old letter in Koine Greek. Paul did not write that letter to us. Take Paul's letter to the Ephesians where he says, "wives submit to your husbands." Paul was talking to wives in the church in Ephesus 2000 years ago. He is not talking to any other wives. Then nor now.

We do love reading texts that were not written for us! We do this all the time. Our spouse's cellphone messages, or our children's. Literary classics. And, yes, Scriptures. I have argued that most people read Scripture as windows to the past (historical methods), as story (literary methods), and as mirrors (cultural studies).

²⁷ Joel Baden, Professor of Hebrew Bible, has his one semester course on Hebrew Bible (at Yale Divinity School) on YouTube. The course focuses on how people use and misuse the text. For a very short summary, refer to this video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XS7LgbMr1m4>.

²⁸ Allah Muhl, "Monotheism: Its Influence on Patriarchy and Misogyny," *The Journal of Psychohistory*; New York Vol. 43, Iss. 1, (Summer 2015): 2-20.

When texts are read as windows to the past, we are basically listening to the dead; hearing echoes.²⁹ We might not admit it, but most of our cherished values come from the dead, from departed loved ones. The works of favorite authors and composers who died before we were even born. Then there's tradition. The narratives, beliefs, behavior of a particular family, community, people that have been handed down from one generation to the next.

When we read texts as a story, we assume that the story "always happens." That the text has a life all its own. That there is meaning in how the story elements of plot, characters, and setting interact. This is why we name our children after characters in books, in movies, in songs. This is also probably why so many celebrities win in our elections. We vote for the "characters" they play instead of the real, flesh and blood, people behind these characters.

Finally, when we read texts as mirrors, we presuppose resonance. What we read strikes a chord deep inside us: as individuals, as a community, as a people. Thus, these are "readings as." As people of color, as LGBT, as children, as Indigenous Community, etc.

Mitri Raheb calls scripture "the primary software" of the dominant Christian imperial culture.³⁰ The Biblical "past," "story," and "mirror" become privileged locations, for eternity. There is no past more important. No story more salvific. No mirror more reflective.

500 years of colonial Christianity (beginning with the Spaniards for 3 centuries starting on March 16, 1521, and then with the Americans since 1898) serve as proof of the pervasiveness of this "software." Research has shown that up to 80% of Christians believe that the Bible is God's literal word. Research has also

²⁹ This is the problem with both the formal and dynamic equivalency theories of translations. The ancient texts are translated to sound like these are written for the modern reader. No. These were not. Translations of ancient texts should provide echoes.

³⁰ Mitri Raheb, *Faith in the Face of Empire: The Bible through Palestinian Eyes* (Orbis: 2014).

shown that majority of these Christians do not read the Bible!³¹ Filipinos during the Spanish Occupation were not given access to the Bible. What they received was the Spanish Friars' interpretations and the Pasyon. The Pasyon was an epic poem in Tagalog on the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ written by Gaspar Aquino de Belen in 1704. It was publicly read and recited during the Lenten Season. Although the American Occupation introduced the Bible to the Filipinos in their native languages, translation theories privileged the source text over the receptor texts and "correct" interpretations of the text were reflective of the "White Man's Burden" and Benevolent Assimilation policies.

Fred Atkinson, the first American General Superintendent of Education in the Philippines, inaugurated more than a century of racist public education in the islands when he remarked that "the Filipino people, taken as a body, are children and childlike, do not know what is best for them.... By the very fact of our superiority of civilization and our greater capacity for industrial activity we are bound to exercise over them a profound social influence."³²

How many theologies and ideologies are grounded on the "Exodus" and "Christ" events? And the theology of chosen-ness? Even biblical archeology is constructed to fit the biblical narrative: age of the patriarchs, exodus/conquest, the united kingdom, the divided kingdom, etc. Sunday sermons need to follow the lectionary reading for that day and homilies that do not have the proper exegesis are not considered proper sermons. Unfortunately, those privileged locations (past, story, and mirror) also identify the enemy, the excluded, the not-chosen, the Canaanites. The missions, whether Spanish or American,

³¹ See Joel Baden's work noted earlier.

³² From Daniel B. Schirmer and Stephen Rosskamm Shalom, eds., *The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship, and Resistance* (Boston: South End Press, 1987), p. 12.

Roman Catholic or Protestant, were designed to civilize the native “Canaanites.”³³

Mindanao was constructed as “The Land of Promise” echoing “The Promised Land” because “Israel” (the Colonizers) as God’s Chosen People was ordained to wipe out the “Canaanites” (the Colonized) in the land. And wipe out the Canaanites they did. This was tragically true in the Americas, in Africa, in many parts of Asia, and other occupied territories (including Palestine today).³⁴

The linchpin of the imperial “software” is monotheism. More specifically, the male, white, Christian God of Western imperialism. We were introduced early to this God with the capital “G” who looked a lot like Santa Claus with a frown, and his equally male, white, blue-eyed “Christian” representative, Jesus Christ, in Sunday School. This 500-year-old “software” continues to dominate our liturgies, our theologies, our hermeneutics, our pedagogy, our life as churches in the Philippines. This 500-year-old “software” continues to define “God,” “truth,” “right,” and most everything of value for most of us.

To this day, when people say “the Bible says” it usually means monotheistic, monologic, and monolithic affirmations which the Bible does not really say. The Bible, since it is a library from Antiquity, is polytheistic, dialogical, and diverse. Maybe it is time we stop using the Bible and, actually, start reading it!

THE HOUSE OF EL

³³ The work of Renato Constantino, Reynaldo Ileto, and Ambeth Ocampo are required reading on this particular topic.

³⁴ Refer to Dube’s, Donaldson’s, Raheb’s, and Warrior’s works cited earlier.

“When the Most High [Elyon] gave to the nations their inheritance,
when he separated humankind,
he fixed the bounds of the peoples
according to the number of the gods [sons of Elohim].
For the LORD’S [YAHWEH] portion is his people,
Jacob his allotted heritage.”Deuternomy 32: 8-9³⁵

When Ian was around 4 or 5 he started doing his own Bible verses. Ian’s collection was borrowed by my father-in-law when he was pastor at the Church Among the Palms. Unfortunately, the collection has been misplaced. One of Ian’s verses went, “God sent the flood to wash away bad people so that the bad people can go to heaven where God will teach them how to be good.”

I want to believe that Ian got that from me. Coming up with apocryphal verses. My father said, when I was about the same age, I had my own version of Genesis 1: 1. In the beginning, God and Mama Mary created the heavens and the earth.

We are animists. Like the Ancient Canaanites, the Ancient Israelites, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Incas, the Aztecs, the Native American Nations, the Igorots, the Lumads, and other IPs, and everyone who believes that the world breathes. Animism is a term coined in 1871 by British anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor. He used it to describe belief among the earliest peoples and communities that all things, both living and inanimate, are inhabited by breath or spirit (orruach, pneuma, or anima).³⁶

This is why we talk to our dearly departed; to flowers and plants; to cats and dogs; to trees and rocks; to rivers and oceans; and to Mother Earth. This is also why we say "tabi, tabi po" to respectfully request passage when we explore shared places and sacred spaces.

³⁵ From the New Revised Standard Version. Words in brackets are the actual Hebrew words used.

³⁶ Allan Muhl, 2.

We are also polytheists. Like the Ancient Canaanites, the Ancient Israelites, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Incas, the Aztecs, the Native American Nations, the Igorots, the Lumads, and other IPs, and everyone who believed that the gods and ancestors were family.³⁷ This is why the gods of the Egyptians were Egyptian. And the gods of the Israelites were Israelite (who rest on the Sabbath and who forbid shellfish but not slavery).

This is why we love to talk about Greek gods and goddesses; why we pray to Bathala, to Kabunian, to Mebuyan, and to Lakapati; why we affirm Sophia, the Goddess of Wisdom; and Barbelo, the Mother-Father deity of the Gnostics. This is why we get headaches trying to explain how a male God can create everyone and everything in the midst of all the diversity and plurality we experience and celebrate every single day. How one is three and three is one. And when our rationalizations run out, we tell everyone it's a divine mystery.

Scholarship in Hebrew Bible, New Testament, allied social sciences, and archeology³⁸ in the past 50 years provide building blocks to the alternative software we badly need. Contrary to the imperial discourse that monotheism is the highest form of religion and that the Ancient Israelites “invented” it, there is no evidence in the Bible for monotheism. Polytheism? Yes. Henotheism? Yes. Monolatry? Yes. No evidence in recent archeology as well.

In other words, the Ancient Israelites and Ancient Judahites were like everybody else. Pluralists. Polytheists. Don't forget that the early Christian communities, the Marcionites, the Gnostics, and even Paul, believed in the existence of other gods.

³⁷ Paula Fredriksen, *Paul: The Pagan's Apostle* (Yale University Press, 2017).

³⁸ Christine Hayes, *Introduction to the Bible* (Open Yale Course Series), Yale University Press, 2012; Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (Random House, 2004); Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story who Changed the Bible and Why* (HarperOne, 2009); Israel Finkelstein, *The Bible Unearthed: Archeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Sacred Texts* (Free Press, 2002); and Elliot Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible* (Simon and Schuster, 2019).

Moreover, those foundational myths that we have privileged for millennia as proof of “God’s action in human history” are exactly that: foundational myths of particular tribes and peoples. They are not historical events. The Patriarchs. Moses. The Exodus. The Conquest of Canaan. The United Kingdom of David and Solomon. All these are myths. Like the creation and flood myths of other ancient peoples and civilizations. Like the resurrection myths of Early Christianity.

Studies of the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age have shown that the Ancient Israelites were descendants of the Ancient Canaanites. They are not the “Israelites” and the “Canaanites” who are narrative characters in the biblical text. What does this mean for us? We need to realize that the Bible is literature. Pluri-form. Multi-vocal. The Bible is fiction. It is not history. It is an archeological tel.

Finally, and we all know this already. The suffix “im” in Hebrew makes a singular noun into a plural one. Cherubim. Seraphim. Nevi’im. Ketuvim. Genesis 1: 1 should read, “In the beginning, the gods (elohim) created the heavens and the earth.” Thus, the subsequent verses where the gods say, “let us” and “one of us” make sense (1:26, 3:22).

“El” is the god in the Priestly and Elohist traditions. “Yahweh” is the god in the Yahwist and Deuteronomistic traditions. The Moses and Elijah traditions show us the later, post-exilic conflation of these two divinities. Elijah has been traditionally translated as “God is Yahweh.” It is actually, “El is Yahweh.” In Deuteronomy 32: 8-9, Yahweh is one of El’s 70 children.³⁹ In Exodus 6: 2-3, Yahweh tells Moses that he appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El.

³⁹ 33 From the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ugaritic texts.

Students of the Bible who can read Hebrew can discover right away how monotheistic translators and interpreters have dealt with the polytheistic texts:

1. El Shaddai. Literally, "El, the one of the mountain" but the common English translation is "God Almighty." In Canaanite myth, El is said to live on a mountain. El Shaddai occurs in Gen 17:1,28:3,35:11,43:14,48:3,49:25; Ex 6:3.
2. El Elyon. Literally, "El, most high" but translated as "God most High." Mentioned only in Gen 14:18-22 and Ps 78:35, but Elyon alone occurs frequently.
3. El Olam. "The Everlasting El" but translated as "The Everlasting God." Gen 21:33. This title can be compared to the Ugaritic titles for El as "El, the Eternal One."
4. El Ro'i. "El who sees" translated as "A God of Seeing." Gen 16:13.
5. El Bethel. "El, of the House of El" translated as "The God of the House of God" Gen 31:13, 35:7.
6. El, the god of: Abraham/Isaac/Israel or Jacob/my father Abraham, etc. Gen 26:24,28:13,32:9, 33:20,43:23,46:1,3; Ex 3:15. as noted earlier.
7. Yahweh as "Baal" Although identified explicitly as El (e.g., in Ex 6:3), Yahweh also has a number of traits in common with Baal. Like Baal he is called "rider on the clouds" (Ps 68:4) and there are allusions to a battle with sea/river in Ex 15, Ps 114 and Isa 51:9-11. Thus, Yahweh is a composite of features of El and Baal. This new deity required a new name and it was fitting that the new God be introduced at the time of the Exodus, which sees the formation of a new people about to make the transition from the semi-nomadic tentdwelling existence of the patriarchs (whose God El also dwelled in a tent) to the settled urban way of life in Canaan (the Canaanite Baal lived in a house).⁴⁰

El was the head of the Ancient Canaanite pantheon. One of the descendants of the Canaanites, after the collapse of the Bronze Age, worshipped El. And they were called ISRAEL. Meaning, El rules. And El always ruled with Asherah.

⁴⁰Christine Hayes, *Introduction to the Bible* (see earlier citation) for this detailed list.

In 1967, Raphael Patai was the first historian to mention that the ancient Israelites worshiped both Yahweh and Asherah. The theory has gained new prominence due primarily to the research of Francesca Stavrakopoulou, who started her work at Oxford and is now a senior lecturer in the department of Theology and Religion at the University of Exeter.⁴¹

Archeological work in the Levant led by Israel Finkelstein (explored in his 2001 book, *The Bible Unearthed*) support the work of Patai and Stavrakopoulou: Yahweh and Asherah were worshipped as a pair. The Temple in Tel Arad, West of the Dead Sea, discovered by Yohanan Aharoni in 1962, has altars for Yahweh and Asherah in the Holy of Holies. Moreover, several thousand figurines of Asherah have been found in Israelite and Judahite homes. Gravesites include engraved prayers dedicated to the divine pair. There are, of course, 40 references to Asherah in the Hebrew Bible! One of these is in 1 Kings 18: 18-19 where Elijah faces 450 prophets of Baal. Most of us know this story. But we have been taught not to see the part where it reads... “400 prophets of Asherah.”

I was onto something when I was five.

The Bible has been used as a sword for centuries. Maybe it is time we realize that it is a ploughshare from antiquity: not a spear but a pruning hook, life giving instead of death dealing.

⁴¹God's Wife Edited Out of the Bible—Almost by Jennifer Viegas at <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna42147912>, accessed 26 May 2023.





Salakot:

*Pedagohiya ng Edukasyong Kristyana sa
Pananampalatayang Pumipiglas*

Hazel Joyce Salatan

Hazel Joyce Salatan

Sa kasaysayan, sa mahabang panahon ng pananakop ay naging bihag ang mga Pilipino ng kaisipang kolonyal, herarkikal at patriyarkal. Kung magbabalik-tanaw, marami ang handang lumikha ng kasaysayang magtatakda ng ating kalayaan. Marami ang nag-alay ng buhay mula sa iba't-ibang larangan upang tayo ay lumaya sa ating pagkakabihag. Ngunit hanggang sa kasalukuyan, hindi pa rin tayo malaya. Nangingibabaw pa din ang mga kaisapang dumungis sa ating paniniwala, nagbahid ng dugo sa ating kultura, at lumupig sa ating tradisyon.

Hindi nasayang ang mga dugo, pawis at buhay na naibuwis. May mga nagpapatuloy na kumilos tungo sa tunay na paglaya na lapat sa tunay na kalagayan ng mga Pilipino. Hindi sila nasusulat sa mga akademikong aklat, hindi nailalathala sa mga pangunahing pahayagan, o bidang aktor sa mga palabas. Hindi sila ang kinikilala bilang mga tuwirang mapagkukunan ng mga bagong kaisipan, hindi sila mga tanyag na manunulat ng teolohiya at hindi sila ang otoridad pagdating sa mensahe ng bibliya. Ang kwento nila ang magpapatunay na ang mga parangal at ang entablado ay hindi batayan ng legasiyang mag-iwan ng aral sa magpapatuloy ng laban.

Ang mga akademikong institusyon, maging ang simbahan ay kinikilala bilang mga tagapagtaguyod ng malaya at malikhaing pag-iisip. Sa karanasan, sila ang may paraan ng pagpukaw sa mga bagong ideya at kamalayan. Sa kasanayan, sila ang may pormal na pag-aaral upang magturo nang pag-unlad sa pag-iisip at kakayahan. Sa kasaysayan, sila ang may potensyal na maghubog ng katauhan. Kalakip nito, ang sistema ng edukasyon at ang simbahan na ating kinamulatan ay sangkap sa iba't-ibang uri ng pang-aapi, pansasamantala, at kadena ng ating pagkabihag. Sa layuning makawala sa pagkakabihag na ito, maglalatatag ng sining nang pagtuturo na makakapagpahubog ng katauhan at kaisipan na nakabatay sa karanasan at karunungan ng masa.

Ang pangunahing ginamit na armas sa ating pagkakabihag ay ang kristyanismo. Sa pamamagitan ng edukasyon bilang paraan ng pagpapalaganap nito ay napaigiting pa ang ating pagkakabihag. Kaya naman, hanggang ngayon marami pa rin ang mga simbahan na nakasandig sa edukasyong kristyana limang-daang taon na ang nakakaraan. Pinanatili nito ang kaisapang kolonyal, hererakikal at patriyarkal. Sa kabilang banda, marami ang sumubok na magbigay ng alternatibong sining ng pagtuturo na kontekstwal at mapagpalaya. Susing tama sa hulma upang makalaya sa pagkakabihag ang ating likhain.

Ang salakot ay simbolo ng paglaya at pagpapalaya. Mukha ito ng kontekstong lapat sa ating mga Pilipino. Naka-ugnay ito sa mga magsasaka at mangingisdang nagpapagal upang walang sikmurang kumakalam. Ang lipunang hindi gutom, sapat ang kahandaan upang mag-aral. Bilang alternatibo sa de-kaon na sining ng pagtuturo, ang balangkas sa pagtataguyod ng edukasyong kristyana na nakabatay sa pamumuhay ng mga magsasaka ang aking iminumungkahi.

Ang mga naka-salakot na mga magsasaka ng Lupang Ramos ang nagmulat sa maraming kabataan, taong simbahan at iba't-ibang sektor. Araw-araw isinasabuhay ng mga magsasaka ng Lupang Ramos ang uri ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas.

Araw-araw matapang nilang hinaharap ang magkakaibang uri ng banta sa buhay at kabuhayan. Ang pananakot ay bunsod ng kanilang paninindigan at prinsipyo na ipagtanggol ang lupang kanilang binubungkal at pinagyayaman upang makarating sa bawat hapag ng pamilya ang kanilang mga ani. Ito ay larawan ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas. Tumataya, pumipiglas sa ngalan ng kalayaan.

Ang abstrak na konsepto ng pagmamahalan ay konkretong nararamdaman sa pamayanan ng mga magsasaka ng Lupang Ramos. Sa kabila ng kanilang mga pangamba, sandalan nila ang bawat isa. Walang anumang problema ang hinaharap ng mag-isa, walang nakakaramdam sa dilim ng nag-iisa, at walang humaharap para ipaglaban ang lupa nang walang kasama. Ito ay mukha ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas, umiibig sa ngalan ng pagkakaisa.

Ang pagtutuwid sa kamalian at ang paghahanda para sa pagpapanibagong-hubog ay matingkad na karakter ng mga magsasaka ng Lupang Ramos. Sa pamamagitan ng pagpuna sa sarili at sa kapwa, masinop na naaayos ang mga tunggalian at hindi pagkakaunawaan. Hindi pinapalagpas ang anumang di-makatarungang gawi bagkus kolektibo itong hinaharap ng buong komunidad. Ito ay hugis ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas, nagpupuna at nagtutuwid sa ngalan ng katarungan.

Ang mag-alay ng buhay ang pangunahing paraan ng mga magsasaka ng Lupang Ramos upang makamit ang kapayapaan. Sa kabila ng mga banta sa buhay, namumutawi pa din sa kanilang mga salita at nakikita sa kanilang gawa ang mithiing makamit ang kapayapaan. Ginagawa nila ito hindi lamang para sa kanilang pamayanan kundi maging sa buong bayan. Ito ay ang disenyo ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas, pag-aalay ng buhay sa ngalan ng kapayapaan.

Hindi naman kristyanismo ang pamantayan kaya kumikilos sa ngalan ng kalayaan, pagkakaisa, katarungan at kapayaan ang mga magsasaka ng Lupang Ramos. Ngunit ang mga konseptong ito ng kristyanismo ay ang isinasabuhay sa kanilang pamayanan. Ito ang paraan ng kanilang paghuhubog sa mga batang aani ng bunga ng mga pagod, pawis at dugo na kanilang.

Ako ay saksi sa pagtataguyod at pagsusumikap na makamit nila ang pamayanang malaya mula sa anumang banta, mapanatili ang pagkakaisa sa kabila ng madaming kontradiksyon at tunggalian, sikaping mangibabaw ang pagiging matuwid at isulong ang kapayapaang nakabatay sa katarungan. Kumukumpas ito ng pagtatakda ng kasaysayan na nakabatay sa interes ng pinagsasamantalahan at inaapi. Iwinawaksi ang anumang porma ng diskriminasyon at opresyon. Binabasag nito ang mapang-abuso at mapanlinlang na paraan ng pagtuturo. Ang ganitong paraan ng paghuhubog ng kaisipan at katauhan ay taliwas sa mandato ng mga nasa poder o naghaharing-uri.

Sa patuloy na pakikipag-ugnayan sa kanilang komunidad nasaksihan din ang di-pangkaraniwang porma ng panamabahan. Ang pagbubulay ng salita sa bibliya ay mula sa mga magsasaka kung saan ang karanasan nila sa buhay, pagsasaka, at pakikibaka ang mensahe ng pag-asa. Matingkad din ang kulturang kwentuhan sa kanilang pamayanan. Ang pagbibigay ng kwento ang pinakasubok na paraan upang magturo sa mga bata at kabataan. Sa pamamagitan ng paulit-ulit na pagbabahagi sa kwento ng kanilang kasaysayan sa mga bata ay napapanatili ang alab sa puso nang patuloy na pakikibaka sa lupa gayundin naman ang kulturang nahubog sa isang kolektibong pamumuhay.

Ang mga kwentong ito ang dahilan ng maagang pagkamulat ng mga bata sa tunay na kalagayan ng lipunan at ang kanilang katayuan bilang mga anak ng magsasaka. Sa pamamagitan din ng mga kwento kung saan malaking bahagi ang pagpapasya ay nalilintang din ang mga kabataan sa kasanayang obhektibong magpasya para sa sarili at sa komunidad. Binibigyan din ng pansin na sa paraan ng pagtuturo sa pamamagitan ng kwento ay natutunan ng mga bata at kabataan ang orihinal na kulturang Pilipino. Nakatutuklas ito ng maraming pananaw at paninidigan na angkop sa kanilang at sa kasalukuyang kalagayan ng bayan. Nagsisilbi itong gabay sa paghubog ng buong katauhan. Ang bawat kwento din ay nagbibigay buhay sa mga nagpasyang magbuwis ng buhay para sa lupa.

Sa obserbasyon, sa pamamagitan ng kwento ay naituro ng mga magulang ang mga katangian na pagiging mapagmalasakit at mapagmahal sa kapwa, pagtindig sa tama at makatarungan, pagiging malikhain, matapang na pagharap sa suliranin at pagpapahalaga sa lupang sakahan.

Di-pangkaraniwan ang mga nakasalakot. Naghuhubog sila ng kamalayan, kaisipan at buong pagkatao ng isang indibidwal maging nang buong komunidad. Ganito ang balangkas ng edukasyong kristyana na ang aking iminumungkahi. Edukasyong kristyanang de-kolonyal, nakasalig sa wikang Filipino o ng wikang gamit ng pamayanan, mapagpalaya sa paggamit ng bibliya at lubog sa pakikipagkapwa.

Walang isang sining nang pagtuturo o pedagohiya ang angkop sa lahat ng komunidad. Wala ring permanenteng pedagohiya ang nalikha sa partikular na komunidad. Lagi itong magbabago, mapapalitan at tuluyang mawawala. Sa pagsisikap laging makalikha ng bago at angkop na pedagohiya na makakatugon sa pangangailangan ng komunidad at nakakasunod sa nagbabagong panahon. Gayunpaman, mananatiling lilikha ang pamayanan ng magsasaka ng isang pedagohiyang mapagpalaya at nagpapalaya.

Ang isa sa maraming susi upang maitaguyod ang edukasyong kristyana tungo sa isang pananampalatayang pumipiglas ay ang buhay na kwento ng pamumuhay at pakikibabaka ng mga naka-salakot - ang mga magsasaka.





*Dancing with the Movement,
Defining our Own Moves:*

*Movement and Development of
Pastoral Care through the 500
Years of Christianity in the Philippines*

Carmel Burila Villar

Movement and Development of Pastoral Care through the 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines



Carmel Burila Villar

Introduction

What has become of the discipline and scholarship of Pastoral Care and Counseling since it has reached the shores of the Philippines 500 years ago? This is the intent of this paper: to trace the movement and development of pastoral care and get a clearer picture of expression of pastoral care in our present time. This paper does not in any way pretend to project what the future holds for pastoral care in the Philippines, but if perchance, this paper could set foot on that future.

To say that the care and counseling is the exclusive domain of Christianity is a great misrepresentation and an insult to the inherent and innate caring and welcoming nature of the Filipinos.

Antonio Pigafetta provided an eyewitness account in 1521 of *Babaylan* rituals and documented the continued and widespread practice of rituals in the Visayas that evolved into a movement called *babaylanes*.¹

Ma. Teresa G. Tuason, et. Al., in their work, *Counseling in the Philippines: Past, Present, and Future* describes the

¹ Dr. Ana P Labrador. *Babaylan in Philippine Communities: liminality, myth and inspiration* in Dr, Victoria N. Scott, Ed., *Animism in the Arts of Southeast Asia*. Thailand: SEAMEO SPAFA, 2020, p40.

Pre-colonial Philippines was much like neighboring Indonesia and Malaysia, and counseling still shows vestiges of indigenous help-seeking through (a) superstitions; (b) reliance on elders, faith healers, and fortune tellers; and (c) belief in the supernatural.²

The babaylan that Pigafetta documented were:

The word babaylan is a Visayan term, originating from babai (woman) and the classical Malay word belian/balian or waylan of Java, Bali, Borneo, and Kalmahera which means 'spirit medium'. In most cultures, they are known as shamans; the ancient warrior-priest/priestess class who presided over the religious rites, serving as mediators between gods and men.

They were valued so much, exalted, and treated with deference by the native people, even feared. Their word was received with great respect and their capabilities were held with awe.

Female datu existed as well, and some remained in power because of the belief that they can harm enemies by magical means. The babaylan equally matched the tribal chief in this aspect, that they are sometimes considered rivals. But in most cases, they aided the datu in bringing down an enemy.

The babaylan function as healers, seers, clairvoyants, exorcists, artists, teachers, agriculturists, philosophers, consultants, miracle workers, keepers of culture and tradition, or a combination of any of those rolled into one. Thus, the babaylan insures the institutionalization of traditional roles resulting in the stability and endurance of the social structures.³

The Babaylan and Indigenous Rites of Care and

Healing

Babaylanes were respected individuals—men or women—who served as community healers.⁴ The

Center for Babaylan Studies describes a

babaylans as “someone who has the ability to



Figure 1. Picture depicts the annual celebration of Babaylan in Bago City, Negros Occidental. It represents the rituals performed by the Babaylan for marriage, baptism, healing, and harvest. Babaylan Festival (Rituals) (vigattintourism.com).

² Ma. Teresa G. Tuason, Karina Therese Galang Fernandez, Maria Autrora D.P. Catipon, Louise Trivino-Dey, and Ma. Lourdes Arellano-Carandang. Journal of Counseling & Development. July 2012. Volume 90. ([PDF Counseling in the Philippines: Past, Present, and Future \(researchgate.net\)](#)) Accessed August 22, 2023 5:10pm.

³ Ian Spike, [Babaylan: The Ancient Witches of Tribal Philippines - HubPages](#), April 11, 2023.

⁴ Jessica Pag-Iwayan. [The rise of Babaylans: Inside a Philippine Witch Coven \(mb.com.ph\)](#) November 2, 2020 06:00PM

mediate with the spirit world, has her own spirit guides, and is given gifts of healing, foretelling, and insight. She may also have knowledge of healing therapies such as hilot, arbularyo. She is a ritualist, a chanter, diviner. She has the gift of traveling to the spirit world or non-ordinary states of reality in order to mediate with the spirits.”⁵ Babaylan Adlaw⁶ includes as expected tasks of Babaylan to intermediate between humans and deities, or spirits and acting as bridge between the physical world and spirit world. The Babaylan maybe asked to call on the rain to ensure good harvest to save the community from draught and starvation.⁷

Then the Spaniards came. Christianity was introduced. The Babaylans and their followers were pushed and driven to hiding in the mountains. Those caught were punished, their idols that represented their deities were burned.⁸ The renowned painter, Fernando Amorsolo, painted the “Burning of Idols” depicting the burning of idols used by Babaylan in their work. There were babaylans who resorted to revolution, Papa Isio of Panay and Tamblot of Bohol opposing the conversion of their community to Christianity. Fearing the Bathala would be replaced by the Christian God, Tamblot led what is known as the Tamblot Uprising (1621-1622).⁹

Another significant figure who revolted against the annihilation of babaylans was Datu Banca of Carigara, Leyte. He was initially baptized a Catholic in his youth but later abandoned his faith. Through the influence of a native babaylan, Pagali, he built a temple for

⁵ [What is Babaylan? | Babaylan Studies \(centerforbabaylanstudies.org\)](https://centerforbabaylanstudies.org/) August 24, 2023 5:20PM.

⁶ [Babaylan: Definition, Short History & Frequently Asked Questions - Babaylan Adlaw | Philippines](#) August 24, 2023 5:20PM

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

the local Diwata and convince other towns to rise to revolt. This revolt is known as the Bankaw Revolt, 1621-1622¹⁰ and is considered a religious revolt inspired by the Tamblot revolt in Bohol.

Other babaylans may not have resorted to war, but they did not give up without a fight. Instead of waging war, the women babaylan used “Catholic images and rituals as their own *anitos or diwatas*.”¹¹ The rites and prayers of the babaylans and the elders were replaced by Christian prayers, their epics by the Christian Bible and Latin chants, and their idols by statues of Mary, Christ and the saints. With the introduction of Christianity, even names of sacred mountains where the spirits are believed to reside and rituals were and still are performed were replaced and named after Virgin Mary, i.e., *Mariang Makiling* in Laguna, *Maria Cacao* in Cebu and *Mariang Sinukuan* in Pampanga.¹² If there are indigenous chants and rituals that continue up to this modern era, they are influenced by Christianity (which others call Folk Christianity), which is called, *oracion*.

The people would go to the babaylan for treatment of diseases, so the Spaniards, in order to get clients for their modern medicine, attached evil to the babaylan.

— Anthony Lim, Historian, Professor¹³

¹⁰ Rolando O Borrinaga, [Bankaw's legacy \(oocities.org\)](http://oocities.org) published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, May 24, 2003. Borrinaga features the oral tradition of the revolt which is featured in the folk ritual known as *turugpo*. In this oral tradition, Bankaw was willing to offer peace to Legazpi's expedition but was betrayed by the Spaniards. The name Leyte was a “corrupted” version of “Ila-Iti,” an honor accorded by naming the place after Bankaw. “Ila Iti” means “belonging to Iti” Iti (or Good Boy” was the baptismal name of Bankaw.

¹¹ Mario Alvaro Limos. The Fall of the Babaylan. [The History of Babaylan \(esquiremag.ph\)](http://esquiremag.ph) August 24, 2023 6:23PM.

¹² Labrador, p 50

¹³ Ian Spike, [Babaylan: The Ancient Witches of Tribal Philippines - HubPages](http://HubPages), April 11, 2023.

This paper is not in any way an attempt to trace the history and place of the babaylan in the country. By featuring the history of babaylan, this paper shows that care has been inherent among the Filipinos even before Christianity reached the shore of the Philippines, and that, as Lartey says, “Care is very often enshrined in the training and practice of the religious functionaries who have leadership and oversight of devotees. The expectation with which people went to them was that the traditional healer would offer words and efficacious rituals, grounded in their worldview, culture and belief structure, that would be effective in bringing about relief or else explanations and meaning to their trauma.”¹⁴

The practice and discipline of the *cure of the soul* now has the title, pastoral care.

Tracing the movement

Tracking the Different Definitions of Pastoral Care.

We begin our trace of the development of pastoral care on how it is defined and understood.

The best way to begin tracing pastoral care is by its definition. And the best place to start is with the Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling. The *Dictionary* defines pastoral care as “Pastoral Care derives from the biblical image of shepherd and refers to the solicitous concern expressed within the religious community for persons in trouble or distress.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Emmanuel Y. Lartey, et.al., In *Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 2nd Edition. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003, p4.

¹⁵ W.E. Oates, “Pastoral Care (Contemporary Methods, Perspectives, and Issues) in *Dictionary*, p 832-836.

There are three significant concepts in this definition worth noting: the term pastoral as derived from the biblical image of shepherd¹⁶ providing care to; the persons in trouble or distress, and that the care is done within the religious community. The definition has set the limits of pastoral care: care is provided by pastors to people in trouble or distress within the religious community.

This definition has defined, not surprisingly, the practice of pastoral care of even contemporary ministers, and the understanding of the role of the ministers by the laity and the common people. No wonder, parishioners would expect (close to demand) that pastors are the ones to do pastoral care. Take for example, when a friend or a neighbor is sick, the parishioner would call on the pastor to pray for the sick, it is as if, only the pastors can pray!

The earliest published definition of pastoral care is that of Clebsch and Jaekle whose definition was first put to print in 1964: "Pastoral Care consists of helping acts done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons, whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns."¹⁷ This definition is significant because the manner by which pastoral care is conducted was included: healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling. Still, the recipients of care are those who are troubled. Other implications of this definition are:

1. Pastoral care is identified with helping acts. It therefore has a pragmatic focus and a somewhat messianic tone.
2. Pastoral care is the preserve of 'representative Christian persons.' These are not, the authors argue, to be identified with ordained clergy persons. Rather

¹⁶ This paper will discuss on the image of shepherd in pastoral care separately.

¹⁷ W.A. Clebsch and C.R. Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*. New York: Harper, 1964, 1967, p4.

- these are persons who represent Christian faith in that they bring to bear upon problems, the insights and thinking of the Christian tradition.
3. Pastoral care has to do with 'troubled persons.' This problem-centered focus, with the implied problem-solving approach, has affinities with the types of therapies, educational philosophies and management techniques.
 4. The context of the troubles focused on in pastoral care is 'ultimate meanings and concerns.'¹⁸

In 1966, Howard Clinebell offered a definition of pastoral care:

Pastoral Care and Counseling involve the utilization by persons in ministry of one-to-one or small group relationships to enable healing empowerment and growth to take place within individuals and their relationships. Pastoral Care is the broad, inclusive ministry of mutual healing and growth within a congregation and its community, through the life cycle.¹⁹

Clinebell's shift of care-giver and care-receiver is noticeable. From Clebsch and Jaekle's centrality of care giving resting on the pastor, Clinebell offers mutual, inclusive, and group or community's participation in the ministry of care. And the care covers through life cycle.

In 1985, Campbell came up with a simple, direct, and easily understood definition:

Pastoral care is, in essence, surprisingly simple. It as one fundamental aim: to help people to know love, both as something to be received and as something to give.²⁰

In its simplicity, pastoral care appears to be shallow and encompassing. Isn't it the aim of the entire pastoral ministry to make known to mankind God's love for all? Making

¹⁸ Lartey, p 21-22.

¹⁹ H. Clinebell. *Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing & Growth*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984, p25-26.

²⁰ Alastair V. Campbell, *Paid to Care?*, SPCK 1985, p1 in Pattison's *A Critique of Pastoral Care 3rd Edition*, Great Britain: SCM Press, 2000, p 16.

known God's love is facilitated through, and not limited to, Christian Education and Nurture, Worship, Christian Witness and Service, etc. But pastoral care is set in the context of the people's current situation and in the context of need.

On the ground, pastors perform pastoral care to parishioners in need or in crisis, when a member is sick, grieving, or going through crisis in life. That is where pastoral care is evident. And that is the context of helping people realize love, to use Campbell's definition. Pastoral care is making people know that they are not alone in their life's journey and that the church cares for them.

Meanwhile, Stephen Pattison in *"What is Pastoral Care Anyway?"*²¹ covered various definition of pastoral care to include:

The attempt to bring theology or the 'good news, to bear in a relationship where one is known as a member of the priesthood of all believers and seeks to care in a manner that is sensitive to the other person or persons and faithful to the theological commitments which have brought them together.²²

The term "pastoral" in the pastoral care gives a connotation that only pastors can give pastoral care. Pastors who have undergone formal theological education and ministerial formation. There is a religiousness in the function. This is how Rodney Hunter describes pastoral care:

"theologically informed ministry" ... grounded in particular theological traditions, its goals are guided by the theological orientations of practitioners who are described as "representative religious persons" – not merely ordained persons –

²¹ Stephen Pattison, *A Critique of Pastoral Care 3rd Edition*, Great Britain: SCM Press, 2000.

²² William V. Arnold, *Introduction to Pastoral Care*, Philadelphia: Westminster 1982, p 10 in Stephen Pattison, *A Critique of Pastoral Care 3rd Edition*, Great Britain: SCM Press, 2000., p 5

and communities of faith whose goals are nurture and support for persons and their relationship and “community relationships.”²³

There are two significant concepts in this definition that are worth emphasizing: the task of pastoral care is not limited to ordained ministers but to the community of faith, and that the goal of pastoral care is not only to make people realize love, but to nurture and support “community relationships.” The task of pastoral care is now decentralized from the pastor and is given to the community. There is a temptation to put a category of “faith” into the community, or as defined by the *Dictionary*, religious community. It is the faith (religious) community providing pastoral care tempered by their faith (religious) community’s theological orientation and practice.

But if faith is attached as description to the community, it gives a connotation that pastoral care is given exclusively to members of the faith (religious) community, which means, only those who belong to the same religious group. But this is very exclusive way of looking at pastoral care. The greater challenge is when pastoral care is needed and extended outside of the faith community.

One’s understanding of what pastoral care is dictates one’s practice. If the theological orientation of one’s religious organization dictates that God created only male and female, then that religious organization will not accept LGBTQ people into its community and will thus not extend care towards LGBTQ people. And if one’s church’s theological

²³ Nancy J. Ramsay (Ed.), *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004, p 3.

orientation towards suicide as sin, then the church will refuse funeral service to someone who died of suicide.

Lately, the term pastoral in pastoral care is being challenged. In a religiously plural context, Doebling suggests the use of *theological care*, while Anderson endorses the use of *soul care*. While, the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education replaced pastoral care with *spiritual care*.²⁴

The term “care,” as defined by the *Dictionary*, refers to “any pastoral act motivated by a sincere devotion to the well-being of the other(s).”²⁵ For Clebsch and Jaekle, care includes “healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling.”²⁶

In the Philippines, the term pastoral care is still being commonly and widely used. But among Filipino pastors, pastoral care includes, but are not limited to, visitations in homes, hospitals, prisons, feeding the hungry, and ministering to the elderly as deduced from the local church’s programs and activities.

For Pastor Baguhin, pastoral care also means extending ministerial functions to people rejected by their faith community. He told an incidence when he was called to administer final funeral rite to a person who died from an encounter with the police authorities. The deceased was known in their community to be criminal. He was not given final rites in his church because of his criminal status. His family approached Pastor Baguhin to perform the final funeral rite. Because the church to which Pastor Baguhin serves is a

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ I.O. Mills, in *Dictionary*, p 836 -837

²⁶ Ibid, p4

welcoming church, the church agreed to proving the funeral rites to the deceased. Eventually, the family of the deceased joined the church. Pastor Baguhin added this comment to his story, “It really depends on the conviction of the pastor. The pastor can convince the church to provide services where needed.”

Based on this account, the participation of the community of faith into pastoral care is essential and significant. Even if Pastor Baguihin is convinced that the final funeral rite should be given to the deceased, but if the community does not support, would care be complete? Would care be significant to those who needed care, particularly, to the family of the deceased?

Pastor Jazz²⁷ has been working with the youth of the church to which she was assigned as youth pastor. One of the issues that her community is facing is the rising incidence of teen-age pregnancy. Despite her efforts to raise awareness on teen-age pregnancy, the church remains silent. Pastor Jazz can’t even provide pastoral care to a pregnant youth because the family had the pregnant youth in hiding.

These are just two stories of pastoral care in Philippine church setting. There are two things worth noting in these two stories. First, that pastoral care is initiated by the pastor and second, the importance of the participation of the faith community. With the first story, pastoral care was effected and effective because of the participation of the faith community. Even if the pastor initiates pastoral care, without the support and engagement of the faith community, pastoral care cannot be effected.

²⁷ Real case, but pastor’s name is changed.

Different definition, different understanding, and different ways of expressing pastoral care. Lartey, after dealing with different definitions of pastoral care and identity of the pastor as carer, provides five essential elements of pastoral care. According to him, pastoral care should encompass

- a declaration of the nature of activity,
- a discussion of agency that explores who are involved or engaged in it,
- an indication of how it is done including pointing to resource and their employment
- identifying the goals aimed at, and
- setting forth of motive – why people do it.²⁸

Fast forward from a male dominated definition, in 1999 Kathleen Billman offers a more inclusive definition of pastoral care: “Pastoral care is a communal art bringing together laity and clergy to offer ministries of care to one another and to those outside the boundaries of their congregation.”

This definition revolutionizes pastoral care when boundaries are broken and the carer includes both the laity and the clergy, and that the clergy can and may receive care from the laity. This is liberating. Hope more pastors and congregation will subscribe to this definition

Changing Image of Pastoral Care

From the onset, the *Dictionary* has already defined the image of pastoral care to that of a shepherd. Up to this day, the image of pastoral care and the pastoral ministry is the

²⁸Emmanuel Lartey, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 2nd Edition, London: Jessical Kingsley Publishers, 2003, 25-26.

shepherd; following Jesus, the great and good shepherd. That is also the reason why pastors are called as such.

Two images of shepherd were offered by Seward Hiltner, *The Solicitous Shepherd*, one who is willing to offer help... even going out of his/her way

- To find that one lost sheep or protect the flock from robbers (John)
- To lead the flock to green pasture and still waters, who protects the flocks even in the valley of death, and prepare a feast (Psalm 23)
- To gather the scattered sheeps, feed them, and bandage their wounds.²⁹

The other image of shepherd is, *The Courageous Shepherd*, offered by Alastair V. Campbell.

This shepherd is aware of the danger of tending sheeps referencing to David's words before

King Saul, *"Your Majesty," David said, "I take care of my father's sheep. Any time a lion or bear carries off a lamb, I go after it, attack it, and rescue the lamb. And if the lion or bear turns on me, I grab it by the throat and beat it to death..."* (1 Samuel 17: 34-37 TEV) and

finding the lost sheep as portrayed in the Parable of the Lost Sheep. The shepherd is aware of the danger lurking in the dark from vicious animals or thieves and robbers, and yet, they are undaunted. If there is any image that would describe Filipino pastors (of any gender), this image fits them to the T.

But Billman mentions a critique on this image as a model of pastoral care: "It suggests strength, courage, and leadership - all essential qualities for pastoral carers. But it does not suggest a common vulnerability or a mutual struggle to survive and flourish in a tumultuous

²⁹ For detailed description of the images of pastoral care, please read Dykstra, Robert C., Jr. Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings. Missouri: Chalice Press, 2005.

world. The shepherd is a different species type than the sheep and is somehow able to see dangers and possibilities for green pastures that the sheep cannot see.”³⁰

And so, the Wounded Healer was offered, a pastoral care that banks on ones woundedness as a resource for care and healing. Popularized by Henri Nouwen,

The wounded healer only becomes able to heal and help others (which is to simultaneously be healing and helping him/herself again and again in the form of seeming “others”), when instead of being resentful, bitter and feeling victimized by their wound, he or she recognizes their wound as a numinous event, an archetypal moment that seeks to make them participants in a divine, eternal happening.³¹

This image has become popular when ministers/pastoral carers recognize their own wounds and use the pain and suffering in their caring and healing ministry. They offer their vulnerability and identify with the suffering of the people; a great show of solidarity.

The problem with this image is that suffering is romanticized and theologized. Using the Isaiah motif, “with his stripes we are healed,” (Isa. 53.5) which was also referred in 1 Peter 2:24 as the stripes of Jesus that healed us and made us live in righteousness, pain and suffering are ascribed to be sharing with the suffering of Christ. And so, we would hear pastors saying, “your pain is a sharing in the suffering of Christ” or as many preachers are wont to say, “your suffering makes you stronger” as if God willed for people to suffer for their own good. Billman critiques, “the image may suggest a certain passivity in the pastoral role – an understanding of the cross that is focused on God’s suffering love and the call to

³⁰ Billman, p21

³¹ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. New York: Image Books Doubleday, 1972, xvi.

“suffer with” but not on another dimension of the cross, that is, God’s resounding “No to human suffering and the forces of death and destruction.”³²

Dykstra collated different images of pastoral care from classic; shepherd and wounded healer, to contemporary images that includes, Gardener, Midwife, Storyteller, etc., and the reimagining continues, with the challenge to come up with an image that is inclusive and liberating.

Growth in the functions of Pastoral Care.

The following table shows the development of the areas of concern and functions of pastoral care through the years:

Hiltner, 1958	Clebsch and Jaekle, 1964	Clinebell, 1966	Lester, 1995	Lartey, 2003
<i>healing,</i>	<i>healing,</i>	<i>healing,</i>	<i>healing,</i>	<i>healing,</i>
<i>guiding</i>	<i>sustaining,</i>	<i>guiding</i>	<i>guiding</i>	<i>guiding</i>
<i>sustaining,</i>	<i>guiding</i>	<i>sustaining,</i>	<i>sustaining,</i>	<i>sustaining,</i>
	<i>reconciling.</i>	<i>reconciling</i>	<i>reconciling.</i>	<i>reconciling.</i>
		<i>nurturing</i>		<i>Nurturing</i>
			<i>Liberating</i>	<i>Liberating</i>
				<i>Empowering</i>

Even the models of pastoral care have evolved to include empowerment and social action.

³² Billman, p21.

Significant movements in Pastoral Care

From Individualism to Communal

Nancy J. Ramsay in “A Time of Ferment and Redefinition” notes that “the most striking discovery of two new paradigms which emerged which gradually eclipsed the Clinical Pastoral Paradigm that predominated the *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling* (1990).”³³ The two paradigm that Ramsay mentions are Communal Contextual paradigm and the Intercultural Paradigm.

The **communal contextual paradigm** draws on the ecological metaphor of a web to describe the foci of pastoral care: (1) The ecclesial contexts that sustain and strengthen community practices of care; (2) the widened horizons of the field that conceive of care as including public, structural, and political dimensions of individual and relational experience.

The communal contextual paradigm includes ecclesial communities of care and the importance of cultural and political contexts shaping person’s lives. It retrieves the earlier awareness that care is a ministry of the church or faith community rather than solely a clerical responsibility. It also reclaimed the importance of social context from the influence of the social gospel on the field and the more contemporary issues posed by power, gender, race, and class.

It is worth noting that in defining the normative context of pastoral care, Patton brings back biblical and ethical use of imago *Dei* as foundational.

³³ Nancy J. Ramsay, “A Time of Ferment and Redefinition,” in *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms* edited by Nancy J. Ramsay. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.

Brita Gill-Austern in 1995 enlarged the image of web to address the mutuality of care as normative for communities of faith.

The **intercultural paradigm** also draws on an ecological theme but responds more immediately to the fact and significance of cultural, racial, and religious pluralism as a context for practices of care whether responding to individual or larger system.

A proponent of communal healing is Margaret Zipse Kornfeld. In her work “Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities,”³⁴ declares that “authentic community is the ‘medicine’ our society needs. She laments the fact that when a patient comes to the doctor for healing rarely does the doctor deals with the patient’s entire family”³⁵ – and may I add, the community to where the patient belongs. Kornfeld observes that

“the doctor usually has little direct knowledge of the patient’s lifestyle, support systems, or religious experience and values. The doctor limits his or her actions to understanding what is wrong with the patient and then, if possible, curing what is “wrong. Most counselors, too, work in private with the counselee without direct input from the counselee’s family or friends. The counselor is taught to diagnose the illness, help the counselee solve problems, and if possible, help provide a cure.”³⁶

Even if Kornfeld affirms that people can find healing in a community, she still was lead to ask, “Do all communities heal?”

³⁴ Margaret Zipse Kornfeld. *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities*. New York: Continuum, 2011.

³⁵ Kornfeld, p16

³⁶ Ibid, p 15

For Kornfeld, healing comes when the community is a real community having the following characteristics:

- a. Where members can communicate honestly and without fear.
- b. Where members are able to resolve conflicts and are characterized with
- c. Where members who are able to love themselves can love others
- d. The place between “I” and “Thou”, as Martin Buber writes, “that living community occurs when those in it know and are known as “you” rather than “it” It is a community where one is “open to God who is at the Center. They learn to know “I” through becoming “You” to others. Salvation comes in relationship.”³⁷

Healing only happens in this kind of community. Lately, this kind of community is created. Take for example the community created inside a rehabilitation center where a patient is brought for healing. The patient is confined in a community I have to say, artificially. In that created community, a patient finds healing. But what will happen if the patient returns to his/her family, to his/her faith community?

Another work that encourages the communal work of pastoral care and counseling is Kathleen D. Billman. In “Pastoral Care as an Art of Community,” declares that “pastoral care is a communal art that brings together laity and clergy to offer ministries to one another and to those outside of the boundaries of their congregations.”³⁸ She engages the midwives in the Exodus story and came up with creative tensions that pastoral carers encounter. The creative tensions are:

anxiety and possibility - “The anxieties, pressures, confusions, and disappointments that individuals experience are often mirrored in the

³⁷ Ibid, pp21 - 33

³⁸ Ibid, p 10

communal life of struggling congregations and those who try to lead them.”³⁹

oppressed and oppressor where pastoral caregivers experience both being oppressed and oppressor, privileged and marginalized. The “dual identity” as she termed this place of being in the center, should not be considered as paralyzing, but should be considered as a place of energy and action.⁴⁰

systemic sin and eschatological hope, recognizing that “sin is systemic and an ongoing condition of our lives and cannot simply be understood in terms of individual responsibility, although taking responsibility is important in the face of sin”⁴¹ and providing framework in keeping hope alive where communities could flourish.

empathy and sociopolitical analysis where pastoral caregivers are called to listen and perceive the world, share in the people’s struggles, joys and sorrow and yet facilitate examination of the roots of the problems.

After analyzing the creative tensions that caregivers encounter, Billman offers a feminist approach to pastoral care, which she calls, “*The Art of Conspiring and Collaborating*,” She concludes that pastoral care is conspiring and collaborating in the hope of helping “birth that names, symbols, and language that people give to their own experiences – and to claim the power of naming themselves.”⁴² Conspiring and collaborative care, according to Billman, “involves becoming knowledgeable about the theological and psychological issues and the ritual options that exist, and in making resources available to people and congregation.”⁴³

³⁹ Kathleen D. Billman, “Pastoral Care as an Art of Community” in *The Arts of Ministry: Feminist – Womanist Approaches* edited by Christie Cozad Neuger. London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996, p 14

⁴⁰ Ibid, p 16.

⁴¹ Ibid, p 18.

⁴² Ibid, p 30.

⁴³ Ibid.

From the North to the South, from West to East

It is without restrained claim that pastoral care came with Christianity obliterating the inherent and indigenous ways of providing care for the soul, and that pastoral care, the way it is understood and practiced comes from the West or North. What has been described above are definitions, models, functions, and images of pastoral care were all made by pastors and scholars from the North and West. How about the South and the East?

Lartey, who is an African scholar, put forth the description of an African pastoral care called, “Pastoral Care in the Black Church” proposed by Ed Wimberly in 1979 which is describes pastoral care as “the bringing to bear upon persons and families in crisis the total caring resources of the church.” (Ed Wimberly, 1979)⁴⁴ Wimberly further provides a model of pastoral care based on the experience of providing pastoral care to Black church:

the four functions of pastoral care for liberation are worship, care, nurture and witness. In spite of a focus on crisis, which seems to be the bane of pastoral care worldwide, the categories and practice of pastoral care in the Black church tradition emerge as overwhelmingly about preparing, strengthening and attempting ‘to change those conditions which prevent persons from choosing healthy crisis-coping patterns’, within a framework which is communal and supportive. The communal framework is crucial. Pastoral care, especially in the Black church tradition has to do with mobilizing the resources of the total community in caring for the needs of individuals and groups.⁴⁵

That function of pastoral care that attempts to “change those conditions which prevent persons from choosing healthy crisis-coping patterns” is revolutionary, liberating. This is a take-off from most western approaches that look into the person disregarding the forces and systems that create the crisis.

⁴⁴ In Lartey, p 24

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Defining our Own Moves: the challenge

It is good that the Africans are coming out with their own definition and models of pastoral care. But how about the pastoral care from the East? This is a challenge that faces Filipino pastoral care practitioners as well as other Asian pastoral care practitioners. In my humble attempt, I offer *Tambayayong: A Filipino Approach to Pastoral Care*⁴⁶ that looks at and resurfacing the inherent community system of care. There is also a need to de-demonize indigenous practices and honor the tradition of babaylan in the Philippines. In as much as *shamanism* and the *shamans* of Korea is getting attention, and Japan's *Ikigai* is making its rounds in the social media, perhaps, we Filipinos should begin looking at our own indigenous healing and caring heritage.

Different community in different regions and tribal groups in the country may have inherent community system of care and support to the weak, vulnerable, those in need, or even in responding to the daily challenges of life. It would be to our advantage if we know how each community help its members. What values undergird the system. Perhaps, by studying the different ways our communities help their members, we could have an authentic, indigenous way of helping and caring for our people, so that, the *cura animarum* or the 'cure of souls' would really cure the Filipino souls because the method and concept come from the souls of the Filipinos.

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⁴⁶ Carmel Villar, *Tambayayong: Towards a Filipino Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*. Unpublished thesis in Master of Theology. Union Theological Seminary, 2020.

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*Ang Teolohiyang Ekyumenikal ng Nilupak
Taglay Ang Pananampalatayang Pumipiglas*

Jarwen Grason A. Reyes

ANG TEOLOHIYANG EKYUMENIKAL NG NILUPAK

Taglay Ang Pananampalatayang Pumipiglas

ni Jarwen Grason A. Reyes

Ang Handaang Pilipino at Ang Nilupak

Matingkad sa kaugaliang Pilipino ang pagsasama-sama sa pamamagitan ng hapag sapagkat tinataglay ng mga Pilipino ang matibay na pakikipag-ugnayang komunal¹ na may kabukasang ibahagi ang biyaya – na kadalasan ay biyayang nakakain – sa kapwa. Kapansin-pansin ito sa mga panahon na mayroong bumibisita sa mga tahananang Pilipino, ang unang itinatanong sa mga panauhin ay “Kumain ka na?”² Para sa mga Pilipinong nakapanirahan sa Estados Unidos, ang pangunahing ibinibigay sa mga panauhin ay ang silid na paglalagian nito kung siya ay doon matutulog. Ito ay nagpapakita ng kaibahan ng pag-uugaling Pilipino para sa kanilang mga bisita, at tunay na masasabing ang tahananang Pilipino ay isang lugar na bukas na hapag-kainan. Ito ay tiyak na paglalarawan ng masidhing pagpapahalaga ng mga Pilipino sa pagsasalu-salo. Kaya’t ang handaan, maging ito man ay magarbo o payak, ay malaking bahagi ng pagiging Pilipino. Sa ganitong diwa, ang salitang “handaan” ay hindi nakatuon sa pagdiriwang lamang bagkus pagsasalu-salo na nilalakipan mula sa mga pagkilos na may paghahanda. Maaaring ito’y sa panahon ng kaligayahan at pagdiriwang, at maaari din sa panahon ng pag-alaala sa yumaong mahal sa buhay. Tampok din sa mga handaang Pilipino ay ang pagbabahagi ng kanilang mga niluto at inihanda sa mga kapit-bahay lalo na ang mga malalapit sa kanila.

Pangkaraniwan din sa mga handaang Pilipino ang paghahanda ng mga kakanin. Sa maraming mga probinsya sa Pilipinas, ang mga kakaning ito ay hindi binibili. Ito ay ginagawa ng mga pamayanan kung saan ang ilan pa sa mga ito ay mayroong kani-kaniyang pamamaraan at kaluto (*recipe*) na maaaring pamana pa mula sa kanilang mga ninuno. Sa katunayan, ang pinakamahalagang pamana para sa maraming Pilipino ay hindi palaging nakatuon sa kayamanang materyal kundi sa kaluto na inaaaring yaman ng angkan sa mga sali’t salinglahi. Ito rin ay bahagi ng pagpapakilala ng kasaysayan ng kanilang angkan.

Gayundin, mababakas sa mga handaang Pilipino ang pagsasadiwa ng pananampalataya, lalo na sa mga Pilipinong Kristiyano Katoliko, sa pamamagitan ng pag-aalay ng kakanin sa kanilang altar sa tahanan na kabilang doon ay ang kalamay o sa mga probinsyang naglulupakan ay nilupak. Ito ay isang tradisyong minana pa sa

¹ Eleazar Fernandez, “Filipino Popular Religiosity,” *People’s History of Christianity*, Vol. 7, edited by Mary Bednarowski (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2008), p.46.

² Melanio Aoanan, *Bituka Theology: Seven Essay on Filipino Contextual Theology* (Mandaluyong, Philippines: Merryland Publishing, 2021), p. 35.

mga sinaunang Pilipino kung saan bahagi ng kasaysayan at sinaunang kaugalian, bago pa dumating ang mga mananakop, na ito'y ialay kay Bathala – sa Diyos na mapagbiyaya. Para sa ating mga ninunong Pilipino, ang ganitong paggawa ng paghahandog ng malagkit na pagkain tulad ng nilupak ay isang makabuluhang sagisag at banal na pananampalataya ng pagdulog at pagdaing sa Diyos na panatilihin ang maigting na relasyon ng mga pamilya, mga kamag-anak, at mga kaibigan o malalapit na tao. Sa paghahanda nito, lubos na pinalalagkit ng pamayanan ang kakanin sapagkat ang lagkit nito ay kapahayag ng pagpapanatili ng lagkit ng pagsasama.³ Sa pag-unawa sa pagsasadiwang ito, ang kakanin ay nagsisilbing tagapamagitan sa pagitan ng Manlilikha at nilikha. Kaya't sa larangan ng kaugaliang Pilipino, sa salinlahi ng sambahayan, at sa maigting na pananampalataya, ang kakanin ay maituring na isa sa mga pinakamatanda o makasaysayang kaluto sa mga handaang Pilipino – makasaysayang sagisag na nakaugat pa sa pananampalataya, gawi at pagkakakilanlan ng pagiging Pilipino.

Sa lahat ng mga kakaning inihahanda ng mga Pilipino, para sa akin, ang pinakanangingibabaw ay ang nilupak. Bukod sa lasa nito, namukod tangi ito dahil sa mga karanasang pampamayanan na nasisilayan sa pamayanang naglulupak. Ang salitang “nilupak” ay pangkaraniwang ginagamit ng mga probinsyang Tagalog at mayroon pang iba't ibang katawagan o terminong ginagamit sang-ayon sa wika ng mga lugar sa Pilipinas. Halimbawa, ang nilupak ay tinawag ding nilusak, niyubak, linusak,⁴ minukmok,⁵ linupak,⁶ lubi-lubi, agbayo⁷ at marami pang iba. Bagama't walang tiyak na taon kung kalian unang ginawa ang paglulupak, mababakas naman sa iba't ibang kasaysayan at kaugaliang Pilipino ang paggawa ng nilupak bilang bahagi ng tradisyon at kultura.

Ang paglulupak ay ginagawa sa pamamagitan ng mga kasangkapan na lusong at halo (*mortar and pestle*) na karaniwang tawag ng mga pamayanan sa Katagalugan at iba pang probinsya sa bansa ngunit mayroon ding ibang tawag sa mga kasangkapang ito.⁸ Ang lusong ay gawa mula sa matigas na punong kahoy o kaya'y hinulmahang bato

³ “Kakanin: The History of 7 of Our Favorite Sticky Rice Snacks,” pepper.ph, accessed November 1, 2021, <https://pepper.ph/the-history-behind-7-of-our-favorite-kakanin/>

⁴ Mga terminong ginagamit sa karamihan sa mga Bisaya. Ang terminong ito ay binanggit ni Pastor Jona Espinosa mula sa isang personal na pakikipagkwentuhan.

⁵ An alternate term used by the people in Quezon Province.

⁶ Mga terminong ginagamit ng mga Waray, Bicolano, at Kapampangan. Ang mga terminong ito ay binanggit nina Pastor Jayson Espino, Pastor Vince Pacto, at Rev. Elaine Grace Salen mula sa isang personal na pakikipagkwentuhan.

⁷ Mga terminong ginagamit sa karamihan sa mga Ilokanong probinsya. Ang mga terminong ito ay binanggit ni Pastor Derrick Mark Bacquian mula sa isang personal na pakikipagkwentuhan.

⁸ Luhung for the Ifugao, lusung for the Batak, Pala'wan, Tagbanua and Hanunoo, lesong for the Maranao, lesung for the Manobo, and alsong for the Iloko or Ilokano; while the halo, also, had its other terms such as al'u or lal'u for the Ifugao, alo for the Kapampangan and Pangasinan, al'o for the Iloko, Ilokano and Kankanaey, ar'u for the

ngunit pangkaraniwan sa mga probinsya na ito'y gawa sa bahagi ng pinutol na punong kahoy na madalas ay sa punong Mahogany na inuukitan ng bungangang palalim sa gitna (*hollowed in the middle*) sang-ayon sa taas ng lusong at doon nilulupak ang mga sangkap na gagamitin. Samantala, ang halo ay isang mahaba at makapal na pabilog na kahoy na mayroong ukit sa bahaging gitna ng pahaba bilang hawakan sa paglulupak at ang mga dulo ay hugis pabilog. Kaya't hindi nakapagtataka na ito'y mabigat. Ang lusong at halo ay magkatuwang na ginagamit sa paglulupak ng mga butil ng palay at butil ng mga kape at lalo't higit ng mga bunga at bungang-ugat. Bagaman ang lusong at halo ay dalawang magkaibang kasangkapan, ngunit karamihan sa mga Pilipino, kinikilala ang mga ito bilang iisa tulad na lamang noong mag-utos ang isang matanda ng pamayanan na, "Pakikuha ang lusong, tayo'y maglulupak." Ang tao na inutusan upang kunin ang lusong ay kinukuha na din kasama ang halo.

Kahanga-hanga na ang mga Pilipino sa mga sinaunang panahon at kahit maging sa mga unang taon sa ika-20 siglo, ang pagkakaroon ng lusong at halo sa mga bahay ay kailangan⁹ kalakip na ito'y mayroong iba't ibang laki at timbang sang-ayon sa mga taong gagamit nito. Ang pagkakaiba-iba ng laki nito ay pagpapakita lamang na hindi lamang mga ama o ina ang nakikibahagi sa paglulupak kundi maging ang mga bata. Datapwa't ang pagsasagawa ng paglulupak ay tunay na nakakapagod at mahabang oras ang ginugugol sa pagsasagawa nito hanggang sa makamit ang ninanais na lagkit at pino ng nilupak. Bukod sa mga nabanggit na gamit ng lusong sa paglulupak, sa mga panahon na matapos ang paglulupak at kakainin na ang mga ito, maaaring baligtarin ang lusong at gamiting upuan o kaya nama'y kung magluluto ay maaaring maging sangkalan (*chopping board*). Sa ilang mga probinsya sa Pilipinas, lalo't higit sa Hilagang bahagi ng bansa, ang lusong ay nagsisilbing kasangkapan kung saan ginagawa ang mga ritwal ng paghahandog sa pagbibigay halaga sa buhay na minanang kultura.¹⁰ Sa pag-aaral na ito, ang paggamit sa nilupak bilang pagwawangis ay hindi nakatuon sa mga sangkap na nilulupak kundi sa mga karanasan ng pamayanang naglulupak sa paglalapat nito sa pag-aaral ng teolohiyang ekyumenikal na naiisapamuhay sa pamamagitan ng pagkakaisang ekyumenikal, pakikibahaging ekyumenikal, at ministeryong ekyumenikal.

Ang Ekyumenismo at Ang mga Karanasan ng Pamayanang Naglulupak

Bontok, allo for the Isneg, allu for the Itawes, ha'lu for the Bikol, Tausug, Hanunoo and Hiligaynon. Terms retrieved from National Museum of the Philippines, "Mortar & Pestle," September 3, 2020, accessed November 1, 2021, Facebook post, <https://www.facebook.com/nationalmuseumofthephilippines/photos/sa-pagpapatuloy-ng-pagdiriwang-ng-pambansang-linggo-ng-palay-at-mais-ibinabahagi/3555271954497097/> and Berto, "Lusong ug Alho," The Philippines Today, September 25, 2020, accessed November 1, 2021, <https://thephilippinestoday.com/lusong-ug-alho/>

⁹ National Museum of the Philippines, "Mortar & Pestle."

¹⁰ Ibid.

Sa paglipas ng mga siglo, ang pagkakaisang ekyumenikal, ang pakikibahaging ekyumenikal, at ang ministryong ekyumenikal ay naging makabuluhang bahagi at gampanin ng mundo ng mga relihiyon sa buong daigdig na tinatawag na 'ekyumenismo'. Ang ekyumenismo ay naging isa sa mga mahahalagang bahagi ng pagsaksi ng mga iglesya sa kasalukuyan. Bagaman ang salitang 'ekyumenismo' ay dumating sa kaniyang pangkalahatang paggamit sa pamamagitan ng Ikalawang Konseho sa Vatican (*Second Vatican Council*) noong 1962-1965,¹¹ ngunit ang diwa nito ay nagmula pa noong 50CE kung saan naganap ang pagtitipon ng Konseho ng Jerusalem (*Council of Jerusalem*). Sa katunayan, ilan sa mga dokumento at pag-aaral pangkasaysayan ay hindi kinikilala na ang Konseho ng Jerusalem ang Unang Konsehong Ekyumenikal.¹² Ngunit malinaw na ang nasabing Konseho ay nagbibigay diin sa usapin sa pagitan ng Kristiyanong Hentil at Kristiyanong Hudyo. Sa mga panahong iyon, ang iglesya ay pangunahing pinangangasiwaan at nangingibabaw ang tradisyong Hudyo kung saan mayroong malaking kaibahan ang mga Hentil sa iba't aspeto ng paniniwala at gawi. Ito ang pangunahing ekyumenikal na layunin ng Konseho ng Jerusalem na kung kailangan pa bang sundin ng mga Hentil ang Kautusan ni Moises (*Mosaic Law*) at kaugaliang Hudyo upang sila ay mapabilang sa kalipunang tatanggap ng kaligtasan. Nakita ng Konseho ang pagkakasalungat nito sang-ayon sa halaga ng kaligtasan na ipinagkaloob na biyaya ng kagandahang-loob ng Diyos (*grace of God*), sa pamamagitan ng pananampalataya at ni Cristo na kanilang sinusundan.¹³ Pinagtibay ito sa pamamagitan ng pangangaral at ministryo ni Pedro para sa mga Hentil na nagbibigay diin sa Banal na Espiritu na ibinigay para sa mga Hentil na hindi tuli at tulad din ng pagdating ng Espiritu sa mga disipulo sa araw ng Pentecostes.¹⁴ Kung kaya't ang mga katotohanang ito ay nagpapalinaw na ang Konseho ng Jerusalem ay nagtataglay ng diwa ng ekyumenismo, at ang Espiritu na tinataglay ng pamayanan ng mga Hudyo at ng mga Hentil ay kumikilos sa pagkakaisang ekyumenikal at hindi nakakulong sa dekahong pananampalataya, kaugalian, at kulto ng iilan. Ito'y Diwa na nagtatatag ng ekyumenikal na pagkakasundo tungo sa pamayanang nagpapalaganap ng kapayapaan.

Ang salitang ekyumenismo (*ecumenism*) sa kaniyang etimolohiya ay mula sa salitang Griyego na *oikoumene* na ang kahulugan ay ang buong mundong pinananahanan (*the whole inhabited earth*). Ang kahulugang ito ay nagpapahayag ng kaibahan ng "mundo" sa "daigdig". Ang daigdig ay ang planetang pinananahanan ng mga tao, hayop, isda, ibon, at ng kalikasan. Subalit ang mundo ay tumutukoy sa

¹¹ Nicholas Lossky, Jose Miguez Bonino, John Pobee, Tom Stransky, Geoffrey Wainwright, & Pauline Webb, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991), pp.1053-1054.

¹² Justo L. Gonzalez, *Church History: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), p. 38.

¹³ "Council of Jerusalem," [britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com), accessed August 12, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Council-of-Jerusalem>

¹⁴ Tingnan ang Aklat ng Gawa ng mga Apostol Kabanata 15

reyalidad sa iba't ibang aspeto tulad na lamang sa mundo ng agham, sa mundo ng politika, mundo ng relihiyon at iba pa. Halimbawa sa usaping heograpiya, ang heograpiya ay ang pag-aaral sa mundo at lahat ng mga nangyayari dito, at ang heograpiya ng daigdig ay binubuo ng 1/4 na anyong lupa at 3/4 na anyong tubig ng mundo.¹⁵ Sa makatuwid, ang 'buong mundong pinananahanan' ay hindi lamang limitado sa daigdig, bagkus kumikilala din sa iba't ibang reyalidad ng buhay na tumatahan at nananahan. Ang ganitong paraan ng pag-unawa sa ekyumenismo ay naglalapat ng kaniyang mahalagang gampanin katulad ng mga pamayanang naglulupak sa paglikha ng modelo ng teolohiyang ekyumenikal mula sa kanilang mga karanasan para sa iglesia at lipunan – isang paraang mapagpalaya, mapanlikha, at makabuluhang paglulupak.

Ilan sa mga karanasan ng mga pamayanang naglulupak sa mga probinsya at nayon sa Pilipinas ay kakikitaan ng mga magkakahalaw na gawi. Ang nilupak bilang maka-Pilipinong gawi ay nagpapakita ng kaniyang malaking ambag para sa kasaysayan ng lipunang Pilipino. Ang gawain ng paglulupak ay tinatawag na "lupakan" sa ilang probinsya, tulad sa Batangas, na karaniwang sa bukid ginagawa. Isa sa mga pagsasalamín nito ay ang kaugalian sa kasalan sa Batangas. Sa isang isinulat ni Remedios Q. Kalalo na bahagi ng kasaysayan noong 1916 na "*Marriage Customs in Batangas*," inilahad niya ang mahahalagang detalye patungkol sa kulturang Batangueño noong pagsisimula ng ika-20 siglo. Kakikitaan na ang nilupak ay kabahagi sa panimulang paghahanda bago humatong sa kasalan; ito ay ang pagliligawan. Kung ang binata ay napapaibig o nagpahayag ng pag-ibig sa isang dalaga, ipinababatid ito ng dalaga sa kaniyang mga magulang upang ipakilala ang binata. Bibisita ang binata ng ika-7:00 ng gabi at hihiling sa mga magulang ng dalaga para sa dami ng palay na kaniyang lulupakin sapagkat bago pa dumating ang mga imbensyong gilingan, ang palay ay binabayo o nilulupak upang mahiwalay ang mga ipa sa bigas. Kung ang mga magulang ng dalaga ay sang-ayon sa panliligaw ng binata, magbibigay sila ng palay sang-ayon sa dami na kanilang pinagpasiyahan. Ngunit kung hindi nais ng magulang ang nanliligaw, hindi ito bibigyan ng palay. Ito ay ginagawa hindi lamang upang mapukaw ang damdamin at pag-ibig ng dalaga kundi pati na rin ang mga magulang nito.¹⁶ Ayon sa ilan sa mga may gulang na sa pamayanan na nakapanayam, noong dekada sitenta hanggang otsenta (70's to 80's) ang lupakan ay bahagi pa rin at nagiging gawain ng pagtitipon ng mga binata at mga dalaga. Ang mga binata ay naghahalinhan sa pagbabayo sa lusong at ang mga babae ay katuwang ding

¹⁵ "Ang Katangiang Pisikal ng Daigdig," esepmeyer, accessed February 6, 2023, <https://esepmeyer.wordpress.com/2013/03/12/aralin-2-ang-katangiang-pisikal-ng-daigdig/>

¹⁶ Buhay Batangas, "Marriage Customs in Batangas," Batangas History Culture & Folklore, accessed March 1, 2023, <https://www.batangashistory.date/2018/03/marriage.html>. Ang isinulat ni Remedios Q. Kalalo na "Marriage Customs in Batangas" ay inilathala noong 1916 at bahagi ng H Otley Beyer Collection ng National Library of the Philippines Digital Collections.

naghahalo ng mga sangkap na kasamang nilulupak. May mga pagkakataon ding ang lupakan ay ginagawa ng magkakapares sa paglulupak ng mga nagliligawan at mga magkasintahan.

Bukod sa ligawan, makikita din ang lupakan bilang bahagi ng pista partikular sa Sublian ng mga Batangueño – isang pista na magsisimula ng ikalawang araw ng Mayo na tumatagal ng dalawang Linggo kung saan nagbibigay pagpapahalaga sa pananampalatayang Katoliko sa paggunita sa debosyon sa Banal na Krus sa Bauan at Agoncillo, kasabay ang pagdiriwang ng anibersaryo ng pagkakatatag sa Bayan ng Batangas,¹⁷ at ang nilupak ay kasama sa mga nagsisilbing paanyaya sa bawat isa na makisalo sa dulang. Ang pamayanan ay nagsasalu-salo sa Subli – isang natatanging sayaw sa saliw ng tunog ng mga tambol kasabay ang mga sabayang pag-usal ng mga salita (*chanting*) na ito ay nagsisilbi namang seremonyang kulto-divinong pasayaw (*ceremonial divine worship dance*) na kinapapalooban ng mga panalangin at mga awitin, – kasama rin ang mga tradisyunal na palarong Pilipino, harana at lupakan.¹⁸ Isinasagawa din ang lupakan bilang gawaing pansimbahan ng ilang mga kapisanan ng kababaihan bilang bahagi ng proyekto sa paglikom ng halaga sa mga natatanging gawain ng kapatiran. Ginaganap iyon tuwing Sabado ng umaga na bahagi ng pag-eehersisyo ng mga kababaihan o kaya'y pagkatapos ng pananambahan ng araw ng Linggo na bahagi ng pagsasama. Ang mga bata ay katuwang na din sa lupakan sa pamamagitan ng pagpapahid ng dahon na loob ng bunganga ng lusong, at ang iba naman ay binibigyan ng maliliit na mga lusong at halo na tila mga dikdikan ng mga paminta. Iyon ay nagsilbi ding katuwaan at pagbubuklod nila bilang mga anak ng mga kababaihan sa kanilang iglesya. Nakikinig din sila sa mga masasayang kwentuhan ng mga kababaihan habang mga naglulupak lalo na sa mga pagpapalano ng iba't ibang mga paraan kung paano maibebenta ang mga ginawang nilupak. Ito ay nadadalang kaugalian magpahanggang sa pagdadalaga at magkaasawa na.

Sa pananaw naman ng isang kabataang kinapanayam, ang lupakan ay tunay na makabuluhan para sa kaniya bilang isang komunal na gawain na kasama ang mga kapwa kabataan, mga magulang, at mga kamag-anak. Bagama't mabibigat ang mga kagamitang ginagamit sa lupakan, ang bawat isa, anumang kasarian, ay handang magbuhat ng lusong at halo, magtagtag o magtibag ng saging mula sa puno at maglupak hanggang sa pagsasalu-salo. Mula sa paghahanda hanggang sa pagkain ng nilupak ay mayroong mga ngiti ang lahat na tila hindi dama ang naging pagod sa mahigit sa dalawang oras na paglulupak. Naranasan naman ng kabataang kinapanayam ang lupakan pagkatapos ng Paskuhang Gawain na sa huling araw, pag-

¹⁷ "10 Cultural Festivities of Batangas," Pueblo De Oro, April 7, 2017, accessed November 9, 2021, <https://pueblodeoro.com/blog/10-cultural-festivities-of-batangas/>

¹⁸ Ibid.

alis ng mga kinatawan ng mga iglesya, naiiwan ang mga kaanib ng pamunuan ng mga kabataan upang maglupak. Doon nila isinasagawa ang pagsusuri at pagtatasa (*evaluation*) sa ginawang gawain at ang pagdiriwang sa tagumpay nito. Sa ibang mga pagkakataon, kung mayroong matatanda sa pamayanan na nagsabing mayroong saging sa kanilang bakuran, nagningingitan na ang lahat ng mga kabataan sapagkat iyon ay isa nang palatandaan na dapat nang maghanda para sa lupakan at kani-kaniya nang gagawa upang ihanda ang mga kailangan para sa lupakan – mayroong manghihiram na ng lusong, bibili ng sangkap, kukuha ng saging at dahon nito na nasa bakuran ng nagsabing matanda, at marami pang iba. Sa lupakan, tinitiyak na ang lahat ay mayroong bahagi sang-ayon sa kani-kaniyang mga kakayahan. Naging bahagi din ng makabagong bayanihan ang lupakan sa pagkakataong mayroong kamag-anak o malapit na kaibigang lumipat ng tirahan. Ang mga tumulong sa paglilipat ng mga gamit ay silang gumagawa ng paghahakot at pagdadala ng mga gamit ng pamilyang lumilipat ng tirahan habang ang mga lilipat ng tirahan ay naglulupak sa bahay na lilipatan upang ang nilupak ay kanilang maihain sa mga tumulong sa paglilipat ng bahay sagisag ng pasasalamat at pagdiriwang sa biyaya ng bagong tirahan na pananahanan ng pamilya. Ang lupakan ay ginagawa sa iba't ibang pagkakataon maging sa kaarawan, anibersaryo, at kung mayroong mga pagkakataon upang magtipon maliban lamang sa panahon ng kamatayan at kung may libing para sa mga Batangueño sapagkat ang kahulugan ng lupakan sa pamayanan ay bahagi ng pagdiriwang at pagsasalu-salo.

Sa probinsya namang naging tatak ng kanilang mga pagkain na iniluluto o inihahanda ay ginagamitan ng gata, tulad ng Bicol, sa usapin ng kakanin, ang nilupak ay isa sa mga pangunahing ibinibida.¹⁹ Karaniwan sa kultura ng mga Bicolanong nasa mga bukid na lugar, kung mayroong dumayo mula sa malalayong lugar, ipinararanas nila ang masayang pagsasama at kwentuhan sa pakikibahagi sa lupakan. Kapansin-pansin din ang mga babae ay naghahalin-hinan sa pagbabayo at paghahalo, at kung naging malagkit na ito ay hahalili naman ang mga lalaki upang makamit ang nais na lagkit ng nilupak. Sapagkat kapag ang nilupak ay naging malagkit na, matindi ang lagkit nito na tila dumidikit din maging ang gamit na halo. Ang lahat ng ito ay pinagtutuwangan ng mga nakikibahagi bilang isang pamayanan ng nilupak. Habang isinasagawa ang paglulupak, nagbabalik-tanaw ang bawat isa sa mga kwento at mga naging karanasan sa buhay. Kung minsan ay pagkatapos ng rabus o ang pagtutulong-tulong sa gawain sa bukid tulad ng pagtatanim ng palay, susunod ang paglilibang sa pamamagitan ng paglulupak.

¹⁹ Jovi Figueroa, "Biniribid, Sinapot, Puto Sa Bao, Mazapan—These Are Bicol Street Food's Greatest Hits," Metro.Style, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://metro.style/food/food-tours/best-of-bicol-street-food-and-delicacies/16731>.

Bukod sa mga masasayang pagkakataon at pagdiriwang, isinasagawa din ng pamayanang naglulupak ang paglulupak sa panahon pamamaalam sa isang malapit sa buhay o ang despedida sa mga kabataang luluwas ng Maynila upang mag-aral o kaya'y maghanap ng trabaho. Gayundin sa pag-alaala sa mga yumaong mahal sa buhay, kaiba sa Batangas. Sa katunayan, ang lusong at halo ay bahagi ng mga ipinapamana na maaaring magamit hindi lamang ng ilan kundi ng marami – isang magandang larawan ng pamana na hindi pinaghahatian kundi ginagamit ng komunal at ibinabahagi sa bawat isa. Isinasagawa din ito upang maging pag-asa ng pamayanan matapos ang malakas na bagyong nanalasa. Dahil sa maraming mga puno ng saging saba ang nagbagsakan at ang ilan ay putol na dulot ng bagyo, kaya't ang bunga nito ay kinukuha. Sa layuning hindi masayang ang mga ito, ang mga magkakapit-bahay ay magsasama-sama at maglulupak. Ang paglulupak ay nagsisilbing pag-asa ng pamayanan lalo't higit pagkatapos ng malakas na bagyo ay maaaring wala gaanong naitabing pagkain ang mga pamilya. Sa kabila ng kahirapan, hindi naman ito nagiging hadlang sa pagdiriwang ng mga mahihirap na pamilya sapagkat ang saging saba at mga bungang nakukuha sa lupa na ginagamit sa paglulupak ay madali lamang kuhanin. Madalas nilupak na saging saba o balinghoy ang inihahanda kung saan ang mga magulang at ang mga magkakapit-bahay ay tulong-tulong sa paglulupak at pagdadala ng kanilang ambag na sangkap at kung mayroong pang kulang ay iyon na lamang ang bibilhin sapagkat mayroon na sa bukid ng mga pangunahing kailangan sa paglulupak.

Mula sa pagiging mga kabataan hanggang sa paglaki bilang bahagi ng pamayanang naglulupak, lumalalim din ang kanilang mga napagkukwentuhan habang naglulupak sapagkat napagtutuunan din sa usapan ang mga kalagayang panlipunan ng pamayanan tulad ng nakawan ng mga alagang hayop tulad ng manok sa pugas, alagang kalabaw at ang maaaring nagiging daanan ng mga kawatan sa pagnanakaw. Minsan habang naglulupak din, nabubuo din ang mga istrategiya ng alertong pangseguridad na pangnayon sa pamamagitan ng mga tinatawag na kalatong na yari sa bungbong ng kawayan. Kapag ito ay tumunog at narinig ng iba ay sinasagot ng iba at nagbubuo ng isang hudyat na may bagay na nagaganap na hindi kanais-nais sa mga alaga ng magkakapit-bahay o magkakasama sa baryo. Nagiging hudyat din ito na mayroong humihingi ng saklolo dahil sa isang sitwasyon na nangangailangan ng tulong.

Ang iba't ibang karanasan, sitwasyon at gawi sa pamayanan ng nilupak ay ilan sa mga salik sa malikhaing pagbuo ng kasaysayan, makabuluhang pagtukoy ng kailanan, at maka-Pilipinong pagtatanyag ng mabuting kaugnayan sa buong sangnilikha. Mula rito ay nabibigyan ng kaukulang pagpapahala at malinaw na kahulugan ang halaga ng lahat ng may buhay at ang mga alaalang nananatiling buhay sa mga pamayanan. Sa ating pagpapahalaga sa pakahulugan ng *oikoumene* bilang buong mundong pinananahanan, nagkakalakip-lakip ang mga kasaysayan, kailanan, at

kaugnayan sa pagpapaliwanag at pagbubukas ng katotohanan at mga katotohanan hinggil sa teolohiyang ekyumenikal sa larawan ng pamayanan ng nilupak. Ang mga karanasang inilahad ay ilan lamang sa mga ipinakita ng pamayanang naglulupak bilang pagwawangis na paglalapat sa teolohiyang ekyumenikal na naglalahad ng kakanyahan nito ng Pagkamakasaysayan, Pagkakailanan, at Pagkakaugnayan.

Pagkamakasaysayan, Pagkakailanan, Pagkakaugnayan: Teolohiyang Ekyumenikal ng Nilupak Taglay ang Pananampalatayang Pumipiglas

Ang Pagkamakasaysayan ay binibigyang kahulugan bilang karanasan sa nakaraan na ipinagpapatuloy sa pagsulong taglay ang mga karanasan sa kasalukuyan. Ang mga inilahad na mga karanasan ng pamayanang naglulupak ay nagbibigay ng kaniyang mahalagang paglalapat sa teolohiyang ekyumenikal. Tulad ng winika ni Obispo George F. Castro, ang usapin hinggil sa kasaysayan ay karapat-dapat na malaman at pahalagahan ng mga nasa kasalukuyan at mga sumusunod na henerasyon tungo sa isang tunay na kasaysayan.²⁰ Ang ibig sabihin niya sa paggamit sa salitang 'tunay' ay ang pagtataglay ng kasaysayan ng mga bagay at impormasyong patungkol sa nakaraan, pinagmulan, mga hamong hinarap at mga pagtatagumpay. Kalakip din nito na kapag binasa ang akdang kasaysayan ay magkakaroon ng malalim na pagkilala at pagpapahalaga sa nakaraan na paghahanguan ng sigya, unawa, at malawak na pananaw tungo sa angkop ng pagtugon sa hinaharap. Idinagdag pa niya na ang pagkaalam at pagkaunawa sa nakaraan ay nagbibigay ng kakayahan na magkaroon ng higit na malinaw na adhikain ng buhay sa hinaharap at ituon ang mga kaisipan at kalakasan sa pagkamit ng mas makabuluhang tunguhin.

Ipinakita sa mga inilahad mula sa karanasan ng pamanayang naglulupak ang pagkamakasaysayan bilang bahagi ng mga alaala ng kabataan sa ligawan, pagbabalik-tanaw sa mga karanasan, paggunita sa buhay ng mga ninuno at bahagi ng pamilya na yumao na, ang mga kasangkapan sa paglulupak na ipinamamana na hindi kailangang paghati-hatian bagkus ibinabahagi at napapakinabangan ng bawat isa, ang pagpatak ng pawis ng mga tagapaglupak, at ang pagbangon sa pagdadala ng pag-asa sa pamayanan sa kabila ng unos na pinagdaanan. Ipinakikita nito na ang teolohiyang ekyumenikal ay pananampalatayang pumipiglas na nagpapahalaga sa kaniyang makasaysayang karanasan sa mahabang panahon ng pagsisikap na maisulong ang ekyumenismo sa bansa sa anyong maka-Pilipino. Binabalikan ang kaniyang kasaysayan, ang mga karanasan, at ang ipinakitang halimbawa ng mga ninuno sa pagnanais na makamit ang buhay na ganap at kasiya-siya para sa mapayapa at makatarungang mundong pinananahanan.

²⁰ George F. Castro, "Foreword," *A Monument to Religious Nationalism*, ed. Ruben F. Trinidad (Quezon City: IEMELIF, 1999), pp.v-vi.

Kapansin-pansin din ang halaga ng salitang pinananahanan sa karanasan ng mga may buhay. Ang salitang “pinananahanan” ay mula sa salitang ugat na “tahan” na binibigyan ng kahulugan na pagpawi ng luha mula sa kalungkutan at pagdadala ng pag-asa ng matiwasay na paninirahan. Kaya’t ang larawan ng pagpatak ng pawis ng mga tagapaglupak ay bahagi ng pagsusulong ng teolohiyang ekyumenikal na maka-Pilipino na kumikilala sa mga pawis at dugo na dumanak sa pakikilaban sa pagtatanyag ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas para sa kakanyahan ng bansa mula sa kamay ng mga mananakop – na inari ng mga mananakop na sila’y dumating upang palayain ang mga Pilipino mula sa kaapihan sa gawaing makademonyo, ang mapang-aliping pananakop ng mga Kastila, ang imperyalismong pananakop ng mga Amerikano, ang pasistang pananakop mga Hapon, at ang muling pananakop ng mga Amerikano na pagkatapos ng “mga pagpapalaya kuno” na ito, ang kakanyahan at pagiging Pilipino ay tila binubura ng mga mananakop,²¹ at ang pananakop ng diktaduryang rehimen sa bansa – at pagkamit ng katarungan at kalayaan ng mga mamamayan. Kaya naman, tulad ng ginagawa ng pamayanan ng nilupak na nilabanan ang pagkalugmok at hinarap ang unos sa pamamagitan ng paggamit sa mga naging resulta ng unos – ang mga bumagsak na mga puno ng saging saba ay ginamit upang lupakin ang mga bunga nito at ibinahagi sa pamayanan bilang pantawid ng gutom matapos ang unos – na maging daan ng pagdadala ng pag-asa para sa buong pamayanan. Ang maka-Pilipinong teolohiyang ekyumenikal na Pagkamakasaysayan ay pinapagpapanibagong anyo ang mga naging resulta ng unos tungo sa mapanghamon at mapanghikayat sa kaisahan sa layunin sa kabila ng pagkakaiba-iba sa pagbabahagi ng pag-asa at pagkamit ng kapayapaang nakabatay sa katarungan taglay ang mga karanasan sa nakaraan na patuloy na binubuhay upang sumulong sa kasalukuyan. Kahalitulad ito sa pagyakap sa tradiyon bilang pagpapanauli ng buhay ng pananampalataya at pag-asa ng mga yumao, at hindi ang pagpapalaganap ng tradisyunalismo na pumapatay sa pananampalataya at pag-asa ng mga buhay.²²

Bukod sa Pagkamakasaysayan, tinataglay din ng teolohiyang ekyumenikal ang Pagkakailanan sa pagsasalarawan sa pamayanang naglulupak. Una sa mga pagkakailanan ay ang mga layunin kung saan ginamit ang naglulupak tulad ng ligawan, katuwaan ng mga magkakaibigan o magkakasama sa iglesya, pagkikilanlanan ng mga tao mula sa iba’t ibang lugar na dumayo, malikhaing pamamaraan ng pagpupulong, sagisag ng pasasalamat sa mga tumulong sa nangangailangan, pagdiriwang, ang bayanihan sa pamamagitan ng panunulungan, mga gawain ng pag-alaala at paggunita, kaaliwan matapos ang rabus o gawain sa bukid, despedida sa kaibigang lilipat na ng Maynila o ibang lugar, mga pagbubuo ng istrategiyang panseguridad ng pamayanan, at

²¹ Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited*, Vol.1, in collaboration with Letizia R. Constantino (Quezon City, Philippines: Renato Constantino, 1975), p.11.

²² Eleazar Fernandez, Class Lecture on Capstone, March 30, 2021 via Google Meet at Union Theological Seminary, Philippines.

ang pagpapahayag ng pasasalamat sa Diyos sa pamamagitan ng pagbabahaginan ng pagpapala sa kapwa. Ikalawa ay ang iba't ibang mukha ng mga kabahagi sa paglulupak. Mayroong mga nakatatanda na silang umaalalay at gumagabay sa mga nagsisimula pa lamang sa lupakan at sila ring nagtuturo bilang pagpapamana ng tradisyong maka-Pilipino na nagpapakilala ng kakanyahan at katangian ng pamayanan. Mayroon ding mga kabataan na masigasig na nakikibahagi at ang iba't ibang maaaring maging bahagi ng mga bata mula sa kanilang pagnanais na malaman (*children's curiosity*) at makibahagi sa pamayanan ng nilupak. Ang paglulupak din ay sagisag ng pagkakapantay-pantay sapagkat hindi hadlang ang gulang o katatayuan sa lipunan upang makibahagi. Ikatlo ay ang pagkakailanan ng paggamit sa kasangkapan sa paglulupak. Ang lusong, bilang pangunahing kasangkapan sa paglulupak, ay maaaring ding gamitin bilang upuan sa mga pagtitipon sa nayon, upuan sa mga pagpupulong, at upuan sa pagkukuwentuhan habang mayroong nagsasagawa ng pantomina; bilang sangkalan sa pagluluto sa panahon ng panunulungan; at bilang espasyo sa mga kultura at ritwal ng paghahandog. At ikaapat ay ang pagkakailanan ng mga kasarian. Maaaring ilan sa mga pananaw ay mas malakas ang pwersa ng mga lalaki kaysa mga babae sa nayon sa paglulupak ngunit hindi ito dapat maging dahilan ng pagbaba ng pagtingin sa mga babae sapagkat sa pamayanan ng nilupak, kinikilala ang mga kakayahang ito. Ang mga babae ay masinop sa paglulupak, banayad at hindi makalat habang nagbabayo, ang mga sangkap na inilalagay ay hindi gaanong nagtatalsikan at nahahalo ng wasto. Samantala, ang mga lalaki naman ang siyang magtutuloy ng paglulupak kapag ito'y naging ganap na malagkit na upang makamit ang kapinuhang (*texture*) ninanais ngunit hindi sila iiwanan ng mga babae sapagkat tutuwang pa rin sila sa paghahalo. Ang katangian ng pagkakailanang ito ay hindi nakukulong sa dalawang kasarian lamang at ang usaping ito ay maaaring palawigin pa sa mga susunod na mga pag-aaral na maaaring paghalawan ng larawan ng feministang teolohiya ng nilupak. Bukod sa mga ito, mayroon ding pinagkaibahan ang pamayanan ng nilupak sa Batangas at Bicol. Ito ay ang pananaw nila sa nilupak bilang bahagi ng buhay. Para sa mga Batangueño, ang gawain ng paglulupak ay sagisag ng pagdiriwang sa buhay kaya naman hindi ito pangkaraniwang ginagawa sa panahon ng pagdadalamhati. Para naman sa mga Bikolano, ang gawain ng paglulupak ay sagisag ng pagdiriwang sa buhay ng mga buhay at maging sa gawain sa patay sapagkat sa ganitong paraan ay matitipon ang pamayanan sa isang malikhaing pamamaraan ng pakikibahagi. Bagaman mayroong pagkakaiba ay iginagalang at kinikilala na ang mga pamayanan ng nilupak na ito ay nagbibigay ng malaking ambag sa pagkakailanan ng teolohiyang ekyumenikal ng nilupak.

Ang mga nabanggit ay nagpapakita ng iba't ibang layunin, mukha, paggamit, kasarian, at ang pinagkaibahan ng pamayanan ng nilupak sa Batangas at Bicol. Sa mga isinalaysay na ito, tunay na nailalahad na ang maka-Pilipinong teolohiyang

ekyumenikal sa pagsasalarawan sa nilupak ay nagtataglay din ng iba't ibang mga layunin at adhikain ng ekyumenismo na hindi lamang nakakulong sa mga simbahang Kristiyano, bagkus makalilikha ng mga espasyo para sa dayalogo sa iba pang mga pamayanan ng mga mananampalataya, sa mga pamayanang panlipunan, at maging ang layunin sa sangnilikha ay maaaring kilalanin bilang bahagi ng pagkakailanan ng pagsusulong ng ekyumenismo sa bansa, kabahagi ang lahat ng edad, antas ng pinag-aralan, katatayuan sa buhay, kinabibilangang pangkat etniko, at kasarian.

Bagaman nagkaroon na ng ilang mga panimulang pagsasalaysay ng Pagkakaugnayan sa bahagi ng Pagkamakasaysayan at Pagkakailanan, mahalaga ring tukuyin sa teolohiyang ekyumenikal ang Pagkakaugnayan sa pagsasalarawan sa pamayanang naglulupak. Napahapyawan ang Pagkakaugnayan sa Pagkamakasaysayan at Pagkakailanan sapagkat ang tatlong ito, bilang Trinidad ng dalumating balangkas ng teolohiyang ekyumenikal ng nilupak, ay nabibilang na iisa at nagkakaisa sa tunguhin. Ilan sa mga ito ay ang nabubuong ugnayan ng pagkikilanlan patungo sa mabuting pagkakaibigan. Gayundin ang proseso ng pagkakagustuhan, pagliligawan, pagiging magkasintahan na ang ilan ay humantong sa pagtatanan at ang ilan naman ay sa mabuting ugnayan sa kanilang mga magulang bilang pagbibigay ng pagpapahalaga sa ugnayan ng magulang at anak. Ang Pagkakaugnayan ay nagdadala rin ng kaaliwan at kagalakan ng mga nagsasama-sama sa pagkakapatiran at pagdadamayan.²³ Ang pakikigalak ay naisasagawa sa pamamagitan ng pakikipagdiwang at pakikipagtulungan sa tradisyon ng panunulungan sa paghahanda ng mga natatanging pagsasalu-salo na walang inaantay na kapalit o bayad at sa halip ay nakabubuo pa ang mas malawak na samahan mula sa iba't ibang mga kaibigan at kamag-anak ng ikinasal na kalaunan ay magiging mga magkakasama na din sa mga pagsasalu-salo sa kwentuhan, inuman, at iba pang pagkakataon ng panunulungan. Bahagi din ng Pagkakaugnayan ay ang pagsisilbing espasyo upang ang ugnayan bilang pamunuan ng mga pamayanan ay naisasagawa ang pagsusuri, pagtatasa at pagpapalano para sa kabutihan ng buong pamayanan. Sa panahon ng kalungkutan tulad ng pamamaalam ng isang kaibigan o kamag-anak, naisasagawa ang makabuluhang despedida ng pagbabahaginan ng damdamin. Gayundin sa paggunita sa mga mahal sa buhay na yumao o anibersaryo ng kamatayan, ang pamayanan ng nilupak ay nagiging daan at sagisag ng maka-Pilipinong katangian ng pagdadamayan at pagmamalasakitan. Lalo't higit, ang Pagkakaugnayan sa larawan ng naglulupak ay nagpapaigting ng ugnayan ng Diyos at tao na isang komunal na ugnayan sa pamamagitan ng pananampalatayang may kabukasan at inklusibo – ang pagmamahal

²³ Ito ay mula sa salitang-ugat na “damay” na nagtataglay ng kahulugan na piliing samahan ang kapwa sa kaniyang pinagdaraan maging ito man ay sa emosyon, sa damdamin, sa suliranin at sa pisikal na aspeto o *solidarity*.

sa Diyos ay naisasakatuparan sa pamamagitan ng aksyon at pagkilos sa pagmamahal sa kapwa bahagi ng sangnilikha.

Ito ay ilan lamang sa mahahalagang Pagkakaugnayang katangian ng teolohiyang ekyumenikal sa pagsasalawaran sa pamayanan ng nilupak. Ang maka-Pilipinong teolohiyang ekyumenikal taglay ang Pagkakaugnayan ay hindi nilalagyan ng hangganan, bagkus ito'y nananatiling bukas tulad ng Pagkamakasaysayan at Pagkakailanan, nananatiling bukas sa iba't ibang mga posibilidad at kaisipan hinggil sa pagsulong ng teolohiyang ekyumenikal na lapat sa tunay na kalalagayan. Mula sa Pagkakaugnayan sa pagitang ng mga Simbahan sa Pilipinas ay patuloy na sinisikap ng maka-Pilipinong teolohiyang ekyumenikal ang pagbubukas ng mga mahahalaga at malawak pang ugnayan ng mapagkakaisahan kasama ang iba pang mga pamayanan ng mananampalataya halaw sa mga pagkatuto, karanasan, pakikipag-ugnayan, at pakikipamuhay sa iba't ibang sektor-panlipunan. Bagaman mayroong mga balakid, ang tunay na nagkakaisang pamayanan ay magpapatuloy sa pagsulong at sa paglikha ng mga ugnayan at pamamaraan sa pagtatanyag ng kaisahan mula sa pagbubukas ng kamalayan sa maka-Pilipinong teolohiyang ekyumenikal sa larawan ng pamayanan ng nilupak.

Paglalogom

Ang teolohiyang ekyumenikal ng nilupak ay patuluyang nagbibigay ng mga hamon para sa pagsulong ng Pagkamakasaysayan, Pagkakailanan at Pagkakaugnayan na kinababahaginan ng mga pamayanan. Tulad ng mga naunang binaggit sa pag-aaral, ang paglulupak, bilang isang tradisyunal at maka-Pilipinong pamamaraan ng pagbabayo mula sa sinaunang kasaysayan na nagpapatuloy maging sa kasalukuyan, ay mahalagang maging bahagi ng pinagtutuunan ng pansin ang tungkulin ng tagapaglupak. Kalimitan, hindi isang tao lamang ang tagapaglupak na naglulupak sapagkat ito ay nangangailangan ng sapat na lakas o kakayahang bumayo lalo't higit kung ang nilupak na ihahanda ay ihahain para sa mga iba't ibang handaan. Sa kasaysayan ng ating bansa, naging makabuluhan ito tulad na lamang sa panahon ng mga Katipunero, ng mga Pilipinong naghimagsik upang itanyag ang dangal ng bayan, ng mga sinaunang mananampalataya na buong tapang na itinidig ang mga iglesyang maka-Pilipino at mapagpalaya mula sa malakolonyal at makadayuhang pananaw, at ng nagkakaisang pwersa ng mamamayang Pilipino sa EDSA. Sa kasalukuyan, patuloy na mababakas na ang nagkakaisang mga tagapaglupak na sama-samang isinasagawa ito sang-ayon sa panaghoy ng bayan ay kapahayagan ng pananampalataya, pagtitiwala, at pag-asa sa tunay na pagkakaisa sa pagkamit ng kapayapaang nakabatay sa katarungan — isa patuluyang paglulupak taglay ang pananampalatayang pumipiglas.

Samakatuwid, ang paglulupak ay nagtataglay ng komunal na ugnayan sa pagitan ng kasaysayan at karanasan, ng pagkakaiba at pagkakatulad, ng pagkakaisa at pakikiisa, at ng mga tao na nakikibahagi bilang mga tagapaglupak kasama maging ang ugnayan sa sangnilikha. Hindi dapat mawaglit sa kaisipan na ang mga nilulupak ay bahagi ng sangnilikha at bahagi para sa sangnilikha.

Sa ganitong pagpapakahulugan sa sangnilikha, ito'y nagbubukas na hindi lamang ang mga nakikita ang bahagi nito, bagkus maging ang mga nilikhang hindi na abot ng ating mga paningin tungo sa isang mapagpalayang teolohiyang pumipiglas mula sa mapanakop at mapaniil na kaisipan. Ito rin ay nagbubukas sa pagkaunawa sa teolohiya patungkol sa Diyos ng kasaysayan, isinilang ang teolohiyang ekyumenikal mula sa mga panalangin, adhikain, at pangarap ng Diyos-na-naging-tao para sa buong sangnilikha. Ipinakilala ang pagkakailanan ng nilikha bilang bahagi ng kawing ng buhay (*web of life*). Ang mga pagkakaiba at pagkakatulad ay nagbigay ng kakaibang sikhay at diwa ng buhay na nagpupunyagi at nagpapatuloy sa kailanan ng pagsasakatuparan ng ekyumenismo. Nakikilala ang isa't isa bilang kaanib ng buong sambahayan sa pagsasagawa tulad ng isang buong pamayanan ng nilupak. Nagiging makabuluhan ang mga pagsasama-sama, pagtutulungan, at pagkakapatiran na nakalikha ng mga espasyo ng mabuting ugnayan. Ang ekyumenisidad ng ganitong uri ng sambahayan ay kinikilala bilang sambahayan ng pagmamalasakitan at pagdadamayan (*household of sympathy and empathy*). Ang mga ito ay naiisalarawan ng pamayanan ng nilupak bilang pagpapaigting ng maka-Pilipinong teolohiyang ekyumenikal sa pagsasapamuhay ng pananampalatayang pumipiglas.





*Sensing History: Developing a Keen and Deep Sense of History
(A Historiographical Message for the 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines)*

By Eric P. Baldonado

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Introduction

History does not concern only the past but also for us to make sense of our present and to help us chart the future. Eduardo Galeano, a Latin American thinker defines "History as a prophet who looks back: because of what was, and against what was, it announces what will be."¹

We are a result of historical processes and reasons whether personal or results of having been influenced by events in our involvement with the ministry of the church and engagement with the different struggles in society. Teodoro Agoncillo once said, "that maybe Emilio Aguinaldo should have died in the battlefield, and his place of honor could never have been questioned."² But then, I believe that history also is a good judge of character, and can never be a hiding place for evil deeds and mistakes, as Andres Bonifacio said, "Fear history because in it none of your deeds can be hidden!"³

In fact, whatever happened in our past lives should form part of the inspiration for us to live in the here and now. While living in this moment, we must not forget the lessons of the past because only in remembering may we be able to exorcise its ghosts and demons. George Santayana, prominent philosopher of history declares: "Those who do not remember the lessons of history are condemned to repeat its negative features".⁴ Thus, it is important that we work and struggle together so that we may be able to develop a keen and deep sense of history.

¹ Eduardo Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997), 8.

² Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *The Revolt of the Masses: The Story of Bonifacio and the Katipunan, Second Edition*. (University of the Philippines Press, 2017).

³ Ambeth R. Ocampo, *Bones of Contention: The Andres Bonifacio Lectures*. (Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2014).

⁴ George Santayana, *The Life of Reason: Reason in Common Sense*. (NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 284.

What is this sense of history and how is it developed? History, that of the church included, is a problematic area of life. There is the problem of perspective in historiography and general reckoning. Who writes and teaches history? Is the history we came to know our real story? Or is it simply “a fable agreed upon” as Napoleon Bonaparte once averred as in colonial or ruling class perspective? Or a propaganda (a lie repeated often becomes the truth according to Josef Goebbels, Hitler’s propaganda minister)? Or is it the story of lion being always told by the hunter as I remember in our Church History Class? Or maybe it is a history that has never happened, written by a man who wasn’t there, as an anonymous complaint goes?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer discovered the process of viewing history from the perspective of the suffering, the oppressed or those who are on the underside of history when he was thrown in prison by the Third Reich for his involvement in the assassination attempt on Hitler. He said: “It is an experience of incomparable value to have learned to see the great events of history from the viewpoint of the useless, the suspect, the abused, the powerless, the oppressed, the despised – in a word, from the viewpoint of those who suffer.”⁵

Colonial historiography, established as the standard, has significantly contributed to the process of subjugation by helping cultivate among Filipinos a negative historical consciousness. It put the accent on the so-called ‘pre-historic emptiness’ or out-of-history-ness’ (i.e., the total absence of a pre-colonial history), of the *Indios* and where colonization was presented as a cognitive and benevolent force.⁶

Historiography from the Underside of History

The history of Christianity on the whole suffers from revisionism and distortions.⁷ It is unfortunate that the main trajectory of the history of the Roman Empire and its Church begins from Constantine, the end of persecution

⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer as quoted in *Towards a Theology of Politics*, in *Theology, Politics and Struggle*, in the issue of *Tugon*, Vol. VI, No. 3, p. 3.

⁶ Ferdinand A. Anno, *The Pakikibaka Tradition and the Filipino Christian. Pakikibaka and Liturgy: Resistance Liturgics in the Philippine Setting* (unpublished). Union Theological Seminary – Philippines, 2006, 5.

⁷ Noel L. Baybay, Lecture on History of Christianity and Philippine Church History during the UCCP Upland Cavite Conference Lay Formation Program held at UCCP Gulod, Magallanes, Cavite on January 5, 2020. Noel Baybay is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. A regular lecturer of Church History in the UCCP and reviewer to the UCCP National Canonical Review and Exam.

and the start of toleration. It is the triumph of Christendom; the Christian Empire substituted for the Kingdom or Reign of God. It is the triumph of statist institutionalization while the original popular movement founded by Jesus Christ was almost relegated to the margins and even to what some would label as the underside.

In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church preached about heaven and spirit, but strove to acquire as much property and earthly power as possible. On the other hand, Martin Luther preached the ability of each individual to interpret the Bible, but ended up siding with the aristocratic rulers and against peasant revolutionaries who fought against economic and social oppression. According to Marx, this new form of Christianity, Protestantism, was a production of new economic forces as early capitalism developed. New economic realities required a new religious superstructure by which it could be justified and defended.

"Ecclesia reformata sic semper reformanda" (The church reformed and always reforming). But even reforms are not enough. Reformation involves patching up, repairing something that is still structurally workable. Luther and other Reformation movements failed to restore the church as a popular movement for change. The changes were institutional. From a Catholic institution to a Protestant one; merely changes from the top. Baron-landlords were still oppressing the peasants; the same baron-landlords who protected and sponsored Luther.

Luther and his contemporaries frowned upon the Zwickau prophets and the Anabaptists springing from the Peasant War, movements from the underside of history. Later, Catholic and Protestant-dominated states forced the Anabaptists, Waldensians and Albigenses naked out of the churches, burned them as witches, and massacred them in their communities, resisting or not.

Michael Servetus, a Spanish theologian escaped burning at the stake by the Spanish Inquisition only for the sentence to be carried out at the instigation of Protestant John Calvin in Switzerland (thus removing a possible last challenge and thereby cementing Calvin's status); from Catholic to Protestant persecution.

Reformation from the top caused the separation of the Church of England from Rome with King Henry VIII becoming its head. He at once persecuted

the Carthusians, a Catholic order beloved of the people by demolishing their monasteries as well as those who were eventually disgusted by his policies. The restiveness of the English subjects against institutional Anglicanism saw the emergence of the Dissenters, Puritans, Methodists and others.

A group of people called the Pilgrims sought economic and religious freedom by sailing to Plymouth, Massachusetts in what is now the United States on board the ship Mayflower. For 70 years, guided by the Treaty of Squanto, they coexisted in friendly terms with the natives who taught them how to plant corn and zucchini and to raise turkeys. These arrangements were not to last forever as the English Crown learned that colonialism is a lucrative endeavor and supplanted the original intentions of the Pilgrims. Genocide was practiced and the natives were forcibly removed to reservations. The denominations prospered and were likewise institutionalized and less than 300 years later became tools of colonialism in the Philippines. Protestant mission became a cultural-religious weapon to mitigate the harsh effects of the war of aggression by transforming the Filipinos into brown Americans.

Let it also be remembered that earlier, England rejected the planting of poppy imported from Turkey within its homeland and the merchants had to look for another place. Poppy is the plant from which opium is produced. So, they fought the Opium War against the Chinese in the 1840s who also, understandably, rejected what was bad for the English. It was simply a war to force convert China into a plantation for poppy and a market for opium. On board the same warships were Protestant missionaries. Thus, while the soldiers were forcing the Chinese to become drug addicts, the missionaries introduced another addiction – the religious kind. Marx, therefore could not be wrong when he wrote that religion is the opium of the people.

Any change that involves only the institutional top and does not factor in the people at the grassroots and margins is sadly lacking. More so if the same institution becomes reactionary to the movement of the grassroots by conniving with the state powers in suppressing it. Of what use if the 5 *Sola* or doctrinal pillars of the Reformation are committed to memory and the ecclesiastics' dogmas ring hollow in the ears of the hungry and dispossessed?

Some quarters attempt to exonerate Luther by arguing that he was not thinking along class lines. He might not be thinking aloud but there ingrained

in his consciousness is his petty bourgeois development as a result of his upbringing as an academic and intellectual in the comfort zone of his university (funded by Elector Frederick himself). When at first, he cautioned the baron-landlords, that was his remnant peasant and miner background coming back in sparks inside his consciousness but in the end his comfortable petit bourgeoisie extinguished those sparks. He may have courageously fought (and there was no doubt about it) against the Catholic institution but then it was only from another institutional perspective -- and while he may not have coined the term -- that of Protestantism. The peasants would not have cared for all the intellectual sophistication and theological jargon. They looked at Luther as a traitor to his original class.

We of the church may have come from class backgrounds like or unlike Luther. But we are still working for a church institution and have to relearn the movement character of the church as intended by Jesus. The institutional character of the church tells us to be more or less formally established or fixed in our doctrines and systematically organized in our bureaucracies (we prefer the term polity). We cannot, however, deny the fact that the capitalist and the contractual laborer, the landlord and the peasant sit side by side in the pews. We pretend to be brothers and sisters even as our relationships are built on exploitation. For so long, our leadership structures are patterned after the larger society's norms.

Yet a part of us -- our training and formation tells us that the righteousness of God actually means standing straight and solidly with the people, that God's righteousness means solidarity. And that this righteousness is paired with justice. And that this righteousness and justice builds peace. And that this peace is shalom, the total welfare and well-being of people. And that the immediate victims of the lack of shalom are the people below, the ones fighting to survive existence in the underside of history.

And so, having renounced our comfort zones of the petit bourgeois class into which we developed, we would no longer see the reformation as a continuing process. In fact, reformation has to end. No more patching up and repairs. Total overhaul is now needed. Total and encompassing change has to happen. We now have to participate in that revolutionary change process which we prefer to call transformation. It is not to be our own sole initiative and invention. It is necessary to develop a class-consciousness no different from

those who live and struggle down below. We call them the *ptochoi* in Luke and the *ptochoi to pneumati* in Matthew – the economically poor, the poor in spirit which means those who are deprived of life, the poor who are suffocated by the powerful who try to monopolize the life-giving breath of God, the Spirit of God. The poor who hunger and cry but who have learned to fight back. We who are not necessarily economically poor and may be actually comfortable are asked if we are ready to be suffer deprivations and persecution on their behalf. We are offered to be *makarioi* (blessed or happy) like the poor by deciding to take up our crosses as their companions and comrades as they take their rightful place in God's Reign. Will we mind and be afraid of joining the poor even if they are named the proletariat? Because, in factories and farms, in cities and countryside, that is who they are. Can and shall we deny ourselves and form a new identity with them?

Luther's Reformation succeeded partly because of the support of influential and wealthy German barons. This sponsorship was cemented by Luther's endorsement of the suppression of German peasants' revolt. He succeeded in establishing a new version of the Church but failed to reckon with the more far-reaching movements. And so we have the Muntzerians, Anabaptists, Waldensians, Albigenses, Cathari and others whose adherents were mostly from the peasant and the emergent industrial laboring class. They suffered and died for their righteous heresies under both Roman Catholic and Protestant orthodoxy.

Here in the local scene, for the past 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines (1521-2021), according to Orly Putong:

Filipino (Christian) history is predominantly seen through the lens of Spanish and American historiography. During the nationalist ferment of the late '50s up to the early '70s, there were attempts to challenge these predominant views of history. These can be seen through works such as the 1946 pamphlet "Peasant War in the Philippines," which was anonymously reprinted in the Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review around 1958; "Revolt of the Masses" by Teodoro Agoncillo; "The Philippines: A Past Revisited" by Renato Constantino; and "Philippine Society and Revolution" by Amado Guerrero.

But in the course of history, we cannot deny nor omit its colonial origins. Colonization projects require ideological justifications in order to hide their economic and political motives. Christianity was introduced to us by Spanish

conquistadors as part of their colonization project. The cross was used as an extension of the sword, converting colonized barangays into Christian subjects.

To solidify the Spain's hold on a pre-nation-state colony, our native culture was erased from our collective consciousness. Native religion was seen as blasphemous devil worship. Our babaylans became witches or aswangs.

Catholicism became a cultural apparatus to pacify natives. Our ancestors were taught to obey the word of God as interpreted by the colonizers, lest they suffer eternal damnation. They were taught that salvation should not be sought from this material world, but from the afterlife. Be a good and obedient subject now and go to heaven in death, or else suffer in hell.

Patriarchy and other feudal values were also perpetuated through religion. Women, who in pre-colonial times were of equal footing with men, were relegated to a subservient role.

The end of Spanish colonization did not put an end to the role of religious institutions as cultural apparatus. It was eventually used by American imperialists, who introduced capitalistic values to justify their "benevolent assimilation."⁸

Filipinos, it is said, suffer from historical amnesia; that we do have a weak sense of history. It is further averred that we are a forgetful people because we love so much to adhere to the saying: "History repeats itself". EDSA I was not enough and therefore EDSA II happened. Erap's hordes almost succeeded in their own "EDSA III". The result of the last May 9 (2022) polls also attests to this truth. The dynasty of the late dictator, tyrant, and fascist President Ferdinand Marcos will regain power three decades after the family, mired in corruption, brutality, and violations of human rights, was ousted by the 1986 People Power Revolution, and forced to flee in public shame. It is not, however, that we are historical amnesiacs. It is so because as a people, we simply do not know what to believe. With so many myths, lies, and half-truths in our historiography, history when studied in schools becomes boring especially when the concentration is on names, dates and places. When we were young, we have always believed what we were told, that Magellan discovered the Philippines. With realization brought about by a critical,

⁸ Orly Putong, *Class Struggle: On the History of Christianity in the Philippines*, Article on Rappler, March 17, 2021. <https://www.rappler.com/voices/imho/opinion-history-christianity-philippines/>

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radical, and liberated perspective, we now say that Magellan discovered that he was in the Philippines.

A lot of people believed that Martial Law during the regime of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos was the “economic golden age” of the Philippines. The Marcoses are bent on revising history and its narratives to erode its horrors through social media. In a 2016 New York Times article a number of people said that during that time “the Philippines was the leader of Asia,” “life was easier under Marcos,” and “the economy was booming.” However, the essential truth is that the Philippine economy suffered its worst postwar or recession by the end of the dictator’s regime. We lost our standing as an economic leader in Asia. Marcos’s years were the darkest time in Philippine history. It was the golden age for corruption, external debts, and abuses. And the sad reality today is that the nightmare of a dictator’s rule still haunts us today. It is so because Filipinos win revolutions but it is always the elite beneficiaries who savor the victory. The same dominant elite ruling class profit from the struggles of the poor.

Indeed, we cannot separate the history of Christianity in the Philippines with the Filipino people’s history of struggle. According to Eleazar Fernandez:

"The history of the Filipino people is a history of struggle: a struggle to form a nation that truly embodies the sentiments and aspirations of the people, and a struggle against the negative forces, both with and without, that continue to abort the people's cherished dreams. Though oppressed and despite the fact that many have accepted their plight with resignation, Filipinos have risen from the culture of silence to reclaim their rights as a people. The long history of oppression did not totally crush the spirit of the Filipinos. Filipino history is not only a history of exploitation, betrayal, cowardice, and subservience to both local and foreign powers, it is also a history of resistance and struggle."⁹

Learning from History Towards a New History and Historiography

Historically, the church had played a politically significant role in the Philippines, mainly on the side of the counter-revolution (change). The church continues to do so through timid silence or varying degrees of conscious collaboration with the status quo or those who are in power. The church has become part of the problem, not the solution of our national ills. “Perhaps it

⁹ Eleazar S. Fernandez, *Theology of Struggle*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1994).

may be safe to say that the massive weight of the political power of the churches in the Philippines – both Catholic and Protestant – has erred on the side of depraved humanity, otherwise the process of socio-political transformation in the land may not have been so arduous and not have languished for so long in our land.”¹⁰

Protestant theology in the Philippines has largely been private and personal, and it has not dared to go public to address the burning social and political issues of the day.¹¹ Suarez argues, there was a notorious marginality of the Protestant Churches in their engagement on socio-political issues. But given the increasing number of highly educated evangelicals in the Philippines, there is much that they can contribute in the solving many ills of Philippine society.¹² Protestantism in the Philippines is associated more with ... theological views that have emerged from the religious life of the American frontier than with the tradition ... engendered by the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The result is a watered-down ... Protestant Christianity that simply does not have the... theological depth of the Reformation or the social, economic and cultural expressions that the Reformers initiated. This is not only sad; it is also a ... great impoverishment....¹³ This is where the church must dare to exercise her prophetic witness and to exorcise the ghost of the pro-imperialist consciousness (including theologies).¹⁴

The church (including the Protestant Church) has remained reactionary on ideological, economic and political grounds. Their institutional, personnel, material, and ideological resources have been utilized by the ruling class to promote a culture adapted to the dominant economic and political system. They have played a dominant ideological role in molding feudal and neo-colonial outlooks and attitudes among the vast majority of people since

¹⁰ Levi V. Oracion, *God with Us: Reflections on the Theology of Struggle in the Philippines*. (Dumaguete City: Silliman University Divinity School, 2001), 29.

This is also the thesis of Oscar Suarez' in *Protestantism and Authoritarian Politics* and though he refers largely to Protestantism, it also applies to the general praxis of all Christian churches in the Philippines.

¹¹ Oscar S. Suarez, *Protestantism and Authoritarian Politics: The Politics of Repression and the Future of Ecumenical Witness in the Philippines*. (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1999). Suarez advances the thesis that Protestantism in the Philippines, for much of its history, has contented itself to move within the confines of the church and that of the human soul and seemed timorous in addressing, let alone wrestling with the critical issues that affect the life of the nation as a whole.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹³ Feliciano V. Cariño, "Editorial," *TUGON: An Ecumenical Journal of Discussion and Opinion*, Vol. VIII, No. 1 [1988], 2.

¹⁴ Melanio L. Aoanan, *Militant Engagements of Protestant Churches in Contemporary Socio-Political Issues* (Unpublished), 2020, 4.

Christian beliefs and practices were well integrated in Philippine culture and in the Filipino's daily existence."¹⁵

Generally speaking, this can be attributed to the Euro-North American theologies or Protestant Evangelical theology brought over to the Philippines by American missionaries. Suarez' points out that "the beginning of American rule marked the entry of the Filipino into the Western liberal world. The Americans regarded education as the most effective strategy in inculcating American ideas and spirit that would eventually teach them to forget their emotional yearnings for independence."¹⁶ According to Luna Dingayan:

"Their theologies are centered on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who offers forgiveness of sins, a transformed life of joy, righteousness and peace in this world, and eternal bliss in the life hereafter. But the believer is expected to respond with a life that is free from sin and one that is spent in love and service to God and one's fellow human beings.

If one is blessed with power and riches, one is counseled to be charitable, but if one be poor, one is counseled to work hard, be industrious and thrifty; if one could not do anything about one's own condition, one is taught to be patient and to endure those hardships of life, and trust in God's mercy and care, and he/she will surely be blessed with God's rich rewards.

It is a religious faith that is intensely personal whose principal concern is to be in right relationship with God and others, and thus be assured of heavenly reward after death. The world is perceived as a realm of sin where the powers of hate, selfishness, and greed hold sway, and the believer is warned not "to be conformed to this world" but to maintain a life of righteousness that they may be effective witnesses to the grace and glory of God that the world may repent and believe. For the church, her principal reason for being is to evangelize and make disciples of all human beings."¹⁷

However, in the course of history, it is also worth mentioning that there were Christians and church people who were transformed and expressed their faith by taking the side of the people's struggle. "The institutional church was united with the colonial power in reacting to the 1896 revolution of the Filipino

¹⁵ Orientation Paper on Political Work, Christians for National Liberation, National Congress, April 2017, 35.

¹⁶ Oscar S. Suarez, *Protestantism and Authoritarian Politics: The Politics of Repression and the Future of Ecumenical Witness in the Philippines*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1999, p. 22.

¹⁷ Luna Dingayan, *Christology of Struggle* (unpublished thesis), 1998, 31-38.

people. But there were the Filipino priests and the multitude of Christians who sided with the revolutionary movement and found no unbridgeable gap between the revolution and their faith. As a matter of fact, they saw themselves as the true Christians fighting for justice and the Spanish religious authorities as factors of iniquity.”¹⁸

The Filipino people who are subjects of oppression, also saw Christian teachings as a source of liberation. During Spanish colonization, struggles for liberation and equality took religious forms such as the secularization movement, which resulted in the execution of the GomBurZa, and the Confradia de San Jose of Hermano Pule. Some revolts also held masses and recognized religion, such as the revolt of Dagohoy. Resistance was everywhere. Even if resistance to Spanish rule is considered heresy, and would lead to persecution and eventual death. Filipinos from all walks of life and sectoral groups join the revolution.

During the Martial rule in the Philippines, church people were also instrumental in resisting the despotic and fascist one-man rule. On February 17, 1972, the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) was founded at the worship room of the Sampaloc University Center in Manila on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Fathers Gomez, Burgos and Zamora. Seventy-two revolutionary disciples of Christ gathered to bear the “cross of sacrifice” and raise the “red banner of revolution”. They described themselves as a revolutionary organization of church people who had been challenged by social realities and their Christian faith to take part in the new democratic revolution. The church carried the issues of human rights violations and social inequalities perpetuated by the Marcos regime. Church people played a crucial role during the EDSA People Power movement that ousted the dictator.

Today, there is a rising trend of prophetic criticism of the present system and a growing involvement in the work of social transformation among church people. In order to sustain this and even increase its momentum, and for the church to transform her reactionary character and her tendencies to be used or coopted by the ruling class that perpetuates oppressive structures and systems in the society to justify and legitimize its rule, and the strong current clerico-fascism and anti-change zeal among church leaders and members, we

¹⁸ Orientation Paper on Political Work, Christians for National Liberation, National Congress, April 2017, 33.

need to popularize the theology of struggle and theology of resistance (*o mga iba't-ibang teyolohiyang pumipiglas*). A theology which sprouted out of the struggle of the Filipinos and it is a faith reflection on the struggle. It is not something that fell down from above for us to grasp and use. But it is a theology that is embedded primarily on the experiences of the suffering and struggling Filipino people. The basis of its theological reflection, analysis and interpretation is based on the marginalized Filipino communities' context or situation.

As prophets, we are challenged to form part of the movement of people particularly the underprivileged struggling to tell their collective stories in order for a genuine history to come out. History must be seen as a process where people strive to carve out their path to development and transformation without the aberrations and distortions coming from the enemies of the people of God. We must put a stop to history being written by those who have red-tagged, vilified, demonized, and extrajudicially executed heroes and prophets.

In our day, majority of the Filipino people suffer from increasing poverty,¹⁹ oppression and exploitation that have weighed heavily upon them since the basic problems of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism prevailed. They continue to suffer as far as the most concentrated expression of these evils the imperialist comprador landlord rule maintains its power.

The masses have been struggling since there is no area of our country, no sector of our people that has not broken out in some form of protest and resistance. Their sporadic and scattered struggles are flowing into the current of the new democratic revolution, the one historically viable solution to their misery. It is a national democratic struggle against imperialism and its native collaborators. In this movement of the Filipino people towards liberation, we believe that God is at work, calling us to take part in working out our common salvation in history.

¹⁹ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), xxi. "In the final analysis, poverty means death: lack of food and housing, the inability to attend properly to health and education needs, the exploitation of workers, permanent unemployment, the lack of respect for one's human dignity, and unjust limitations placed on personal freedom in the areas of self-expression, politics, and religion."

Our societal problems will not and will never be solved by what the church institution had been doing for centuries. Occasional donations, charity, a few feeding programs, orphanages and skills training are done to soothe guilty consciences and to boost egos. Almsgiving which originally meant justice-giving became just that, giving of alms of a few coins. According to Gustavo Gutierrez: "Charity is today a 'political charity.' ... It means the transformation of a society structured to benefit a few who appropriate to themselves the value of the work of others. This transformation ought to be directed toward a radical change in the foundation of society, that is, the private ownership of the means of production."²⁰

Developing a Keen and Deep Sense of History as a Church

Five centuries of Christianity in the Philippines have passed, I believe that it is about time we move on towards transformation - holistic transformation of both the church and society or toward the building up of the reign of God. God's reign encompasses all aspects of our human experience - our social, political, and economic systems, and seeks the establishment of a new world order wherein access to the means of livelihood is guaranteed, the products of human labor is not exchanged as commodity - but for the benefit of all, and individual skills are harnessed toward social responsibility and not to glorify the power of the few. This then is the fulfillment of the prayer and mission of Christ, *"Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"*.²¹

The church is faced with the challenge to advocate the full establishment of God's reign, and is therefore called - not only to a life of personal spiritual devotion but also to be in solidarity with all movements sincerely struggling for genuine social transformation. It is in this incarnation of the faith - in an awakened and organized communal effort - that the church realizes a new way of being Christ's body in a world groaning for life and its fullness.

The church must fully embrace her true identity as a popular movement of change and the dynamic movement of persons who desire to live together and have "everything in common"²² - from each according to one's ability,

²⁰ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 116.

²¹ Matthew 6:10

²² Acts 2:44; 4:32

and to each according to one's need; and her calling and commitment to join the march toward liberation and a world without class distinction.

It is incumbent upon the church to identify and participate in the suffering and struggle of the people, the continuation of the biblical roots of the poor crying for land and freedom. This struggle for national liberation and democracy is the historical expression of our vocation to spread God's reign which we are called upon to proclaim as tangible gains to our people here and now. The church must embrace this struggle to achieve her own liberation.

The church must work for the transformation of society. Historically, the church had played a politically significant role in the Philippines, mainly on the side of the counter-revolution. The church continues to do so through timid silence, acquiesce, or varying degrees of conscious collaboration with the status quo or those who are in power. The church has become part of the problem, not the solution of our national ills. Admittedly the church in varying ways, has worked in connivance and complicit with the lords of society to preserve what is foisted upon people -- especially the poor -- as the natural and normal order of things.

"Religion is an opium of the people"²³ and the church has become reactionary and anti-revolution (anti-change) because her theology anoints, permits, and legitimizes the existence of reactionary and anti-people policies and promotes teachings about heaven to forget the exploitation that is happening here on earth. It is a misleading concept that is opposite to the hope for a just and humane society, and for a meaningful and abundant life for all.

But Christianity began as a revolutionary movement that cared for and defended the poor, and it was persecuted for the sake of defending the poor. In the course of history, the state or the political power took the church by its side and became the enemy of the people in ideology, politics and economics. The culture that it lives out and promotes is decadent and anti-people. It is best that we regain and reclaim the revolutionary history and character of the church by going back to its roots, so that it will serve the interests of the people, especially the poor, oppressed and deprived.

²³ Karl Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, in Karl Marx: Early Writings, ed. and trans. T.B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), pp. 43-44.

The church can be transformed. This is the reason why Jesus confidently said that he will build his church. Jesus called, formed and sent out the 12 seemingly hopeless, clueless, and bumbling disciples. He commissioned them to *"go and baptize all nations and to teach them all that I have commanded you"*.²⁴ Jesus knew that a permanent change is coming to wipe away all structures and systems falsely created by false gods. And that permanent change is called Kingdom of Heaven or Reign of God, a genuinely new order of peace, and justice. The world has to experience that new order.

The transformation of the church entails the rediscovering, recovering and moving forward the movement character of the church. We do not reform the institution. We do not transform the institution that continues to be plagued by historical revisionism. We work for the withering away of such institution.

Challenge: From Amnesia to Anamnesis

The 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines is not just a single event in history. It is a continuation of the past struggles for change as seen in the lives of those who are in the underside of history. It is also a herald of future struggles proven by our present desire and efforts as God's people to seek - not just reform - but a total overhaul of the oppressive socio-political and economic system that has engulfed us. It is not the prophets and their courage, not the heroes nor the event, but the power of the God of peace that we must see alongside God's agenda to transform both the church and society towards a meaningful and abundant life for all or *"shalom"*. Jesus' vision was to do the will, plan, and agenda of God for humanity and the whole of creation that all may have life and have it abundantly, and the mission of Jesus to make God's will happen is through radically reversing or turning around the so-called "triangle" or the triangular social structure in the society.

In our case today, this can be done through the church's initiative and active participation for the resumption of peace talks in the country. Peace talks is one of the available platforms for the Filipino people, especially the poor to voice out to the government their agenda of economic sovereignty and independence, and social justice via genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization among other major programs.

²⁴ Matthew 28:19

Jesus once said to Peter, one of his disciples, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people".²⁵ Fishermen during Jesus' time are the poorest among the poor in the society. So, when Jesus said to Peter, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." He is actually inviting Peter to listen and really understand the plight of the poor, be in solidarity with their struggle, and embrace their cause towards their total emancipation and full realization of peace based on justice in the society. Because the Kingdom of God belongs to them. Yes, we have to follow Jesus and be with the poor. Jesus, a peasant Jewish Cynic who faithfully and sincerely advocates for a genuine social transformation during his time. His teachings encouraged his audience to critically analyze and realize their situation and work for their total liberation and transformation. His strategy was the combination of free healing and common eating, a religious and economic egalitarianism, and compassionate and revolutionary teachings and actions.²⁶ Following Jesus is siding and being with the poor. Following Jesus is fighting with the poor against all their enemies. Following Jesus is being friends and allies of the poor. Following Jesus is giving your moral and material resources to the poor and to their cause like Zacchaeus did. Following Jesus is giving up your life to your friends – to the poor as Jesus said, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends".²⁷ This is the true meaning of discipleship, identifying yourself with the poor, marching with them towards victory even to the point of sacrificing your own life for them and to their cause. Remember, if we follow Jesus, we will never go wrong. We must continue to follow Jesus for it is only in following him we will belong to God's Kingdom.

Just like in the time of Jesus, there will be forces that will attack and do everything they could, including various methods of sabotage, to thwart the peace process and the full realization of a genuine and lasting peace. In spite of this, the good news is that the God of history is with us. In this endeavor we must always see God as our companion. Our being God's prophets entails developing a keen sense of history because our God is a God of history. The Book of Exodus introduces to us a God who has observed the misery of God's

²⁵ Mathhew 4:19

²⁶ John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus a Revolutionary Biography*. (New York, USA: Harper Collins Publishers,1994).

²⁷ John 15:13

people, heard their cry, knows their sufferings and came down to deliver them out of slavery to a land flowing with milk and honey.²⁸ This is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To complete this sense of a God of history, however, we must bear in mind that this is the same God of Sarah and Hagar, of Rebekah, of Rachel and Leah, of Bilhah and Zilpah. We cannot recite the names of the twelve sons of Jacob and forget their sister Dinah, Tamar, Miriam, and the daughters of Zelophehad. This God of Israel is also the God of Filipinos, Burmese, Indonesians, Indians, Africans, Koreans and others. This is the God of the poor, exploited, and impoverished toilers of Lupang Ramos, Kapdula, Salawag, Tartaria and Patungan seeking to reclaim their land from those who have monopolized the milk and honey.

Remember all these. But how, exactly must we do our remembering? Is it simply to remember that when we are hungry and thirsty, we must eat and drink all we can of the milk and honey, or of the food, bread and wine and never mind the rest? Paul was reprimanding the Corinthians for this attitude. He had to recall the meaning and essence of the Lord's Supper.²⁹ The Lord's Supper must be a communion, a symbol of oneness and community, not of greed and opportunism. Neither are we to partake of our own bread and wine today in equal and token portions during the ritual and continue the reality of want in the midst of plenty or plenty in the midst of want. Communion as a symbol must mirror reality. Reality creates its own symbols. Our reality does not end today. It continues in the future as a vision. Communion must be a continuing history of sharing. Without a sharing community, history ends. Without a vision of development for everyone, the march of history will not happen.

"Do this in remembrance of me," Paul recalls Jesus saying. Remembrance in Greek is *anamnesis*. Anamnesis is not a simple recall. In its proper sense, it is a reenactment of the past as if it were happening in the present. The Jewish reckoning of history, Albert Nolan writes is looking at events and people of the past as in front; the future. Filipinos say the same: "*Ang nakaraan, ang mga nauna sa atin* (those who have passed, those who have gone ahead)." History therefore should be a confluence of past, present, and future. The Corinthian Christians of Paul's time were exhorted to relive the

²⁸ Exodus 3:1-10

²⁹ I Corinthians 11:23-26

essence of communion in the celebration of the Lord's Supper previously instituted by Jesus Christ. Jesus himself was aware that he was celebrating that supper in an atmosphere of historical remembering of the Passover. He lived the essence of Passover by offering himself as the new sacrificial lamb. Historic continuity is what we see here.

Our succeeding actions therefore will answer the question as to whether we have developed that sense of history.





~END~

