

**THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY:
CASE STUDIES OF PREACHERS OF THE CHURCHES OF
CHRIST IN BICOL, PHILIPPINES**

Ross B. Wissmann

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews**



2014

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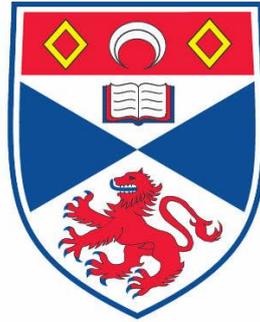
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**The Christian Ministry:
Case Studies of Preachers of the Churches of Christ
in Bicol, Philippines**

Ross B. Wissmann



This thesis is submitted in fulfilment for the degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

**St. Mary's College
St. Andrews, Scotland
1st July 2014**

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For

Cheryl, my wife

Aaron, Rebekah, Jessica, and Andrew, my children

Braiden and Jad, my grandsons

Kevin and Heather, my parents and Dot, my mother-in-law

Joseph, Mel, Gani, Jun, and the other ministers of the Churches of Christ in Bicol

The faculty and staff of ICCM

Dr. Mario I. Aguilar

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Glossary of Ministerial, Filipino, Tagalog, and Bicolano Terms

Including abbreviations, explanations, and peculiar Filipino usage of English

- abaca:** Manila hemp. This is a species of banana, native to the Philippines, grown as a commercial crop, and harvested for its fibre.
- anahaw:** The palm or the leaves of a palm found in much of south-east Asia. The leaves are particularly used for thatching both traditional and high-end tourist buildings.
- anay:** White ants or termites.
- Ang Pasko ay Sumapit:** Roughly translated, Christmas has arrived or Christmas is here.
- araw araw:** Literally, “day, day” meaning daily, day by day, every day, or all the time. Filipinos often repeat the same word to emphasize intensity or continuity.
- aswang:** A white witch who sucks the spirit out of a person.
- ate:** Oldest sister.
- awit:** Song, hymn.
- bagyo:** A typhoon or a tropical cyclone. Typhoon Durian/Reming (November/December 2006) resulted in 1,399 deaths. The Philippines gives local names for typhoons different from the international ones.
- bahala na:** Main meanings are “what will be will be,” or “leave it to God or fate,” or “come/happen what may.” Subsidiary ideas include “do what you want, it’s up to you, but be ready for the consequences,” or “never mind or it does not matter,” or to tolerate a person to allow him/her to do what he/she wants by just leaving him/her alone. It is a philosophy of life and a significant core of Filipino attitudes. The term is deterministic, passive, and fatalist.
- bahay:** House or home. *Sa bahay–bahay* is house to house.
- bakla:** Homosexual, transvestite, gay, a male-bodied person who is attracted to men, but only the one who plays the female part. In the Philippines, *baklas* are often considered a third gender, and many dress or identify as women. The stereotype of a *bakla* is a cross-dresser who works in a beauty salon. See also *silahis*.
- balikbayan:** Literally, returning to one’s place, home, or country. These are Filipinos who go overseas seeking employment. Some may be absent for the length of a tourist visa, others are on contract for one to five years and others migrate permanently. Also known as OFW’s (Overseas Filipino Workers) or OCW’s (Overseas Contract Workers), about 11% of the total population of the Philippines is a *balikbayan*. USA has nearly 3 million, Saudi Arabia more than a million, and Malaysia just on 1 million. Canada, UAE, Japan, Australia, Qatar, Spain, and the United Kingdom also have significant Filipino populations. *Balikbayans* work as domestic helpers and maids in Hong Kong, caregivers, nurses, physical therapists, and radiologists in Western countries, truck drivers, construction workers, and mechanics in the Middle East, factory workers in Taiwan, “entertainers” in Japan, seamen on cargo ships, and waiters and musicians on Caribbean tourist cruises. It is not uncommon for a Filipino doctor to undergo retraining to become a nurse in a foreign country. Typically, a *balikbayan* will send \$US100.00 or \$US200.00 home to his/her extended family each month. Extra money is remitted at Christmas and *pasalubong* is always brought when the individual returns to the Philippines. OFW remittances represent 13.5% of the Philippines’ GDP. In 2009, this amounted to about US\$17.348 billion.
- barangay:** The smallest local government unit in the Philippines and is the native Filipino term for a village, district, or ward. Also known as a *barrio*, it is a community-level government complete with its own elected officials. One of its major roles is brokering peace in personal or neighbourhood disputes. There are about 42,000 *barangays* in the Philippines. In the absence of police, one of the important functions of the *barangay* is to maintain law and order, particularly at night.
- barkada:** Tagalog slang for a friendship group, usually very tight-knit and usually formed when young.
- barong, polo barong and barong tagalog:** An embroidered shirt of the Philippines worn untucked over an undershirt, mostly by men. Traditionally, they were made from pineapple, banana, or abaca fibers and usually were translucent. Today, they are also

made of cotton, polyester, and/or linen blends. A *polo barong*, often just referred to as a *barong*, is short-sleeved and semi-formal, and used for office wear. A *barong tagalog* is long-sleeved. Those made of traditional fibers are a common wedding and formal attire. Formal *barongs* are worn with black dress pants and shoes. The city preachers almost always wear *barong tagalogs* although the Bicol men often wore *polo barongs* to preach.

barrio or **baryo**: District or neighbourhood, borrowed from Spanish, also may mean a rural village.

bautismo: Baptism, a transliteration from the Spanish.

bayanihan: Working together for mutual benefit, community cooperation. It originates from the practice of local volunteers helping a family to move to a new place. Literally, the house is carried to its new location by putting bamboo poles under the house. The men lift the bamboo poles on their shoulders and walk it to the new location. This is still done.

Bicol: Region at the southern tip of the island of Luzon, composed of six provinces: Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon, Masbate, and Catanduanes.

Bicolano: The language of Bicol. Of the ten dialects of Bicolano, fewer than 3,500,000 out of the 5,000,000 Bicolanos speak one of them. The language is very fragmented so that its dialects are often mutually incomprehensible to speakers of other dialects.

BID: The Bureau of Immigration and Department, a Philippine government department.

bolo: Similar to a machete, a *bolo* is a large cutting tool, used for clearing vegetation and agricultural uses such as cutting sugar cane. It is also a military weapon and was used in the rebellions against Spain, United States, Japan, and by Muslim and NPA (New People's Army) insurgents to the present. A *bolo* was used in the assassination attempt against Imelda Marcos in 1972.

brownout: Blackout, electrical failure.

buhay: Life.

bundok: Mountain. It is one of the few words imported into English from Tagalog but changed to *boondocks* or *boonies* and meaning inaccessible or remote rural areas.

bunso: The youngest child in the family who is sometimes given preferential treatment as this is the child that the parents expect will take care of them in their old age. Occasionally in large families where there is a large time gap between youngest and second youngest child, the second youngest may also be *bunso*. While the *kuya* (oldest boy) and *ate* (oldest girl) are usually highly respected and followed, the *bunso* is often able to assert himself/herself because of the parental preferential treatment.

calabasa: The vine vegetable usually known as pumpkin or squash.

calamansi: A citrus tree bearing a small green fruit, native to the Philippines.

cellphone: Mobile phone. The use of cellphones is extremely widespread in the Philippines. Filipinos believe themselves to be the "texting capital of the world." The average cost to send a text is only P1 (1p) and often times there are promotions where the user can send an unlimited number of texts all day for about P20 (25p). There is no cost to receive a text. The cost for a cheap secondhand cellphone unit is only P500 (€6.25). Cellphones have revolutionized communication in the Philippines. Every one of the Church of Christ preachers in Bicol has one but not one of them has a landline telephone. Before the availability of cellphones in the late 1990s, the only way to send a message from Manila to Bicol was literally to go in person. The Philippines does have a postal system but it is underused and thought to be unreliable. Using abbreviations and Filipino colloquial English are the norm. Texting is done in all languages but English is approximately one-third shorter than Tagalog. Miscommunication in texting is prevalent.

CHED: Commission on Higher Education. The government accrediting body for tertiary education.

chismis: Gossip.

cockpit: A pit used for cockfighting where the owners fight cocks against each other to gamble. The building is usually circular with tiered seating surrounding the pit itself. Cockfighting is legal in the Philippines and every town has a cockpit.

CR: Comfort room, the usual name for the small room that doubles as both a bathroom and toilet.

crab-mentality: The term alludes to crabs in a bucket where one tries to escape but the others pull it down. Even within families, it is often due to vengeance, jealousy, or rivalry. It is used to refer to people who pull other people down, denigrating them rather than letting them get ahead or pursue their dreams. Thus it is a short-sighted selfish thinking that says “if I can't have it, neither can you.” Sometimes, it simply is wanting part of the action or benefit and as a result, neither can achieve.

Cristo also **Kristo:** Christ

datu: Local leader, clan leader, minor royalty, usually a little lower but similar to a sultan.

Dep Ed: Department of Education and of course a government department.

DOLE: Department of Labor and Employment, a Filipino government department. There is also the DOLE food company that operates plantations in Mindanao but no reference is made to that company in this thesis.

dress: As a noun, it can refer to male as well as female clothing and mean any set of clothes or a piece of clothing, not necessarily a blouse or skirt.

duwende: In Filipino mythology, dwarves with special spiritual powers, hobgoblins.

DVBS: Daily Vacation Bible School. Basically a Sunday School programme held for a few hours each day for a week, usually in the summer holidays.

EDSA: Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, but always known as EDSA, is the main 10-lane circumferential road of Metro Manila. EDSA was the site of two peaceful demonstrations that toppled the administration of two Filipino presidents—the People Power Revolution of 1986 against Ferdinand Marcos (EDSA 1) and the EDSA Revolution of 2001 against Joseph Estrada (EDSA 2).

exhortation: Another word for preaching, and can be done not only in a church service but also at a birthday party, in a government office, on a bus, in a home, and in the open.

G12: A charismatic background teaching that originated in Columbia and has come to the Philippines via Singapore. C. Peter Wagner is heavily involved with this group. This teaching is proving very divisive in Churches of Christ as a group of progressives have modified and adopted its principles but the conservatives are openly hostile.

gabi: Also known as taro, it is inedible and toxic when raw. Both the leaves and the roots are eaten when cooked.

habang buhay na: All my life, forever.

Himig ng Pasko: Literally, time of Christmas.

hiya: Shame, loss of face, loss of respect, embarrassment, a state of dishonour, disgrace or humiliation. But *hiya* is not just a feeling or an emotion. *Hiya* is a motivating factor behind behaviour for it forms the basis of most etiquette. A Filipino believes one must live up to an accepted standard of behaviour but if he/she fails to do so, shame is brought not only upon oneself, but also upon one's family. A Filipino can lose one's self-esteem if he/she is publicly embarrassed, criticized, or does not live up to expectations. Public displays of criticism, shouting at, or being overly emotive towards someone are all thought to be shameful. If a person has an issue that one needs to take up with a Filipino individual, it should always be done quietly, and in private if possible. The result of *hiya* might be anger, a strong resentment, or even volatile rage. For example, if a person misunderstands an innocent comment from a friend, completely out of character and without warning, the person can pick up a bottle and throw it at the unsuspecting friend.

ICCM: International Christian College of Manila, located in Antipolo, Rizal, is a CHED accredited Bible college of Churches of Christ.

iglesia or iglesya: Church, religion, or chapel.

INC (*Iglesia ni Cristo*): Church of Christ, but not a part of the Restoration Movement. Originally, this group in the Philippines spelt their name with a “K,” *Iglesia ni Kristo* but today, the “C” is normally used. Felix Manalo, who founded the church in 1914, believed that he was sent from God to reestablish the church in its true form because the original church was apostatized. The INC denies the doctrine of the Trinity and the Divinity of Jesus. They also believe that they are the only true church.

jeepney: A popular inexpensive public transportation, jeepneys were originally refurbished US military jeeps left over from World War II but are now purposely built in the Philippines, seating fifteen to thirty passengers. If the jeepney is full, males will also cling on the outside, sit on the roof, or even the bonnet. The jeepneys have regular routes and fixed fares but no set stops and so they can be flagged down much like a taxi.

JIL (Jesus is Lord): The church which is led by the founder-pastor, Eddie Villanueva. He is noted for running for president as well as leading the church. It is a Pentecostal group that began with fifteen members in 1978 but now claims 6,000,000 members in forty-four countries, but mostly in the Philippines.

jingle: The common euphemism used of male urination. It is not uncommon, even in the city, for males to urinate outside or on the street. To save water, males will do this even when a house has indoor plumbing.

Jollibee: A Filipino fast-food chain like McDonalds specializing in rice and fried chicken.

jueteng: Lottery.

kagawad: An elected government official for the *barangay*. *Kagawads*' functions include maintaining peace and order, endeavouring to eradicate drug addiction, maintaining cleanliness, beautifying the community, and promoting the well-being of the youth.

kaingin: Slashing and burning, usually associated with subsistence farming.

kami mayong-mayo: Bicolano for "we who have nothing at all."

kamote or camotes: Sweet potatoes or yams. They are regarded in the Philippines as the food of the poorest of the poor. It can also mean someone who is a dimwit or a blockhead or someone who has little hope of succeeding. "To plant *kamotes*" is a common Filipino idiomatic phrase that is somewhat insulting. It means to give up, go home, and admit you are a complete failure.

kasalanan: Sin, wrong-doing against God.

katulong: Maid, servant, live-in helper.

KJV: King James Version, 1611. Filipinos also call their oldest Tagalog version translated at the beginning of the twentieth century as the KJV but that is not referred to in this thesis.

konte lang: Literally, small only, thus meaning a small amount only.

kulang: Short, insufficient.

kuya: Oldest brother. Much respect and deference is always shown to him.

LET: Licensure Examination for Teachers. Like a bar exam for the legal profession, it is necessary to pass this in order to teach in government schools.

LMCI: Libmanan's Protestant minister's association.

lolo: Grandfather but can be used of one's parent's father's brother or even a grandfather's cousin.

longanisa: A popular sausage in the Philippines, not unlike a mild salami, it is even on MacDonald's breakfast menu. It has laurel among its ingredients.

lotto: The gambling authorized and run by the Filipino government Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. Individuals buy tickets and the drawing of the winning numbers is aired on both radio and television.

mabuhay: Long live, long life.

mag or nag: A prefix added to the front of a Filipino or even an English word to make it a verb. *Mag* is present tense and *nag* is past tense.

magpahag: Confess.

mag-standby: One who sits on the front steps and watches the traffic go by. Often these are people who are unemployed or under-employed. Often, they have a welfare mentality.

Maharlika Highway: The main north-south highway on the island of Luzon, beginning in the north at Aparri, Cagayan, running south through Manila, and then the entire length of Bicol.

MAPEH: A Dep Ed mandated subject in Filipino high schools including elements of music, arts, physical education, and health. Other major subjects in Filipino high schools include Filipino, English, Mathematics, and Science.

Mas mahalaga pa sa nga perlas: More Precious than Pearls.

Mateo: Matthew.

mensahe: Message, sermon.

merienda: Snack, morning or afternoon tea.

mga: Inserted before the noun, this makes it a plural. It is not unusual, however, in Taglish, to add the English “s.”

monggo: Mung bean. Filipinos use them in many ways but particularly as a thick bean soup, similar to a pea and ham soup. *Monggo* is also put in bread rolls and used as an ingredient in various desserts.

Moro: Islamic peoples particularly in Mindanao, about 6% of the Filipino population. There are ten Moro ethnic groups, although other smaller tribes are also called *Moro*, as the majority of their populations are also Muslims. The term came into use during the colonial period, when the Spaniards used the term *Moros (Moors)* to describe Muslim natives.

New People’s Army: See NPA.

ni: Of.

ninong (masculine) ninang (feminine): Similar to godparent. Also as a sponsor at a wedding.

nipa: A palm tree whose leaves are used as a roof material for thatched houses. The *nipa* hut, also known as *bahay kubo*, is the traditional house of the Philippines, constructed with bamboo floor and walls with the thatched roof using *nipa/anhaw* leaves. It is still used in rural and slum areas but also for resorts.

NPA: The New People’s Army is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines that conducts guerrilla tactics and collects “taxes” from citizens and business owners in areas they control. Because of their activities, movement in many rural areas at night is hazardous. The Philippine army and police operate numerous checkpoints across highways to attempt to neutralize their efforts.

padjak: Bicolano for a bicycle with a sidecar, used for transporting one to four or more passengers short distances in crowded *poblacion* areas. They are often used in poorer areas instead of the motorized tricycle.

pag-aaral: Bible study.

pagahuhukom: Judgement day.

paghahayag: Confession of faith, as with Edward the Confessor.

pagpapatuloy kay Kristo: Continue in Christ, thus meaning for an individual to continue to grow and be an active Christian.

pagsisisi : Repent.

pakikisama: Smooth interpersonal relationships. In a positive sense, it is the ability to get along, implying camaraderie and togetherness. On the negative side, it requires conformity with the majority, a sacrifice of individuality and creativity, even to the point of subjugation of doing what is right. This is a core concept.

pamangkin: Niece or nephew but can also be used of one’s cousin’s children.

paninindigan: Our position, our stand, or our way of thinking.

panalangin: Prayer.

pananampalataya: Faith or belief. As in English, Tagalog has two words for the Greek word, πιστις (*pistis*). This one corresponds relatively closely to the way faith, rather than belief, is used in English.

paniniwala: Faith or belief. The second Tagalog word for πιστις (*pistis*). This one corresponds closely to the English usage of belief as in mental assent.

papaya: Also known as paw paw, papaw, or tree melon, this is the poor man’s fruit, not a vegetable.

papuri: Praise.

parin: Also.

pasalubong: Greeting gifts. It is imperative that all returning Filipinos remember their family and friends by bringing gifts on their return journey.

patay: Dead.

patola: Also known as loofah, it is a vine whose fruit is harvested before maturity and eaten as a vegetable. The ripe, dried fruit is also the source of the loofah or plant sponge.

PhilHealth: Philippine Health Insurance Corporation. This is the compulsory government health insurance. As it is contributory, only those who are in reasonably paid fulltime jobs are covered.

pika pika: Assortment.

pinsan: Cousin but can be used for nearly any distant relative.

pls.: Filipino abbreviation for “please.”

poblacion: Town centre.

problema: Problem. There are a number of original Tagalog words that could be used to translate problem but the tendency is to borrow from Spanish or English. Filipinos regularly present any challenge or question as a problem or *problema* and use that terminology.

prospect: A person who is seemingly interested in Christian matters and thus may be interested in greater involvement in the church or active Christian affairs.

purihin natin: Our praise, our songs, our worship.

Restoration Movement: See under Churches of Christ, page 20.

sa: One of the very few prepositions in Tagalog and so has an extremely wide variety of meanings.

sakop: Regionalism, dominion.

sala: Lounge room. Every house, even the smallest and the poorest, has a *sala*. This is used particularly for receiving guests, and the place where the television is put. As it is very important for Filipinos to welcome their guests, they are asked to come inside and sit in the *sala*. Food as well as a drink like Coca Cola is usually offered. The host or the hostess may quickly borrow money and send another family member off to buy drinks and snacks for important visitors.

sari sari: Literally means “variety” but it is usually used in reference to a small convenience store usually located on the front of a private dwelling and found on every street across the nation. Common commodities sold include soft drinks, alcohol, lollies, crisps, biscuits, cigarettes, rice, cooking oil, salt, sugar, instant coffee, shampoo, soap, *yelo*, and small tins of canned goods such as sardines, corned beef, and evaporated milk. Usually the goods are purchased at the supermarket in the nearest big town and sub-divided into individual servings wrapped in plastic. Thus one buys cigarettes by the stick, Cokes opened from a small glass bottle, poured into a plastic bag and straw added, small sachets of shampoo enough for one hair wash and three-in-one coffee enough for one cup, and enough salt and oil in small plastic bags for cooking one viand for one meal.

SEC: The Securities and Exchange Commission is the Filipino government organization responsible for regulating the securities industry and including the registration of company names.

silahis: The male who has relations with the *bakla*. He is not understood to be a gay. It is nearly taboo to talk about him. *Silahis* literally is the “double blade,” and thus the one who is said to have bi-sexuality.

singspiration: Song service or congregational singing, usually at the commencement of a time of worship.

small business: Any transaction or business, never registered with the government, usually commercial and of the middle-man variety, set up by an individual or family with the purpose of supplementing income. *Sari saris* are the most common but others include raising pigs, growing vegetables (as with Jun), vendors selling items like frozen goods (Joseph), soft-drinks and water, peanuts, combs, door mats, knives, and even bamboo beds, handyman services (Jun and Charlie) and on the more up-market end, sweat shops producing clothing or souvenir items. The initial investments can be quite high (P20,00.00 [£250.00] and more) and the greatest majority are sooner or later economic failures as many of the would-be-entrepreneurs do not differentiate between income and profit. As much of the investment capital is borrowed, the lender is not repaid and so needs to be avoided socially. In an attempt to alleviate poverty, many westerners have set up micro-lending co-operatives with varying degrees of success. The vendors sell door-to-door, at traffic lights, at *sari sari* stores, on a folding table on

the street, or at the market. Those without a license at the market quickly disappear when the police or *barangay* officials come by.

sportsfest: A basketball tournament particularly played over the summer months.

sumulod: Follow.

Taglish: The term that Filipinos use when they speak a combination of English and Tagalog. Filipinos rarely speak only Tagalog and often insert numerous English and Spanish words as Tagalog has simply borrowed from those languages since the time of Magellan. Filipinos themselves often have a difficult time understanding pure (referred to as “deep”) Tagalog-only speeches.

tanod: A local volunteer who has been deputized to carry out basic security functions for their *barangay*. This includes basic police functions such as arrests. They are usually armed only with a baton.

tao: People, the masses, the common people.

Tatlong Hari: Three Kings. Feast of Epiphany, 6th January.

thanksgiving: At least in the churches, Filipinos are aware of the American Thanksgiving traditions and sometimes celebrate it as a church with a fellowship meal complete with a roasted turkey. However, when a preacher refers to a thanksgiving, he is usually referring to a birthday party at which there is a religious service including prayers for the birthday celebrant and a sermon delivered by the preacher. Such birthday celebrations are lavish affairs, especially for the first, seventh, and eighteenth birthdays.

thirteenth month salary: Under Filipino law, each worker is to receive a monthly salary at the beginning of the month. At Christmas, usually around the 15th December, he/she is to receive an additional month’s salary known as the thirteenth month salary.

tricycle: A motorbike with a sidecar attached, used for local public transportation.

tsinelas: Open footwear which is known as flip-flops, thongs (Australian), also known in the Philippines as slippers. They are made out of rubber, plastics, or leather. Unlike Myanmar and other south Asian countries, the *tsinelas* is understood very much to be casual footwear and so are not permitted in government buildings. However, a pair of *tsinelas* is often the only footwear poor people own and some do not even have them. A cheap rubber pair only costs P25 or P30 (31p or 38p). When needing to walk through the rice paddies, on unformed roads and tracks, and during the wet season, they make more sense to use than enclosed footwear. Besides walking, they are used for sitting on (rather than directly on the ground), playing basketball in, and swatting cockroaches.

UCCP: United Church of Christ of the Philippines. This denomination is not to be understood as a part of the Church of Christ although it does have some historic roots with the Restoration Movement. The UCCP is primarily a uniting of Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Disciples of Christ and United Brethren Churches established in 1948. A split in the Restoration Movement in the Philippines in 1926 resulted in two groups, the Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ. The Disciples group joined the UCCP.

ukay-ukay: Either a secondhand clothing store or the secondhand clothes themselves. These *ukay-ukay* stores are found in every shopping area. Even though much clothing is made in the sweat-shops of the Philippines, container-loads of used clothing are imported into the country. The general name of the stores derives from the UK (United Kingdom) as apparently, some of the original imports came from here many years ago. Many designer-label and good quality clothing are included. Some especially good items may be sold for P200.00 (£2.50) but most shirts sell for P100.00 or P50.00 (£1.25 or £0.63).

uling: Charcoal.

utang: Debt, social debt.

utang na loob: Literally, debt of gratitude. Filipinos understand it to be a debt on the inside or a debt from within. This is the social compunction to return a favour when the need arises. It can be extremely onerous forcing a reluctant individual to do things that are against one’s ethics and values. High moral Filipinos can writhe in emotional turmoil

and lose sleep for weeks when someone to whom they have *utang* asks them to do something they know is not right. They feel compelled to repay the *utang* and go against their conscience.

viand: An English word that is often used by Filipinos. Tagalog is *ulam*. Usually it means the main dish of the meal. For poorer Filipinos, most meals are one viand, often just about two ounces of meat served with two or more cups of white steamed rice.

videoke: Similar to karaoke where a musical entertainment machine provides pre-recorded accompaniment to popular songs. The words are provided on the video screen and the local performer sings live on a microphone. It is not uncommon for the performer, off-tune, often drunk, to sing suggestive songs night after night, into the early hours of the morning at high volume. There are noise regulations in some *barangays* but mostly, it is just tolerated. There are also Christian karaoke.

wake: The traditional Filipino custom is to hold a wake for seven days after a death. The closest relatives are not supposed to sleep, wash, or cry during the wake. These days, the body is placed in a coffin by a mortuary and set up in a chapel, a funeral parlor, or the *sala* in the deceased's home. It is not unusual for a tent to be erected on the street while the friends, family, and neighbours play cards, gamble, consume alcohol, and eat all night. Christians hold a service each night of the wake. The Protestant service lasts for about an hour and includes singing, prayer, Bible reading, preaching, and testimonies or responses from the deceased's family. Christians wear white, not black, during this time. Wearing red is not considered appropriate as it is the Chinese colour signifying good luck. At the end of the wake, a final burial service is held and the mourners walk behind the hearse on the way to the cemetery.

wala: No, none.

walang pera: No money.

walang permanenting trabaho: No permanent work.

walang problema: No problem, no worries, no concern.

welfare mentality: The term derives from the mentality often associated with the person who is on welfare or government social security benefits. It is also known as dependency, entitlement, or "give-me give-me." The individual expects others to give to him/her without further reason and this is his/her right. The individual can be highly emotional, extremely irrational by western standards, and even violent if he/she is not given as he or she expects. Not surprisingly, this mentality is often associated with low self-esteem, underemployment, unemployment, and poverty. The person caught in this vortex finds that he/she is in a downward spiral of ever lower self-worth and the inability to be pro-active.

yaya: Babysitter. This is usually the job of a teenage girl, often who did not complete high school and often a relative. Most middle-class Filipino households hire at least one servant (*katulong*) and duties include cooking, laundry, and cleaning. Well-to-do families will hire one *yaya* for each child, a house-boy for jobs such as the gardening, outdoor work and maybe cooking, and/or a driver. Most house-helpers live in.

yelo: Ice, often sold as a six inch chunk in a plastic bag at the *sari sari*.

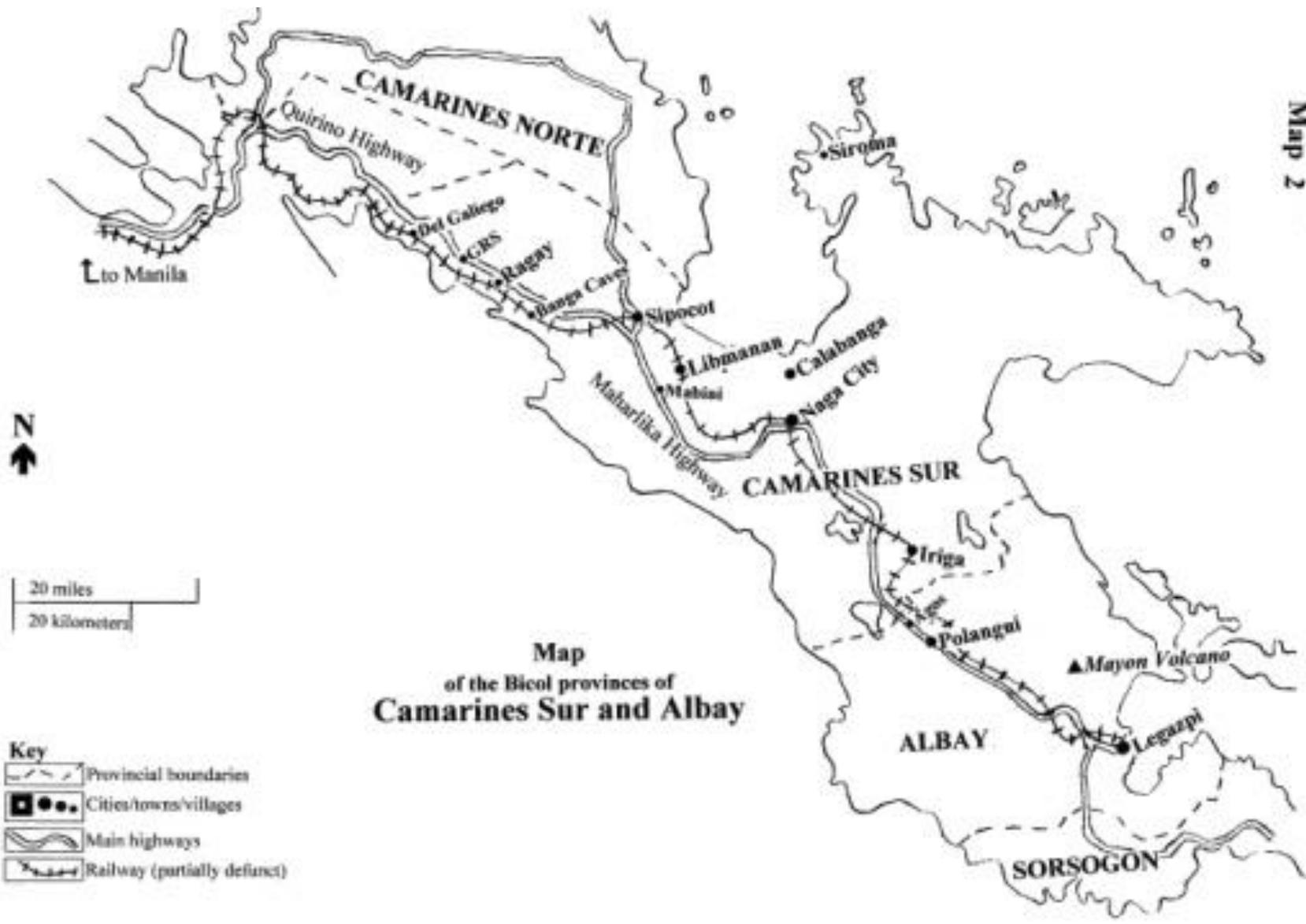
yero: Corrugated iron roofing.

Maps



Map 1
Map of the Philippines and the Bicol provinces

Map 2



Map of the Bicol provinces of Camarines Sur and Albay

- Key**
- Provincial boundaries
 - Cities/towns/villages
 - Main highways
 - Railway (partially defunct)

Abstract

This thesis examines the challenges faced by the ministers of religion in Churches of Christ (Restoration Movement) in Bicol, Philippines. The goal is to do theology from below, not from above, as pastoral ministry must come from the experience of those who practice it, not from textbooks. The pastoral perspectives of the dilemmas that the ministers raise are heard, observed, documented, and then reflected upon. To do this, case studies of four preachers are used and the *mga problema* that they present are explored with them.

As a result, first, I introduce some of those challenges which are perplexing on the ground level and which appear to be under-researched in serious theological circles, especially in an Asian context. Second, I hope that these case studies can be used to stimulate reflection in ministerial and spiritual formation. Third, I document some of the theology and methodology of the Churches of Christ, particularly as practiced in the Philippines.

Chapter 1 explores the dichotomy between the perceived satisfaction in the pastoral ministry with the crisis of role and identity. In particular, issues such as forced exits and stress are presented while baptism and preaching are scrutinized. Chapter 2 centres on the conundrums experienced in planting a new church and being the lone planter. Chapter 3 examines three challenges—the task of ministering in a home congregation, the issue of accreditation in ministerial training, and how the minister can be a success and grow the church. Never far from the thoughts and actions of any of the Bicolano ministers is the *problema* of poverty, so Chapter 4 considers some of the Filipino, personal, and spiritual complexities of poverty, delineates a number of factors that need to be taken into consideration in any effort to overcome this malady and concludes with a particular reference to ministry.

Introduction

Intention, context, and resources

This thesis examines the challenges faced by the ministers of Churches of Christ¹ in Bicol, Philippines, for my aim is, as Martin Stringer puts it, that “at the heart of all anthropological analysis, lies the goal of putting people being studied first, and understanding the world from their point of view.”² Mario I. Aguilar, in *Ministry to Social & Religious Outcasts*, points out that we need to do theology from below, not from above, as pastoral ministry must come from the experience of meeting people, not from textbooks.³ Frances Ward counsels that there is “no point in doing theology from the ivory tower of pure theory: you need to be immersed in culture and contemporary issues.”⁴ David Lyall reports about a young man who decided to train properly for the ministry, had earned a degree in philosophy, and was nearing completion of his Bachelor of Divinity. He received orientation for his chaplaincy work and set out to visit patients on one of the hospital wards but within thirty minutes, he returned distraught. “‘When I met these people, I had nothing to say,’ he confessed. ‘What has all this study been for? Four years of philosophy and three years of dogmatics and when I encounter real people I don’t have a word for them. I have been wasting my time!’”⁵ Using an analogy from baseball, Ray S. Anderson is afraid that “‘academic theology’ may suffer from the ultimate irrelevance—it has nothing to do with the outcome of the game.” He describes his

¹ The preferred word that the ministers themselves use to refer to the challenges they perceive is *problema* (singular) or *mga problema* (plural). For an explanation of the term Churches of Christ, see page 20 below. For the most conservative brethren, the inclusion of the definite article denotes an exclusivity of their particular branch of the movement. Some of them believe that only the members of their group will be saved and go to heaven. In general, members of Churches of Christ (and this thesis) both use and omit the definite article before the term Churches of Christ without distinction unless in a minute defined discussion.

² Martin Stringer in Helen Cameron, et al., eds. *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 89. In this book, as many chapters are without authors and where authors are given, they are writing sub-chapters with similar names, no chapter names are included in these footnotes.

³ Mario I. Aguilar, *Ministry to Social & Religious Outcasts* (Eldoret, Kenya: AMECEA Gaba Productions, 1995). See especially x and xi.

⁴ Frances Ward in Cameron et al., 18.

⁵ David Lyall, *The Integrity of Pastoral Care* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2001), 22.

own experience of having a “theology that could talk but that would not walk.”⁶

John Swinton and Harriet Mowat observe:

One of the most persistent criticisms of academic theology is that, rather than encouraging the activity of faith, it can create a significant distancing from the life of faith. The questions asked of scripture and traditions from within the academy are often quite different from the questions asked by the Christian community. Consequently, theologians who do not take cognizance of the importance of contextual questions frequently fail in significant ways to address the needs and problematics of particular situations that are of vital significance to the people of God.⁷

My intention is to hear, see, observe, and try to understand these men in Bicol and reflect on the dilemmas they raise as ministers of Churches of Christ in the Philippines. To do this, I use case studies of four preachers: Joseph Sevilla, Ismael (Mel) Pel, Isagani (Gani) Ibarrentos, and Juan (Jun) A. Bataller Jr. Thus, this is not an examination of all the ministry of the Bicol churches; rather it focuses on the ministry by those who are ministers. This is not an evaluation of the ministers either from the standpoint of their congregations or of outsiders but instead I seek to let those who are doing the job have their voice. I attempt to highlight the issues that matter to them, how they view their work, and from there, begin reflection. As by-products, I have three desires.

First, I aspire to take cognizance of and stimulate reflection on some challenges in ministry which are perplexing on the ground level and which appear to be under-researched in serious theological circles, especially in an Asian context. My objective is purely an academic one and is not meant to give offence to any church, individual, or custom. My aim is not to give solutions or answers even though I suggest a few. While numerous theological and faith-based concepts will be mentioned, I am not presenting a well-ordered, well-rounded system of beliefs, or a systematic theological treatise, and I will not attempt to delve into each aspect of commonly held Christian beliefs. For example, churchmen generally believe that prayer works, however I make no attempt to theologize on this.

⁶ Ray S. Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 7 and 12.

⁷ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 14.

Second, the hope is that this thesis can be used to stimulate reflection in ministerial formation institutions that will facilitate them in achieving better equipped ministers. However, I am not attempting to provide an evaluation of ministry formation although this will figure into what is reported as the men reflect on their preparation for ministry. As Ward gives seven anchor ropes that she hopes will be an anchor net for supervision of lifelong learning, it is trusted that this study will provide a resource for renewed vigor and practice of ministry.⁸

Third, I desire to contribute is a small way to the “denominational cultures” that Philip Richter encourages. Despite denominational labels becoming less significant, he contends that they have not been superseded for the type of church the person attends will still have reference to one’s past denominational connections. As no individual congregation is wholly idiosyncratic, it is patterned by the larger environment which formed it.⁹ Interspersed throughout this thesis will be some of the practices and principles of the Churches of Christ, a brand name that retains a staunch following for Filipino members whether they live in the Philippines or overseas. I interview a number of selected leaders and pursue participant observation of services as Richter suggests but I will go beyond that and give some of the theology and methodology. My aim is give thick description, as advocated by Clifford Geertz and others, of various unique or eccentric thoughts and practices of Churches of Christ rather than to present an historical overview.¹⁰

As I am centreing on the challenges that the Church of Christ ministers in Bicol, Philippines perceive, there are three contexts from which to begin: ministry, Church of Christ, and Philippines. Before defining various parameters and methodology, I consider some resources for these three fields.

⁸ Frances Ward, *Lifelong Learning: Theological Education and Supervision* (London: SCM Press, 2005).

⁹ Philip Richter, “Denominational Cultures: The Cinderella of Congregational Studies?” in Mathew Guest, Karin Tusting and Linda Woodhead, eds., *Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a Post-Christian Context* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate Publishing: 2004), 169–184.

¹⁰ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1973 [2000]).

Ministry resources

Don S. Browning's *A Fundamental Practical Theology* is the basis of numerous current studies in the field of practical theology. He asserts that a theological method that starts with description of a congregation and its context is legitimate. Theology should not be done from above, as doctrine imposed on experience, but from below and so should begin from the point of life and experience.¹¹ James F. Hopewell, in *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, has a fascination for congregations that has been a major contributing factor in spawning congregational studies on both sides of the Atlantic. Each congregation is to be treated as an independent identity and have its own meaning expressed in a story.¹² In some senses, David J. Bosch's *Transforming Mission*, is ordinary to those who grew up in Church of Christ thinking for his appeal to the New Testament models of ministry and his ministry by the whole people of God are concepts strongly held in Churches of Christ and other smaller denominations for two centuries. In a wider context, however, Bosch is extremely valuable for he puts missions and the New Testament back in the forefront of academic concerns. He is aware that we have an emerging paradigm, one he calls postmodern, that may take decades or even centuries to develop. He asserts that it is not yet clear which shape it will eventually adopt, however in this emerging paradigm, he wants a contextual theology that is from below, from the underside of history, and its main interlocutor being the poor or the culturally marginalized. In contradiction to Barth, Bosch says that a theologian can no longer be a lonely bird on a rooftop but can only theologize credibly with those who suffer.¹³

Only a few post-Browning and post-Hopewell texts can be mentioned. James Woodward's and Stephen Pattison's *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* points out that there is no universally accepted definition of either pastoral theology or practical theology. While it is certainly possible to define

¹¹ Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology; Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

¹² James F. Hopewell, ed. by Barbara G. Wheeler, *Congregation: Stories and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

¹³ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991). See pages 467–474 and 420–425 in particular. Terminology is largely his.

them clearly, it is probably not very useful to do so but it is better that the student delineates these subjects as broadly as he or she would like. So, as this field is a wide open and developing sphere of activity, almost infinite in scope, limited only by the amount of time and resources that one has to devote to it, it starts with practice. However, they suggest significant commonalities including focusing on contemporary practices, issues, and experiences that are a concern for the Christian community. Among their essential characteristics of practical theology are that it:

2. finds an important place for human experience
3. is committed to looking at the world through the “lenses” of a particular committed faith perspective and lives with “huge black holes” in understanding and experience
4. is unsystematic and always be flexible and provisional
6. is contextual and situationally related, committed to being a kind of “local theology”
8. takes contemporary people’s experiences seriously as data for theological reflection, analysis, and thought, and
11. [is] interdisciplinary.¹⁴

As noted above, Swinton and Mowat expect theologians to take cognizance of the vital contextual questions to address the needs of the people of God. In counterbalance to Ray Anderson, they point out that “This is not to suggest that human experience is a locus for fresh revelation (a new script) that will counter or contradict the script provided by scripture, doctrine and tradition,” rather it is “to recognize that the questions that we ask of scripture and theological traditions always emerge from some context. The questions that emerge in the light of human experience of God are often different from those which emerge from the solitude of the academic’s office.” They do not envisage a well-ordered, well-rounded system of beliefs but they expect that “because of its starting point within experience, practical theology tends not to be (sometimes quite self-consciously), a unified, systematic discipline. Instead it offers fragments and themes that emerge from particular situation and contexts.”¹⁵

¹⁴ James Woodward and Stephen Pattison, eds. *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000). See pages xiii and 1–19 principally. The terminology and numberings are theirs. I have only included items that are of particular interest to this thesis and thus there are numbers missing.

¹⁵ Swinton and Mowat, vii and 3–14. See also Anderson, *Shape*.

Swinton and Mowat want us to use qualitative research in order to provide accurate data for theological reflection and they devote an important chapter on outlining and justifying such qualitative research. For them, there are two models of knowledge: nomothetic and ideographic. The two research approaches are not bipolar opposites but need each other. They highlight that, because of the ascendancy of the scientific model of knowledge, nomothetic discourse frequently has been prioritized at the expense of ideographic with the latter being downgraded to mere opinion or only description. Rather, they suggest, that ideographic or qualitative research be taken as authentic. Their example is of the scientist who uses nomothetic knowledge at work, defining truth and fact in terms of replicability, falsifiability, and generalizability. However, when the scientist goes home, he knows that he loves his wife and children intuitively through ideographic knowledge. The quest for practical theology is not for objectivity and explanation as much as meaning and deeper understanding. Stories are not meaningless personal anecdotes; conversely they are important sources of knowledge. No doubt building on Geertz's concept of description, interpretation, and understanding, these are key terms for qualitative research.¹⁶

Ray Anderson, in his *Shape of Practical Theology*, says that there is no necessity for a dichotomy between theology and practice but that they should be an interactive loop. He is concerned that too many become teachers in a divinity school without themselves having served in ministries so his proposals include that faculty teaching academic theology should be experts in church growth, evangelism, and equipping members of the church for ministry. He revises Don Browning's model of practical theology to insert his "Christopraxis" at the core and what he labels a Trinitarian theology as the foundation.¹⁷ Without digressing into the intricacies of his theology of the Holy Spirit, it is well appreciated that all ministry is God's ministry and all ministries are forms of Christ's ministry.¹⁸

¹⁶ Swinton and Mowat, 28–72.

¹⁷ Browning, *Fundamental*, 10–11.

¹⁸ Anderson, *Shape*, various pages but see 318–326 and 6–63. Anderson presents some of these same themes when he edited *Theological Foundations for Ministry: Selected Readings for a Theology of the Church in Ministry* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979).

Unlike the expectations of Bosch and other writes such as John Drane, neither the Filipino preachers nor the Filipino society as a whole are particularly post-modern. It is unclear yet whether the Philippines will follow the general paradigm of the West or whether they will emerge with their own variation. Furthermore, a considerable amount of the post-Browning academic literature centres on the non-parish aspects of ministry so that, although Lyall's *The Integrity of Pastoral Care*, for example, wants to reaffirm the contribution of ordained ministry to the life of the church, he confines much of his book to the counseling and chaplaincy aspects of ministry.¹⁹ Without denigrating Lyall or specialist pastoral ministries in general, there is little about the parish reverend going about his daily duties preaching, teaching, administering the sacraments, visiting, chairing parish council meetings, and otherwise being a part of everyday parish life. As all four of my case studies are local parish orientated, a number of pre-Browning works on ministry are still valuable but I will leave mentioning these to the context to which they are specifically applicable.

Finally, in the context of ministry, Aguilar's *Ministry*, concentrating on third-world outcasts and their lack of relationship with the church, asks how we can make our Christian values more dynamic and relevant to them.²⁰ In his and L. J. Lawrence's paper, "Changing Models and the 'Death' of Culture," the conclusion is that cultures do not exist and that "humans share common understandings and meanings, aspirations and dreams, social institutions and the absence of them, however they do not share a culture."²¹

Following Bosch, Don Browning, Woodward and Pattison, Swinton and Mowat, and others, I hope that the perspective of this thesis originates from below. I will understand ministry as beginning with the human experience of the preachers themselves, focus on the selected contemporary challenges as expressed by these preachers, look through the lenses of a particular committed faith perspective, and not

¹⁹ Particularly see John Drane, *Cultural Change and Biblical Faith: The Future of the Church: Biblical and Missiological Essays for the New Century* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 2000), vii–x and 121–127 and Lyall, xv.

²⁰ Aguilar, *Ministry*. See especially xiii.

²¹ See "Changing Models and the 'Death' of Culture: A Diachronic and Positive Critique of Socio-Scientific Assumptions," in Aguilar, and L. J. Lawrence, eds, *Anthropology and Biblical Studies: Avenues of Approach* (Leiden: Deo Publishers, 2004), 299–313.

be afraid to be fragmentary, unsystematic, and interdisciplinary. No overt attempt will be made to assert the workings of God by this author but quite clearly, as Woodward and Pattison expect, it is admitted that both I and the preachers of Bicol have a committed faith perspective.²² As with Aguilar, the desire to make our Christian values more dynamic and relevant, I am sure, will be seen permeating throughout this thesis. Likewise, I agree that people do share common understandings, meanings, aspirations, dreams, and social institutions as well as the absence of them, however they do not share a culture. This is completely contradictory to not only the common Filipino mindset and also much of the philosophy of the educational elite in the Philippines.²³

²² Woodward and Pattison, 13.

²³ It is ironic that the narrow assumption that Filipinos believe that they have a distinctive culture, at a furtive glance, nearly becomes a distinctive cultural and a universal paradigm. Filipino culture and Filipino values are almost holy grail bywords, challenged at one's own risk and used, by the less kind, to discriminate against anyone with whom one disagrees, especially foreigners. See Thelma B. Kintanar, et al. *Cultural Dictionary for Filipinos* (Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1996). Jose V. Abueva, in the forward (page ix), writes, "From its conception, I envisioned this University of the Philippines Cultural Dictionary for Filipinos as a handy reference to the concepts and ideas that constitute the common body of knowledge and understanding which informed Filipinos actually share or ought to share as fellow citizens. It is by definition a dictionary of what every Filipino should know to be culturally literate." F[elipe] Landra Jocano writes in his *Filipino Value System: A Cultural Definition* (Metro Manila: PUNLAD Research House, 1997), 1-14: "The purpose of this study is twofold: First, to describe the core elements of Filipino traditional value system. Second, to propose alternative interpretations of these core values in a manner consistent with local knowledge and cultural experiences." He goes on to assert that "we need to free our minds from the biases of the old colonial value-models," "romance our culture," and "free ourselves from the current 'exogenous blinders' which, in the guise of modernity, have degraded our values." Having some nationalistic pride is understandable, but on occasions when I have needed to deal with strident assertions, it is easy to point out that what is presented emphatically by an often irate individual as Filipino culture is in reality not held by all Filipinos and especially not the middle class. I have been personally told on more than one occasion that to be Filipino and have Filipino culture, one must be a Catholic. It comes as something of a shock, then, to the Protestant individual with whom I am dialoging and who insists on adhering to his or her concept of Filipino culture, is, by the definition of many Catholic Filipinos, not a Filipino at all. Uncritically, Filipino Values is taught in schools and enshrined in law. See, for example, the description of classes for Values Education in Philippine Association for Teacher Education, *PAFTE Journal*, Vol. XIV, 2005, 100-103. It is believed by many that in some ethereal way, such values are distinctive to Filipinos. Contrary to what Jocano seemingly advocates, most if not all Judeo-Christian ethical concepts are usually included. A simple appeal to a Biblical text can hold sway, even in a court of law. At the end of the day, however, the content of Filipino values becomes whatever anyone wants it to be. In agreement with Aguilar, then, at the very heart of what is believed to be the Filipino cultural norm, there is only the notion of the norm. However much there is of the desire to be in harmony with the Filipino culture, there is in fact only an undefined group of rules and assumptions that are held, not in all Filipino circles, but only perhaps by a majority and only perhaps at a majority of the time. I would go further and propose that whatever understanding of such a corpus of common understandings and meanings, aspirations and dreams there is,

Churches of Christ sources

An introductory delineation of the faith-based tradition of Churches of Christ—or Restoration Movement as they are also known—will be given a little later but here the task is to point out the best sources from which to understand them. There are five primary sources of note. “The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery,” written in 1804, stresses the right and duty of every Christian to appeal directly to the Bible, the complete independence of every local congregation, and repudiates titles such as reverend. “The Declaration and Address,” written by Thomas Campbell in 1809, declares that the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice and includes the oft-quoted slogan, “Where the Scriptures speaks, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.”²⁴ The other three primary sources were written or edited by Thomas’s son, Alexander Campbell. *The Christian Baptist*, published from 1823 to 1830, and *The Millennial Harbinger*, 1830 to 1870, were periodicals edited by Alexander and to which he contributed a variety of articles. In the most influential series, known as “The Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things,” Alexander Campbell sets forth the nature and work of the church of the New Testament. He contends for the abandonment of all practices and beliefs not found in the New Testament including creeds, confessions, and traditions and he derides any distinction between clergy and laity. The New Testament church was to be restored in its pristine purity and so he advocates the adoption of practices such as weekly celebration of the Lord’s Supper, simple order in public worship, and the independence of each local church under a plurality of elders and deacons. Special significance is to be given to the Acts of the Apostles. Later articles in the

historical and transference factors must be essentially configured. In other words, what the common person conceives to be one’s cultural norms is in reality what he or she thinks one’s authority figures, such as grandparents, parents, and teachers thought, felt, or believed. In a way, Jocano is right for if you are searching for a culture as desired by him, you must romance. It is always a longing for that which never was.

²⁴ Both “The Last Will and Testament” and the “Declaration and Address” have been reprinted in numerous sources, with and without additional commentaries. See, for example, [Campbell, Thomas], *Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington* (Lincoln, Illinois: Lincoln Christian College Press, 1986, reprint, Washington, Pa.: Brown & Sample, 1809); Charles Alexander Young, *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Co., 1985); and James DeForest Murch, *Christians Only: A History of the Restoration Movement*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Standard Publishing Company, 1962), 40–52 and 88–89.

periodicals and the fifth primary source, *The Christian System*, expound further on these topics and then current concerns such as immersion baptism of adults for salvation in the mushrooming churches in the Mid-West of America at the time.²⁵

The general histories of the Churches of Christ including Winifred Ernest Garrison's and Alfred T. DeGroot's *The Disciples of Christ: A History*, James DeForest Murch's *Christians Only*, Leroy Garrett's *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, Henry E Webb's *In Search of Christian Unity*, and James B. North's, *Union in Truth* are good sources for many of the events and thinking of the movement as it has progressed over the past two centuries. Two new volumes, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)*, *Christian Churches/Churches of Christ*, *Churches of Christ* and *The Stone-Campbell Movement: A Global History* add significant updated insights from all three wings of the movement.²⁶

An aversion to systematic theology and an emphasis on the primacy of the New Testament itself has left a dearth of theological compendiums. William Robinson's writings were generally published first between the World Wars from Britain.²⁷ Marshall Leggett's *Introduction to the Restoration Ideal* is forthright

²⁵ Alexander Campbell, ed., *The Christian Baptist*, <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/acampbell/tcb/TCB00A.HTM> (Originally republished and revised by D. S. Burnet, St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co, 1889); *The Millennial Harbinger*, <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/people/acampbell.html> (Originally published Bethany, VA: A. Campbell, 1831- 1869); and *The Christian System* (Nashville, Tenn.: Gospel Advocate Company, 1980). The "Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things" has been separately published under that name: Lincoln, Illinois: 1960.

²⁶ Winifred Ernest Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ: A History*, rev. ed. (St. Louis, Missouri: Christian Board of Publication, 1958); Murch, *Christians Only*, Leroy Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An Anecdotal History of Three Churches* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company, 1981); Henry E Webb, *In Search of Christian Unity: A History of the Restoration Movement* (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Standard Publishing Company, 1990); James B. North, *Union in Truth: An Interpretive History of the Restoration Movement* (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Standard Publishing Company, 1994); Douglas A. Foster, et al., eds. *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)*, *Christian Churches/Churches of Christ*, *Churches of Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004); and D. Newell Williams, Douglas A. Foster, and Paul M. Blowers, eds. *The Stone-Campbell Movement: A Global History* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2012).

²⁷ Among William Robinson's writings, see *The Biblical Doctrine of the Church*, rev. ed. (St. Louis, Missouri: The Bethany Press, 1960); *New Testament Christianity* (Birmingham: The Berean Press, n.d.); *The Shattered Cross: The Many Churches and the One Church* (Birmingham: The Berean Press, 1960); and *What Churches of Christ Stand For: The origin, growth, and message of a nineteenth century religious movement* (Birmingham: Churches of Christ Publishing Company, 1926). Many of these are also available on various websites.

although populist while Jack Cottrell's *The Faith Once for All* is a widely accepted volume that expounds at length on most classic systematic theology themes.²⁸

Within the Churches of Christ context, a number of books on ministry are worthy of mention. Murch's *Christian Minister's Manual* of 1965 was used by preachers for many years and Sam E. Stone's *The Christian Minister* has been a textbook in the Philippines since his visit to the islands in 1998.²⁹ Both Murch and Stone were widely respected preachers and their views reflect the mainstream of the Churches of Christ. H. Eugene Johnson's *The Christian Church Plea* and more especially *Duly and Scripturally Qualified* are valuable because they specifically trace the treatment and expectations of the American minister and point out variety of opinions in a regularly very homogenous theological and ethical practice and thinking.³⁰

Filipino resources

A number of books attempt to facilitate Filipino understanding and knowledge for the readers but few of them are on an academic level.³¹ Three areas are of interest to this thesis. First, Filipinos have an extremely strong conception of their "culture" but as to be expected, many are written from a nationalistic standpoint. Reference has already been made to both Thelma Kintanar's *Cultural Dictionary* and F. Landra Jocano, the latter writing a number of books.³² Violeta Bautista's short paper is valuable precisely because she interacts with perceived criticisms. She maintains that *pakikisama* is a core value, points out that Filipinos prefer indirect styles of communication, and recognizes that "values also exist in

²⁸ Marshall Leggett, *Introduction to the Restoration Ideal* (Cincinnati, Ohio, The Standard Publishing Company, 1986) and Jack Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company, 2002).

²⁹ Murch, *Christian Minister's Manual* (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Standard Publishing Company, 1965) and Sam E. Stone, *The Christian Minister* (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Standard Publishing Company, 1980 [1991]).

³⁰ H. Eugene Johnson, *The Christian Church Plea* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing, 1975) and *Duly and Scripturally Qualified: a study of the ministry of the Christian church movement* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing, 1975).

³¹ CHED requires libraries of their accredited colleges to have volumes that are less than five years old. Thus many titles are published each year, regularly on newsprint, and available in the local bookshops. Quality habitually is compromised.

³² See Kintanar and Jocano's books listed in the bibliography. Jocano gives good material about his views but cites very few sources other than his own fieldwork to justify his work.

their idealized and corrupted form within a culture.”³³ The Alfredo and Grace Roces text is a simple introduction to a number of Filipino social contexts.³⁴ In saying that Filipino Christianity is frequently “split-level,” accepting the teachings of the church but daily individual activities deviate from what is taught in the church, Jose M. de Mesa, puts on paper a number of poignant points of which Filipinos in general are aware.³⁵ Interspersed with historical details, Stanley Karnow’s *In Our Image*, gives a solid understanding of Filipino values and society from an American view.³⁶ Second the books on Filipino educational philosophy assume that it is based on the American imports of a century ago, particularly the thought of John Dewey, and Catholic teaching which, as Herman and Cornelia Gregorio state, is theocentric.³⁷ Development of moral character and personal discipline and the teaching of religion are enshrined in law and as indispensable in the classroom as much as math, science, English, and Filipino.³⁸ The small volumes edited by Lee Wanak give helpful insights particularly for theological education.³⁹ Third in my interests on the Philippines are the anthropologies of which Mark Johnson devotes his book to studying the homosexuals in a Muslim area of the southern Philippines.⁴⁰ Fenella Cannell’s *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines* is set in Bicol where her main subjects are rural poor people, whom she describes in events such as weddings, funerals, consulting spirit-mediums, statue veneration, and transvestite beauty

³³ Violeta V. Bautista, “The Socio-Psychological Make-up of the Filipino” in Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano, ed., *All Things to All Men: An Introduction to Missions in Filipino Culture* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1988), 1–18.

³⁴ Alfredo and Grace Roces, *Culture Shock!: Philippines*, 3rd ed. (London: Kuperard, 1992).

³⁵ Jose M. de Mesa, *And God said “Bahala na”: The Theme of Providence in the Lowland Filipino Context*. ([Quezon City: Maryhill], 1979), 3–10. De Mesa’s comments are particularly in the context of Catholicism but equally apply to Protestants. I will refer to some of these points as relevant later. One of the reasons I believe that Churches of Christ in the Philippines has been more numerous than in other countries as well as larger than many other Protestant denominations in the Philippines is because of the intrinsic appeal to facts and reason.

³⁶ Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America’s Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989).

³⁷ Herman C. and Cornelia M. Gregorio, *Philosophy of Education In Philippine Setting* (Quezon City: GAROTECH Publishing, 1979), 120.

³⁸ See for example, Evelina M. Orteza, y Miranda, *Philosophy Of Education: A Collection Of Essays* (Manila: Rex Book Store, 2001).

³⁹ Lee Wanak, ed., *Directions in Theological Education* (Manila: Philippine Association of Bible and Theological Schools, 1994) and *Theological Education in the Philippine Context* (Manila: Philippine Association of Bible and Theological Schools, 1993).

⁴⁰ Mark Johnson, *Beauty and Power: Transgendering and Cultural Transformation in the Southern Philippines* (Oxford: Berg, 1997).

contests. Her theme is that powerless poor Bicolanos use their submission to mitigate against powerlessness.⁴¹

Thus far, a number of valuable sources have been cited for one or another of the three contexts of this thesis: ministry, Churches of Christ, and Philippines; however there is a deficiency in the combination of all three. My thesis looks at the baptism controversy in the 1920s in the Tagalog Churches of Christ. In Cheryl Wissmann's thesis centreing on the changes in worship of Churches of Christ, again in the Tagalog churches, she gives a brief history of the Churches of Christ in the Philippines.⁴² Ministry in a third-world country like the Philippines is under-studied.

Parameters

Church, chapel, congregation, and community

The context in this thesis will usually show the specific connotation for the three words, church, chapel, and congregation, which are used with a variety of meanings. The word church is used of a local congregation; a whole body of believers including many congregations; a particular denomination; the Christians in one locality, city, and or country; the church universal, as a whole; and a building used for worship. I tend to avoid the last commonly used definition on the grounds that the Greek word *ekklesia* (ἐκκλησία) is not used in the New Testament in this way. Thus the singular, church, and the plural, churches, can sometimes be interchangeable. An additional complication is that while one congregation may meet in two or more locations, in the Church of Christ context, it only has one eldership and a combined financial structure. Ezra Earl Jones defines the local church and the congregation as “a group of people who live or participate in the same community, share similar religious beliefs, and are intentionally organized as a social institution for the purpose of pursuing goals and participating in the rites and

⁴¹ Fenella Cannell, *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁴² See Ross B. Wissmann, “A Lone Wolfe in The Pearl of the Orient” (M.Div. in Honors, thesis, Emmanuel School of Religion, 1998) and Cheryl L. Wissmann, “**Worship practice in the Churches of Christ: Central Luzon, Philippines**” (Ph.D., thesis, University of St. Andrews, 2005).

activities associated with their religion.”⁴³ Community can mean either the members or the people who attend the church or its various services and functions or it can refer to the suburb, subdivision, or locality surrounding the church building. A chapel usually is a church building or a place of worship.

Minister and ministry

As H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams note, there is an astonishing variety and adaptability of ministry and the “very word ‘minister’ poses the problem of the variety while it affirms the underlying unity.” They trace it back to Jesus’ concept of being a servant and his statement that he came not to be ministered to but to minister.⁴⁴ Niebuhr and Williams note the parallel usage of minister for Reformed traditions, priest in Catholic and Anglican circles, and pastor in Lutheran and other Protestant churches.⁴⁵ Paul Ballard notes the broad context and diversity because of the widely different British denominations and the transition by clergy from being literate gentlemen who were ordained, to more professional aspirations as seen in their dress, training and standards.⁴⁶ Most writers are content to use both minister and ministry without actually defining them. Ward, being typical, introduces her book with the explanation that she graduated from St. Andrews with a degree in ecclesiastical history and divinity, trained as a nurse, and then went to train for church ministry at an Anglican college and in an Anglican curacy.⁴⁷ Douglas Davies says the minister is primarily one of the congregation who is selected to serve the others.⁴⁸ Lyall mostly limits his discussion to a Church of Scotland concept of those “ordained to the ministry of Word and sacrament, whether full-time or part-time, paid or non-stipendiary.” However, he is by no means unaware of “the ministry of the whole people of God” as he puts it. He acknowledges the priesthood of all

⁴³ Ezra Earl Jones, *Strategies for New Churches* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1976), 1.

⁴⁴ Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45. Modern versions such as the NIV tend to use the word serve rather than minister.

⁴⁵ H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams, eds., *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), viii.

⁴⁶ Paul Ballard, “The Emergence of Pastoral and Practical Theology in Britain,” in Woodward and Pattison, 59–67.

⁴⁷ Ward, xi – xii.

⁴⁸ Douglas Davies, “Priests, Parish and People: Reconceiving a Relationship,” in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 159.

believers, or, as he prefers to talk about it, the collaborative ministry by which he means a team ministry requiring working together and good personal relations.⁴⁹ Ray Anderson's driving conviction is that all ministry is God's ministry. To him, "ministry is determined and set forth by God's own ministry of revelation and reconciliation in the world, beginning with Israel and culminating in Jesus Christ and the church."⁵⁰ I. Howard Marshall encourages looking to the New Testament for his concept of ministry for the form of the church must be determined by the pattern which is discovered in the New Testament. He says that the word used for ministry is *diakonia* which means service.⁵¹ He deduces that ministry is a very general concept that shows considerable variety and that signifies any kind of service performed in the church by people who are serving God or their fellow-Christians. Marshall continues that there was no difference in the New Testament between full-time or part-time ministers, paid and unpaid workers, itinerant or local men, ordained and non-ordained, clergy and laity.⁵² The 1965 British Council of Churches report defines ministry as "any individual performing an act on behalf of the church which is in any way and expression of its ministry." J. E. Newport, in the same report, says that ministry that is accepted by all includes proclamation of the gospel, pastoral care of the church, leading worship of the church, oversight of the church, and giving unity to the church. Later, the report states that the full-time ministry is the normal pattern of British Council of Churches members but notes the exceptions of the Society of Friends, the Independent Methodists, and to some extent, the Churches of Christ.⁵³ I will follow a broad consensus of the above. As with Marshall, the word ministry will be left to be a very general concept, thus fulfilling Ray Anderson's idea of God's revelation and reconciliation. Any Christian can do ministry.

However, for convenience and clarity, the word minister is used in this thesis in a narrower basis. Basically it is used interchangeably with reverend, pastor,

⁴⁹ Lyall, 164–169.

⁵⁰ Anderson, *Shape*, 62.

⁵¹ The Greek work is *διακονία*. Marshall uses only the anglicized form.

⁵² I. Howard Marshall, "The Ministry," in Howard Belben, ed., *Ministry in the Local Church* (Westminster, London: Epworth Press, 1986), 13–16.

⁵³ The British Council of Churches, *The Shape of the Ministry: The Report of a Working Part.* (London: The British Council of Churches, 1965?), 1, 28, and 32.

preacher, evangelist, vicar, clergyman, and priest. Avery Dulles calls them the “functionaries who regularly exercise a special ministry.”⁵⁴ I refer to the man employed, either full-time or part time or given financial remuneration, to lead the local congregation and who is seen as a spiritual leader of the local church and usually manages all or part of the Sunday worship. I will differ from Lyall in that ordination is not a necessary requirement for a minister and although chaplaincy is still understood to be ministry, the minister is tied to a specific local congregation. Further, the minister is a man employed by the church and therefore usually receiving a salary. It will be noted, however, that the differences with Lyall are somewhat semantic and are done to take into account peculiarities of Church of Christ ministry in the Philippines.⁵⁵ Some Church of Christ ministers are ordained while others deliberately are not. There are no Church of Christ persons in the Philippines who are employed by a headquarters. While most preachers of the Churches of Christ perform some chaplaincy work as part of their ministry, none are employed exclusively to do so. The long and integral acceptance of every-member ministry in Churches of Christ and the aversion to a clergy/laity split has meant that it is convenient that the term minister is applied on the basis of whether or not a man is employed by the congregation, is understood by them to be the minister or the preacher, and receives a salary or at least reimbursement for expenses from them.

On the other hand, although minister, is used fundamentally interchangeably with reverend, pastor, preacher, evangelist, vicar, clergyman, and priest, no one in Churches of Christ would ever call their minister a reverend, a vicar, a clergyman, or a priest. As with Dulles, all such terms are used in as neutral a fashion as is possible.⁵⁶ Finally, I will use both minister and ministry as pertaining to Christianity and the church, not as habitually utilized in the more British sense of associated with government, politics, diplomatic rank, or as a business agent.

⁵⁴ Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1976), 151.

⁵⁵ Lyall, 164.

⁵⁶ Dulles, 151.

Ministry in Churches of Christ

A little more clarification is required of the concept of ministry in the Restoration Movement.⁵⁷ Eugene Johnson treats the American aspects of this topic extensively albeit the changes of the last thirty years are not included while D. Newell Williams, et al. give a brief summary of twentieth century development in the three arms of the Restoration Movement in the USA.⁵⁸ After Alexander Campbell, one of the four pioneers of the churches, arrived in Appalachian America in 1809, he began as somewhat of an iconoclast, degrading the “hireling priests” as he called the clergy he saw on the frontier.⁵⁹ That anti-clericalism has in part remained throughout the Restoration Movement, even though Alexander Campbell tempered his thoughts in mid-life. Few of the earliest preachers were full-time, supplementing their income from sources like farming and school-teaching. It was Alexander Campbell who began the first Bible college for the training of preachers in Bethany, now West Virginia. By the time of the American Civil War (1861–1865), the more prosperous congregations in the North employed a minister however it would take a few more generations in the South before this arrangement was accepted. In Britain and Australia, the lack of finances and the smallness of many congregations kept the church from hiring a full-time man. Here, the elders (always plural) did all the leadership ministry work, including the preaching.

Most in the Churches of Christ would agree with Marshall’s comments above. Dean Everest Walker, writes in *The Christian Standard* in 1941:

The ministry is not conceived by the churches of Christ in terms of hierarchy nor of professionalism, nor of ‘holy orders’ reminiscent of medieval society. The ministry is a service. Any activity performed for the church is a ministry. Anyone who performs this service is a minister. The range of this service extends from the material to the spiritual, from public to private, from words to deeds. Preachers,

⁵⁷ See next section for an explanation of this term.

⁵⁸ For further discussion on the general topic of ministry in Churches of Christ, see Johnson, *Duly* and D. Newell Williams, “Ministry,” in Foster, et al., *Encyclopedia*. See also the general histories such as Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples*; Murch, *Christians Only*; and North, *Union*.

⁵⁹ Campbell, *Christian Baptist*.

pastors, elders, deacons, on through to Paul's 'helps' are part of the total ministry of the church.⁶⁰

For Churches of Christ in general, ministry is employed with three variations with ministry not being limited to a clergy class. In fact, in many circles, there continues a robust repudiation of the concept of the clergy/laity divide. In Queensland, this was held so strongly that there was never an ordination service for the ministers.⁶¹

The first concept of ministry is based on the idea of the priesthood of all believers.⁶² Based on New Testament texts such as 1 Peter 2:9, there have been deliberate efforts to find everyone a job in or for the church. The smaller church becomes a little like the bowls club where everyone did a little and all knew everything going on. This remains strong in the churches. Evidence for this can be seen in the descriptions of worship services for the GRS, Libmanan, and Argos church services given in the case studies below.

The second understanding of ministry is the work of the full-time paid man. Usually the minister is expected to be trained in a Bible college as a young man. This was his life's vocation. Once in the local congregation or the located ministry, he is the general practitioner, the all-rounder. The stronger his personality and abilities, the more power and influence he has. He preaches, does the calling, holds new members classes, represents the church publicly, and usually sets the tone of the church; however in the worship service, his only job is usually to preach.⁶³ When the

⁶⁰ Quoted from Dean E(verest) Walker, *adventuring for Christian Unity & other essays* [sic] ([Johnson City, TN]: Emmanuel School of Religion, 1992), 217. Walker's definition of minister here is wider than that I use for this thesis.

⁶¹ See Johnson, *Duly*, 85–100 but he does not reflect at length on the rejection of a clergy class which is strongly held in one form or another in both the Independents and the Non-instrumentalists.

⁶² Lyall, 168–170, calls it collaborative ministry. For a fuller theology on this topic, see William Robinson, *Completing the Reformation: The Doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers* (Lexington, Kentucky: The College of the Bible, 1955). For variants of this practice in Churches of Christ, see Johnson, *Duly*, 21–32. This concept has found wider acceptance than Churches of Christ. See Hanson, Richard. *Christian Priesthood Examined* (Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1979).

⁶³ The masculine pronoun only is used when referring to the preacher in this thesis as, to date, only males are considered for pulpit and pastoral ministry in the Philippines in Churches of Christ. This is consistent with the Roman Catholic practice in this country where more than 80% are Catholic. There have been no women employed full-time in the local church in Churches of Christ, although there are a number of part-time female worship leaders and Christian educators, particularly in the Manila area. However, the faculty and staff of the nine Church of Christ Bible

church grows and hires more than one person, the portfolio of the second may be youth, worship leader, or secretary. In the larger churches with multiple personnel, there may also be a staff member solely responsible for small groups, children's work, the elderly, discipleship, administration, and missions. All these, as paid workers, are understood to be ministers.

When there is discussion or there is an attempt to justify this full-time position from the New Testament, the minister is typically understood to be the evangelist or, particularly with the Queensland churches, one of the elders. Usually, it is a little more pragmatic than that. The minister is the servant leader who just happens to get paid. He is respected and expected to be knowledgeable on all matters spiritual, but he certainly is not clergy. He and his congregation insist on equal treatment of him as any clergy in other denominations but the general resistance to a special clergy class, especially to being more "spiritual," remains. The local congregation hires, pays for, and dismisses the local preacher without reference to any outside synod, presbytery, bishop, board, or convention. The preacher regularly is called upon to make important assessments. However, final and crucial decisions have traditionally rested with the board of trustees who are usually the currently elected elders. The appointment and the role of the minister has remained this way for more than 150 years. The exceptions are the Disciples in America who restructured and centralized in 1968 and the congregations who joined or co-operated with one or another new Uniting/United denominations.

The third of the three-fold ministry is the elders. Their role has varied over time, country, and wing of the movement but they are always understood to have a special ministry. North expresses most of the Restoration Movement's understanding when he argues that the elders are permanent officers of the church.⁶⁴ The British churches secured legal right for the elders to perform marriages. The basis for eldership is taken from 1 Timothy and Titus with occasional references from Acts and thus, uniformly, each local congregation always has more than one

colleges in the Philippines are relatively evenly split between male and female. The Philippines at times operates as a matriarchy and is one of the few countries that has elected two female presidents.

⁶⁴ North, *From Pentecost to the Present: A Short History of Christianity* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company, 1983), 14–16.

elder but the sphere of influence of an elder is limited to the local congregation that elected him. In practice, most taught Bible classes, made pastoral visits and administrative decisions, and formulated the vision and direction of the church. When the churches were without a preacher or the minister was away, the elders did the job. Others were not so active, but always, the elders presided at communion. Efforts to explain the role and variant views of the eldership are found in Johnson's *Duly*.⁶⁵

The role of women in the church was a contentious issue in the 1960s and 1970s but was typically pragmatically settled within each local congregation. The more liberal Disciples allowed women preachers but otherwise, individual congregations in at least 100 countries decided—for now at least—that the pulpit is a man's place. Over time, more and more women have taken up administrative roles, filled full-time positions such as education or worship minister, and become Bible college professors. There have always been as many women missionaries as men in the Restoration Movement.

Churches of Christ

Already I have used the terms Church of Christ, Churches of Christ, Disciples, Christian Church, and the Restoration Movement. Churches of Christ as a whole are usually called the Restoration Movement or the Campbell-Stone Movement as Thomas and Alexander Campbell (father and son) and Barton Warren Stone were the initial leading men in America and so have been derogatorily referred to as Campbellites.⁶⁶ They number about eight million worldwide.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Johnson, *Duly*, 35–43.

⁶⁶ The fourth leader is a Walter Scott, but not to be confused with the renowned Scottish writer.

⁶⁷ For a short current summary of the Restoration Movement, see "World Convention," <http://www.worldconvention.org/>. See also various articles in "The church to end all churches?: The unifying vision of the Stone-Campbell Movement," *Christian History* 106. Mention has already been made of the best histories from an American perspective: See North, *Union*, ix – xi for a summary of American histories. The most up-to-date for Australia is Graeme Chapman's *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism; A History of Churches of Christ in Australia*. (Glen Iris, Victoria: Vital Publications, 1979). British books include A. C. Watters', *History of British Churches of Christ* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Butler School of Religion, 1948) and David M. Thompson's, *Let Sects and Parties Fall: A short history of the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland* (Birmingham: Berean Press, 1980). The only

With any reference to the Restoration Movement, there is always confusion because of at least one of many factors. First, a number of other denominations and cults use names similar to the Church of Christ. Churches of Christ have no relation with the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons), the Iglesia ni Cristo (INC),⁶⁸ the Church of Christ Pentecostal Fourth Watch denomination, or the loose group in Britain called Restorationists, or, as they are more commonly known, the House Church Movement or the New Churches.⁶⁹ Second, the American brotherhood suffered a tripartite division but the three groups share derivations of only two names, Christian, and Church of Christ. Third, although splits did occur in other countries, they have not neatly followed the American divisions while fourth, outside North America, regardless to which arm of the Restoration Movement the group belongs, most use one of the forms of Church of Christ and therefore not necessarily the same form of the name as in USA. Fifth, whereas most of the Churches of Christ outside of the United States have an affiliation with one of the American groups, some identify with two of the three. Sixth, such affiliations are usually informal. Seventh, particularly for the more conservative groups, each congregation has local autonomy. The result is that within each group, while there remains a strong brand identification and all know who belongs and who does not, there are congregations who, particularly because of splits, do not fully co-operate with other local congregations. There are three or four of these in Bicol.⁷⁰ Eighth, there are at least four deviations of Church of Christ—Church of Christ, Churches of

two attempts at an overview of the history of the Churches of Christ in the Philippines are mine and my wife's. See Wissmann, "Worship" and Wissmann, "Wolfe."

⁶⁸ There is an early connection between the founder of the INC, Felix Manalo, and Churches of Christ and it usually is not publicized by the INC. According to a letter of 14th October 1933 written to a Mr. Salvador Laspinas by Leslie Wolfe, Manalo was trained and employed as an evangelist by Philippine Mission Churches of Christ. Manalo was minister at the Singalong church but his salary ceased when they voted him guilty of cruelty and adultery prior to 1914. Manalo then left them and since then, the Church of Christ has had no relationship with either Manalo or the INC. See Leslie Wolfe, "Files of Collected Letters and Manuscripts" (Unpublished documents).

⁶⁹ See Andrew Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom: The Radical Christianity of The House Church Movement* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), 17–25. Peter Brierley, 'Christian England: What the 1989 English Church Census reveals' (London: MARC Europe, 1991), 68, labels them as Independent Churches but they belong to a strong charismatic/Pentecostal stream of denominations.

⁷⁰ Such splits are often rationalized on theological terms but in reality, conflicts in personality and issues of integrity are significant. Splinter factions may or may not survive and have significant issues with identity. Hurt feelings can underlay relationships for generations.

Christ, “the church of Christ,” and Christ’s Church. Ninth, it is common for many to use more than one name or a combination of names. Tenth, as was noted above, the word church (and thus Church of Christ or Christian Church) can be used of either one congregation, one congregation meeting in multiple locations, or multiple congregations. Eleventh, in some countries sections of the Restoration Movement have merged with other denominations but within that denomination, continue to identify with the Restoration Movement and to use one of the Restoration Movement names. Two-thirds of the old Association of Churches of Christ in Britain merged with the United Reform Churches (URC) in the United Kingdom and all of the Disciples churches entered the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP). Some Churches of Christ in New Zealand are part of the Uniting parishes there but to the best of my knowledge, although there is co-operation, none of the churches joined with the United Church of Christ in the United States or were part of the original merger that made the Uniting Church in Australia. Finally, there are many individuals, congregations, and para-church groups who, in one form or another, deliberately attempt to cross the divisional barriers and maintain fellowship with others not in their group. For example, the centrist group’s publishing house, College Press, and the two main conventions, the North American Christian Convention (NACC) and the International Conference on Missions (ICOM) all deliberately have tried to include writers and speakers from the other groups. The World Convention has always been inclusive of all arms of the Restoration Movement.⁷¹

In order to understand the different wings of the Restoration Movement, it is best to examine the tripartite American division. The more liberal of the three wings of the Restoration Movement in the United States is officially identified as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).⁷² Their churches use titles such as First Christian Church and to differentiate them from the other two groups, they are

⁷¹ See “College Press,” <http://www.collegepress.com/storefront/>; “NACC: North American Christian Convention,” <http://www.gotonacc.org/>; “ICOM: International Conference on Missions,” <http://www.theicom.org/conference>; and “World Convention,” <http://www.worldconvention.org/>. ICOM was previously known as the NAC (National Missionary Convention).

⁷² See their website, “Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),” <http://www.disciples.org/>. The use of the words, centrist, liberal, and conservative are comparative only and used for lack of a better word.

usually referred to as the Disciples. Outside of the USA, they can be known as Church of Christ or Churches of Christ as well. In America, the Disciples headquarters is in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Neither the second and third groups maintains a central hierarchy but function as autonomous local congregations. They keep their identity through financing and participating in para-church organizations such as conventions, Bible colleges, camps, homes for children and aged people, publishing houses, missionaries, and church planting organizations.⁷³ The most conservative group is recognized within the Restoration Movement as the Non-instrumentalists as they exclude musical instruments in their worship. Around the world, their churches are always called either Church of Christ or more habitually, church of Christ with the lower-case c for church. Some are reticent to use the plural Churches of Christ as there is only one church while as already noted, the more extreme of them refer to themselves as “the church of Christ,” believing that they are the only true church and the only ones saved.⁷⁴ The non-instrumental group split further over issues such as the second coming of Christ and objections to Sunday Schools, Bible colleges, missions, and the use of more than one cup at communion. There are many non-instrumental churches in the Philippines and they operate a number of Bible colleges.

In the middle is the group that are officially known in the United States as the Christian Church/Church of Christ and whose churches are either called Christian Church or sometimes Church of Christ and occasionally Christ’s Church. To differentiate from the other two, they are frequently referred to as Independents. In the USA, there are in excess of 1,000,000 members in 5,000 churches with 1,000 missionaries overseas. Outside of the USA, the tendency is to refer to themselves as Church of Christ or Churches of Christ. The British wing of this group calls itself the Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and (Northern) Ireland. In the Philippines, the official name of the biennial gathering is the National Convention of the Churches of Christ/Christian Churches in the Philippines. Although a few

⁷³ See Leggett, *Ideal*, 195–204, for a summary.

⁷⁴ Again, see Leggett, *Ideal*, 185–194.

Filipino congregations have caused consternation by calling themselves Christ's Church, almost all the 1,000 local congregations call themselves Church of Christ and refer to themselves collectively as Churches of Christ. Thus it is the Commonwealth Church of Christ though the SEC registration is Church of Christ at Commonwealth as there is a non-instrumental church registered as Commonwealth Church of Christ.⁷⁵ In this thesis, when I refer to Church of Christ or Churches of Christ in the Philippines, I refer to the Independent group, unless the context indicates otherwise.

The Philippines and Bicol

Only a little larger in land area than the United Kingdom, the Philippines is a country of 100 million people living on twelve main islands, the largest of which are Luzon and Mindanao. More than eighty languages are spoken but almost all Filipinos speak one or more of Cebuano or Visayan, Tagalog or its modified form of Filipino, and English. After the visit of Ferdinand Magellan in 1521, the Spanish ruled the Philippines as a part of the viceroyalty of Mexico with the help of a limited number of Roman Catholic friars in the Philippines. The United States controlled from 1898 until the Japanese occupation in 1941. At the end of the war, the Philippines became a democratic republic with freedom of religion and speech with the exception of the Marcos dictatorship from 1972 to 1986.⁷⁶ The Filipino island landscape is naturally dense tropical jungle on marshy coastal plains with rugged mountainous interiors. Common natural disasters such as typhoons, floods, and volcanic eruptions are exacerbated by indiscriminate land-clearing and human, particularly the poor, habitation in low-lying areas.⁷⁷ The Philippines remains a

⁷⁵ Williams, *Global*, gives the figures of 1,200 congregations with a combined membership of 150,000 for the Independent churches and for the non-instrumentals, 40,000 members in 700 congregations. After the article was published, we decided that the figure of 1,200 was an over calculation and 1,000 is probably more correct. Gary Holloway in "Worldwide disciples, worldwide Christians" in *Christian History*, 106:34–36, gives an aggregate total for all Restoration Movement adherents in the Philippines as 324,000. However, personal awareness would suggest much lower actual Sunday attendances. An additional problem in registering with SEC is that the INC also use the Church of Christ name.

⁷⁶ Marcos was elected in 1965 but martial law was declared in 1972.

⁷⁷ According to Köppen, the archipelago of 7,000 islands is mostly climate type Af.

deeply religious country where approximately 80% are Roman Catholic, 8% Protestant, and 5% Muslim.⁷⁸

The Bicol region is the southern tip of the island of Luzon. Bicol is composed of six provinces but as nearly all of the Churches of Christ are in the provinces of Camarines Sur and Albay, attention is confined to those two provinces. From 1574 to about 1600, the Franciscans Christianized virtually every Bicolano. In the past, the main transport was the railway that ran from Manila to Naga City and on to Legaspi, the largest city in Albay. Since Typhoon Durian/Reming in November/December 2006, the railway has only been functional in limited local sections. The local residents now take bus transport to travel to Manila along the main road, the Maharlika Highway. It is a full day's drive from Manila to Naga City or Legaspi. There are subsidiary roads off the Maharlika however it is the only through route. Some *barangays* even just a few kilometers off the highway are inaccessible by road. Except for the residents of the two cities of Naga City and Legaspi, most of Bicol is rural or closely related to agricultural, forestry, or fishing industries. A rich rice-growing area stretches along much of the length of the highway. There are three main languages spoken in Bicol: English, Tagalog, and ten dialects of Bicolano. The population of the Bicol region is 5,109,798 with 2,774,327 registered voters. The corresponding figures for the provinces of Camarines Sur are 1,693,821 and 758,854 and for Albay 1,190,823 and 606,617, respectively.⁷⁹

Ministers of Churches of Christ in Bicol

In 2007, there were forty-six Churches of Christ in the provinces of Camarines Sur (thirty-six) and Albay (ten), but most were very small. The largest had an attendance at worship, excluding children, of about 150. The smallest congregations had only a dozen or so worshippers at their regular Sunday morning service. The average was thirty or forty, making a total of about 1,500 adults in all.

⁷⁸ According to CIA, "World Factbook: Philippines," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/rp.html>, figures, taken from the 2000 census show the following religious affiliation in the Philippines: Roman Catholic 80.9%, Muslim 5%, Evangelical 2.8%, Iglesia ni Kristo 2.3%, Aglipayan 2%, other Christian 4.5%, other 1.8%, unspecified 0.6%, none 0.1%. Other Christian are mostly Protestants.

⁷⁹ See <http://www.nscb.gov.ph/activestats/psgc/regview.asp?region=05>. Figures for the population are of as of 1st August 2007. Figures for registered voters are as of 17th March 2009.

In the years since 2007, a number of small groups have ceased to exist. By 2011, two congregations had grown beyond the 200 mark. The preacher of one of these in Libmanan, Mel Pel, is the subject of Chapter 2. Most other churches stayed about the same size.

Almost all of the churches have acquired a permanent location and a chapel building so that only two congregations meet in rented accommodation. Numerous properties are not technically owned by the church itself but by one of the larger and wealthier families in the congregation. In remote localities, some of the chapels are constructed out of native materials; however most have used hollow cement blocks and *yero*. Most are uncompleted and still in the process of building as funds will allow. There is difficulty in traveling to six churches which are not located by or near a road and in the wet season, access to another ten is limited in conventional automobiles. During the research, it was inadvisable at times to visit at least four areas (eleven churches) due to New People's Army activities.

As of July 2007, nineteen preachers regarded themselves as full-time ministers, understanding their main employment as being a preacher or a minister. Six of them are in Albay and the rest serve in Camarines Sur and all of them preach each weekend and some of them lead more than one congregation. I will use four of these nineteen men as case studies. During the writing of this thesis, a number of the nineteen have changed their place of ministry including Joseph Sevilla, one of the men in the case studies.

In line with the definition of ministry above, in addition to the nineteen, there are numerous people in the churches who perform some ministry or leadership functions. Many elders, whose main occupation is as a farmer or a teacher, preach, especially in churches where there is no paid minister. At least fourteen of them preach most weekends, with maybe as many as twenty-five or thirty who preach once a month or so. Invariably, it is the elders who lead the weekly communion service. Women are active in every congregation. Although a number of younger women are without paid employment, they assist in small groups, Sunday School, youth and women's groups, and the like. The church may or may not give them travel allowances. Mel Pel's church in Libmanan has a number of these.

During the duration of the research for this thesis (2007–2011), no-one was employed in full-time non-preaching ministries. Only one young man was employed as a part-time youth minister but he was preaching regularly as his church was without a full-time man. The nineteen full-time men, as part of their regular preaching ministries, visit jails and schools, do feeding programs, and carry out other pastoral duties. A number perform some chaplaincy work but all nineteen were primarily the parish minister, preaching at least once a weekend. There is no denominational headquarters and none are employed principally in an administrative or secretarial capacity. However, some change was coming so that by 2011, both bigger congregations, Vigaan and CCL in Libmanan, were employing more than one person.

The initial information for this thesis comes from fifteen replies to a survey completed at preachers' meetings.⁸⁰ This had been preceded by and complemented with numerous personal conversations and personal visits to homes and churches over a twelve year period. Swinton and Mowat, quoting Cornwall and Jewkes, highlight the complexities of relationships between researcher and those being researched. They believe that the best participatory research is carried out with and by local people rather than on them.⁸¹ I visited forty-one of the forty-four churches, attending services and other special occasions. I talked personally with virtually every preacher, elder, and leading woman in all congregations. I have visited the homes of all but one of the nineteen full-time preachers, the exception being the one young fellow who—at the time—still lived with his parents. I have spoken in many of the local high schools. I have rejoiced with them at weddings, baptisms, Christmas parties, and new chapel dedications, and mourned with them at funerals.

As of 2007, the average age of the nineteen preachers was thirty-six years with twenty-five being the youngest and forty-six being the oldest. All are married now including the youngest who was engaged in 2007 and all live with their wives. (This is a country where divorce is not permitted.) One of the oldest men has the largest number of children—five. Five men are without children—two because they

⁸⁰ See Appendix 1.

⁸¹ Swinton and Mowat, 227. This is a quote from A. Cornwall and R. Jewkes, "What is participatory research?" in *Social Science and Medicine* 41(1995): 1667–1676.

are newly married but it is a source of considerable embarrassment for three because they have been unable to have children to date. On more than one occasion, I was told that these men are not married because they have not produced children. Most of the preachers either have or are planning to have only two or three children. In 2007, all the children except one or two lived at home with their parents and only three were above the age of fourteen.

Even though these nineteen men classify themselves as full-time, the average salary, in 2007, was only about P1,200 (£15.00) per man per month received from the church. Two actually receive nothing except transport reimbursement. At least twelve of the preachers' nuclear families rely heavily on the wife's or the extended family income. Often, the wife is a school teacher. At least twelve men worked in other employment but mainly, they perform odd jobs like driving, farming, and teaching part-time. They may spend up to twenty hours per week supplementing their income this way.⁸² Two men obtain subsidies from other churches in the Philippines while eight of the nineteen receive significant regular finances from overseas, particularly Filipinos working in America. The lowest family incomes are as little as P2,000.00 (£25.00) per month although these would be supplemented by growing some of their own food or assistance from parents. The highest nuclear family income I could ascertain is probably P15,000.00 (£187.00). The average is about P9,000.00 (£112.00) a month.⁸³ During the writing of this thesis, at least one man, Joseph Sevilla, went technically from being full-time to part-time but in reality, his earnings outside the church are small and spasmodic.

All nineteen men originated from Bicol except one outsider who married into one of the large Bicol families. Two of his brothers-in-law are included in the nineteen preachers. At least fifteen of the men or their wives are related to one of the seven extended leading Bicolano Church of Christ families. All nineteen men have been or still are ministering with the home congregation of either themselves or their

⁸² The average work week is forty-eight hours but Filipinos outside of government employment typically work considerably more than this. See Republic of the Philippines, Department of Labor and Employment, <http://www.dole.gov.ph/faq/details.asp?id=F0000211>, for official laws.

⁸³ See Table 3 below for conversion rates used. These figures are my estimates based on my extended knowledge of the individuals lifestyles but I suspect that there is underreporting. Income is frequently erratic and most simply do not add up all the income from all sources that they receive.

wives. This spawned the reflection in Chapter 3, on Jesus' words that a prophet is without honor in his own country. Of the nineteen, eleven live in homes owned by their parents or their extended family or on family property. Three own their own homes, three rent apartments or small houses, and two live in pastoral houses owned by the church. In one case, this is just a single small room off the side of the chapel. Obviously, these men feel restricted by poverty and this naturally becomes a major issue which will be dealt with in Chapter 4.

In the initial survey conducted with the preachers, I asked the educational attainments of each man which aroused a little consternation and thus the accreditation issue of Chapter 3.⁸⁴ Only four graduated with an accredited undergraduate degree, eleven spent four years at an unaccredited Bible college, and four have either no formal education beyond high school or only completed a short technical course or spend only a semester or two in a college program. All have attended a variety of seminars and lectures but six are without any formal theological education.

Methodology

In order to examine the challenges faced by the ministers of Churches of Christ in Bicol, it was essential to ensure that I was following good research techniques. I was aware of this through reading geography in my undergraduate degree. Sharan B. Merriam's *Case Study Research in Education*, Oswald Werner and G. Mark Schoepfle's *Systematic Fieldwork* and sections of David Willows and John Swinton's *Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care* are insightful.⁸⁵ I found four books helpful as they dealt particularly with subject areas close to my study. Helen Cameron and her other contributors in *Studying Local Churches* specifically use four disciplines—anthropology, sociology, organizational studies, and theology—and also suggest using others such as geography. Their checklist for the research process

⁸⁴ Appendix 1.

⁸⁵ Sharan B. Merriam, *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988), Oswald Werner and G. Mark Schoepfle, *Systematic Fieldwork*, vol. 1, *Foundations of Ethnography and Interviewing* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989), and David Willows and John Swinton, eds., *Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care: Practical Theology in a Multidisciplinary Context* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000).

is useful.⁸⁶ In the same book, Davies advocates using fieldwork, participant observation, interviews, surveys, and vicinity walks.⁸⁷ Similar advice is given in the work of Mathew Guest, Karin Tusting and Linda Woodhead, *Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a Post-Christian Context*. Additionally, they briefly examine the church growth and church health contributions.⁸⁸ Frances Ward in *Lifelong Learning: Theological Education and Supervision* uses the journals of six ministers as cases studies for the basis of her reflection.⁸⁹ In the fourth book, *Everyday Men*, Roger B. Edrington interviewed fifty men near his church in Birmingham and sought to ask questions before speaking.⁹⁰

One particular responsibility I wrestled with was how to present my research. My initial inclination was to use random sampling but as there were only nineteen preachers, this was inappropriate. I considered interviewing all or most preachers on most subjects but, given size constraints, I would face the risk of a large amount of general information and insufficient room for the in-depth perspective I was wanting. My goal was to do theology from below, not from above, and thus present the experience of those who practice it. Interviewing everybody became impossible in any case because a few wanted to compromise ethics in expecting a dependent relationship and I needed to avoid being associated with one side or the other in the factionalism that developed during the time of my research. I needed, as Swinton advised, to seek a way to present meaning and deeper understanding.⁹¹ The case study was the vehicle that allowed the best presentation of my research.

The use of case studies is not remarkable and its long-time use in fields such as law, psychiatry, medicine, and counselling is widely valued and recognized. Now, almost anything, it seems, can be called a case study. Werner and Schoepfle, specifically relating them to ethnography, describe case studies as short episodes or a series of related episodes and even anecdotes. Their purpose is to illustrate,

⁸⁶ Cameron et al., 35–42.

⁸⁷ Davies and others in Cameron et al.

⁸⁸ Guest, Tusting and Woodhead.

⁸⁹ Ward.

⁹⁰ Roger B. Edrington, *Everyday Men: Living in a Climate of Unbelief* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1987), 1. He was a Church of Christ minister at that time.

⁹¹ Swinton and Mowat, 37.

provide evidence, and for elicitation.⁹² Michael Northcott's classroom case studies included four elements: background, description, analysis, and evaluation. His 1990 article still must justify its use in British church circles but presumably that is no longer the case given its subsequent promotion or use by authors such as Cameron, Swinton and Mowat, Emmanuel Y. Lartey, Lyall, Cannell, Edrington, and Ward's entire book, *Lifelong Learning*.⁹³ As my aim was simply to examine a problem from the perspective of the preachers and, as in a courtroom where one case is judged at a time, my case studies will describe, explain, and reflect on one problem with one preacher.

To heed Swinton and Mowat who want theologians to take cognizance of contextual questions in order to address the needs and problematics of particular situations that are of vital significance to the people of God, I held an initial meeting in Sipocot, Camarines Sur, on 23rd July 2007 with the precise intention of setting parameters.⁹⁴ Below are the minutes I recorded from that meeting.

1. In attendance at the meeting on 23rd July 2007 at Impig Church of Christ, Camarines Sur, were twenty-one ministers, some of their wives, a number of elders, three staff and students of International Christian College of Manila (ICCM), and me.
2. I formally announced my purpose to write a thesis for the University of St. Andrews on the *mga problema* faced by the Bicol Church of Christ ministers.
3. The preachers were happy to assist in whatever way was possible. There were no conditions that they wished to impose.
4. I was welcome to [re]visit their churches and interview both them and any one in their congregation.
5. I specifically highlighted that it was essential to have the freedom to write as I saw the need or understood the facts. Some of what I might write may be unfavorable to them. There was *walang problema* with this to them.
6. I would use a number of methods to do research including observing their localities, their services, and their ministry practices, and conducting surveys and interviews.

⁹² Werner, 139–143.

⁹³ Michael Northcott, "The Case Study Method in Theological Education" in Willows and Swinton, 59 – 65 and also Cameron et al., 52–53; Swinton and Mowat, 173; Emmanuel Y Lartey, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 2nd ed. (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), 153–162; Lyall, 132–148; Cannell; and Ward.

⁹⁴ Swinton and Mowat, 14.

7. There were virtually no written sources for their churches as far as they were aware.
8. Initially I suggested that I withhold their names from the thesis however this met with overt disappointment. They wanted to see their names in print and wanted photographs as well. I informed them that it was unlikely that photographs would be used; however, it was agreed that their names could and should be used.⁹⁵
9. English would be the language for the research but they could use other languages—Tagalog and Bicolano—as they wished and a translator interpret for them.
10. I requested that they do two things that day. The first was to fill out a basic survey.
11. Second, I asked that they identify a number of key challenges (*problema*) that they faced. Five or six issues were raised at that time.
12. It was reiterated that, although I had known most of the preachers for ten years and we were all Church of Christ, none of them were in a dependent relationship to me.

The above meeting lasted for at least six hours including lunch with some arriving late and others leaving early. Both prior to this meeting and many times subsequently, there have been other gatherings and individual discussions reiterating this discussion. I already was acquainted with everyone at the meeting while some of them I had known since I arrived in the Philippines eleven years before. I had visited Bicol on a number of occasions prior to this and had stayed in their houses and preached at their churches. Particularly, I and the team from ICCM worked together with these men and their congregations undertaking typhoon relief. At the time of this initial meeting, I was not yet accepted as a student at St. Andrews but

⁹⁵ Filipino custom requires that everyone, including a *katulong*, be accorded a title, at least in public, and proper respect be shown to anyone who is older or of higher social standing than the one talking. Thus, in a public meeting, each of the preachers would be called by a title such as Brother, *Kuya*, or Pastor plus their nickname. Using of nicknames is normal in the Philippines. In the preachers' meeting, everyone simply would call each other by his nickname, except for me. As I was older, a foreigner, and perceived to hold a superior social position, I was always called Prof. or Prof. Wissmann. The Prof is always pronounced prop. In the church, those who were older than I would retain the Prof. or maybe call me Brother Ross. I always called each of the four men by his nickname, adding a title in a worship service or if speaking about them to a person who was of lower social standing. If I was to follow Filipino social etiquette here, I should use a title each time I referred to them but that would be cumbersome, and so, like Cannell, I just use a nickname or a Christian name. Filipinos are well aware of the American custom of calling everyone by their first name and as all the respondents are still young, using just the nickname is not offensive to them.

had applied. Despite all the minister's assurances that they would assist in any way possible, over time, a few of them wanted to claim entitlement from me for their cooperation in the studies and for me to give them money so these men I mostly excluded from further research.

Although with some hesitation, Filipinos constantly use two or more languages, even in the same paragraph. For the preachers in this thesis, English is the language regularly used in the home, in education, and in general communication although it is still a second or in a few cases, third language. Sermons are habitually prepared in English, usually with an English outline, but delivered in a mixture of two or three languages—English, Tagalog, and sometimes one of the Bicolano dialects. Frequently, they all help one another translate with an *impromptu* discussion on the correct translation of a word being a common occurrence, and on frequent occasions, my ICCM faculty, staff, and students assisted.⁹⁶ Even the native Bicolano speakers will revert to one of the other languages as they do not possess the needed vocabulary in their dialect. None of them are at ease using only one of the languages at all times as even common technical and theological terms exist only in English and so Tagalog has borrowed and simply transliterated many Spanish and English words. In Case Study 2, Mel, and Jun in Chapter 4 naturally used English with an occasional Tagalog word. Charlie in Case Study 4 usually needed an interpreter as he normally only speaks Tagalog. Eva, the wife of Joseph in Case Study 1, was more articulate in English than Joseph was. The second schedule of questions for them (Appendix 9) was in dual English and Tagalog. For Chapter 3, Gani sometimes thinks in the Iriga dialect of Bicolano while he is conversant in English and Tagalog but his wife, Karen, knew little Bicolano at the time of the early interviews. With or without my presence, the leaders of the group were those who were most adept in English. Those for whom Bicolano was their main language contribute the least in group settings. As Gani was the only one of the main people interviewed who spoke Bicolano, and the

⁹⁶ There were no fewer than fifty different ICCM personnel who helped in Bicol including Aldwin Falla, Ariel Zarate, Jeffrey Gomonit, and Darell Battung whose assistance I particularly appreciated.

respondents have had some tertiary education, nearly all foreign terms in this thesis are Tagalog.⁹⁷

The initial meeting identified six or seven major *mga problema*, but as with Swinton's and Mowat's research with their Jacobsfield Vineyard congregation, these challenges have evolved a little as the research continued.⁹⁸ Planting new churches was a lively discussion in the Church of Christ brotherhood as a whole since the 2000 convention that had the goal of planting 100 new churches across the nation in the centennial year. Issues like poverty, lack of resources, accreditation, growing the church, being a success, and ministering with the home congregation were raised with me prior to beginning research. The accreditation dialogue aroused heated comments while the location of the church building concern came to the fore after Typhoon Durian/Reming destroyed a number of buildings. Poverty and the various facets of the sacrifices made and attainments of the ministry were topics of every meeting. The important fact is that each challenge has been problematic for one or more of the Bicol preachers and was raised by them in our discussions. As Filipinos are reticent to express their thoughts and feelings directly, the list of challenges became most lucid once they expressed the challenges as questions:

1. Is the ministry worthwhile? Is it worth the sacrifices?
2. How can we plant new churches?
3. I am ministering to my own home congregation. Can I be accepted?
4. My education is not accredited. Is it sufficient? Is it acceptable?
5. How can I minister when the church offerings are so small and they cannot pay me but the barest minimum?
6. How can I grow the church? How can I be a success?
7. What resources can we use?
8. Is our church in the right location?
9. How can I get out of poverty?

Swinton and Mowat, Cameron, and others underscore other important methodological issues that I will follow. As noted already, a number expect immersed participant observation. Cannell did her fieldwork from March 1988 to December 1989, Thomas Gibson and Thomas Kiefer both lived for about two years

⁹⁷ Even though both Cannell's people and mine were mostly from the same provinces and also lowlanders, this is in contrast to the majority of her people.

⁹⁸ As seen above, Swinton and Mowat parallels to the *mga problema* is "vital contextual questions to address the needs of the people of God." Swinton and Mowat, 3–14, and 143.

in Mindoro and Sulu respectively while Edrington spent only one hour or so with each of his fifty men.⁹⁹ I have known many of the nineteen ministers for up to fifteen years and actual research was spread across five years. Cameron points out the difficulty in realistically offering complete confidentiality.¹⁰⁰ For me, it was impossible as there are only nineteen preachers, everybody in the churches knew to whom I was talking, I would need to exclude all geographical and congregational references, and the men would be offended as they expected to be named. Following Cannell, and with the preachers' express permission, I have chosen to use real names although because of the entitlement claims and to avoid *hiya*, in two cases pseudonyms are used.¹⁰¹ Cameron's second chapter on anthropological perspectives and her hands-on approach have been a good check-list and guide.¹⁰² She urges the use of documents and history but, with the exception of Ismael Pel's one-page documents written by himself on his computer, there are very few written sources of any description in any connection with the Churches of Christ in Bicol.¹⁰³ There are three or four so-called histories of the larger churches although these are just a paragraph or two and sometimes unreliable and contradictory.¹⁰⁴ Even for a special event such as an anniversary or a funeral, bulletins are not produced. The *barangays* and other local and provincial government bodies produce some rudimentary maps and general statistical tables but their fliers regularly confuse statistics and promotion. Keeping a journal was suggested by Cameron and Swinton and Mowat while Werner and Schoepfle advised to record all observations as soon as possible so I used a two-ring binder and wrote on the back of the interview sheets during

⁹⁹ See Cameron et al., 20, 89–98, 106–107 and Swinton and Mowat, 227–228. Also, Cannell, xiv, Thomas Gibson, *Sacrifice and Sharing in the Philippine Highlands: Religion and Society among the Buid of Mindoro* (London: The Athlone Press, 1986), 4–5, Thomas M. Kiefer, *The Tausug: Violence and Law in a Philippine Moslem Society* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), 5, and Edrington, x.

¹⁰⁰ Cameron et al., 38–39.

¹⁰¹ Cannell, xxvi.

¹⁰² Cameron et al., 12–42. See also her chapter, “Are Congregations Associations? The Contribution of Organizational Studies to Congregational Studies” in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 139–151.

¹⁰³ Cameron et al., 28–30.

¹⁰⁴ This includes the entries in the printed texts of *The Golden Book* [Manila: Cruzada Church of Christ, 1958?] and *The Centennial Book of Churches of Christ in the Philippines: 1901–2001* (Manila: Centennial Book of the Churches of Christ in the Philippines, 2002).

interviews and observations.¹⁰⁵ There were no problems taking notes during worship services and other meetings. Several of Davies methods, particularly surveys and interviews, I have used extensively in this thesis.¹⁰⁶ Of the twelve different interview schedules (Appendices 1–12) I composed, all the nineteen preachers answered the initial survey (Appendix 1) although for the rest, replies were given by only one to four persons. While Cameron has apprehensions about attending and researching worship services, the Bicolano preachers had none for it was a forgone conclusion that I would attend and moreover, it was assumed that I, as the special visitor, would preach on most occasions.¹⁰⁷ Before each service, I always specifically requested permission of the minister and the elders to jot down observations for this thesis of the service but they were surprised that I even asked. Visitors routinely take photographs throughout even the most reverent of times during services. During the announcements time at the end of the service, I always reiterated my intentions of doing research for my study at the University of St. Andrew's. Over the years, I attended worship services in at least seventeen congregations as well as a variety of baptisms, funerals, prayer meetings, minister's fellowships (EARM), youth fellowships, small groups, and even Christmas parties. As I have talked to all nineteen preachers, I did not use sampling. I have used Swinton's and Mowat's ideographic as much as nomothetic knowledge.¹⁰⁸ As I am confining myself to Churches of Christ, a variation of Richter's denominational cultures as a research possibility is given here. While neither an overall analysis nor a systematization of either the theology or the practices of Churches of Christ is attempted, some description and explanation is given of them. Richter further advises that it is sometimes important to notice what is not present.¹⁰⁹ As recommended by Swinton and Mowat and others, the outcome of this research will not be a neat, systematized compendium of theology but rather fragments and themes that emerge from particular contexts and situations. I simply attempt to open for discussion on a more

¹⁰⁵ Cameron et al., 32, Swinton and Mowat, 39–42, and Werner, 260.

¹⁰⁶ Davies and Cameron in Cameron et al., 19–20 and 35–42.

¹⁰⁷ Cameron et al., 39–40.

¹⁰⁸ Swinton and Mowat, 32–46 and 142.

¹⁰⁹ Richter in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 169–184.

academic level a few salient challenges as perceived by men who are performing ministry.¹¹⁰

I had already fixed the parameters to include the problems as expressed by the Church of Christ ministers in the provinces of Bicol and so that meant that there were precisely nineteen men who could be included in my research and they had fairly clearly intimated the nine *problema* from the beginning in 2007. The challenge was whom to include and for which problem. As will be seen, in the end I chose to follow along Ward's line, concentrating on four men.¹¹¹

In essence, it probably did not matter much whom I used for my case studies as these nineteen men are a surprisingly homogenous group, particularly when relating to the *problema* of ministry that they presented. Obviously, they are all Church of Christ (eighteen of the nineteen had grown up in Churches of Christ), all ministers, and all live, work, and for eighteen out of nineteen, had grown up in Bicol. But the uniformity does not stop there. They are all male, between the ages of twenty-five and forty-six at the time of interviewing, and all married. (The youngest married soon after I started researching.) They all come from and live in rural or market town locations, all know something about growing rice and have had some connection with education either through doing a degree program or the likes of school-teacher wives. On the other hand, none have been employed by the other big category employers in the region: government agencies or health care. As I shall discuss in Chapter 4, all in any definition are classed as poor. As seen above, all receive some remuneration from their church but I doubt that anyone would dispute that the amounts received are insufficient, even in a rural environment, for the work performed. All supplement the family income from other sources.

While any two preachers can have a lively discussion, in reality all nineteen preachers have remarkably consistent views on theological precepts and practices. Some, because of their time spent in Bible college, may have thought through deeper perspectives but this is not necessarily the case as is seen in Chapter 1 with Joseph discussing baptism. All adhere to a standard Nicene definition of trinity and

¹¹⁰ Swinton and Mowat, 12.

¹¹¹ Ward used six.

Christology, a Reformation view of Scripture and authority, a basic Arminian position (with a tinge of fatalism), a common sense Lockean philosophy, and a Campbellian explanation of baptism and the Lord's Supper. All are modernist rather than post-modernist in world view, unafraid of calling a sin a sin, and believing in heaven and hell (and not purgatory). All believe that all the vices, as discussed in Chapter 4, are wrong, aspire to strict and high ethical standards, and in the main, live up to their standards.

Notwithstanding this homogeneity, building on Malinowski's "cake of custom," A. F. C. Wallace advises against "replication of uniformity model" which "assumes that all natives are similar and that they all know about matters cultural."¹¹² Thus, I searched for areas where there may be differences and therefore where a selection of an individual for the cases studies may provide significant deviance.

Jun was the one who did not grow up in Churches of Christ but the finer details of his theological views are not a matter for discussion in the consideration of poverty.

The preachers may or may not have some variance from traditional Church of Christ thinking with regard to the role of elders in the church. Some of this is long-term and due primarily because of the small size of the church and other because of the adoption by some of G12 practices. Regardless, this issue is not about the full-time man, it was not presented to me as a *problema*, and it was not my role to stir up controversy and division.

The preachers fall naturally into three groups of educational attainment: no completed college education, those who attended an unaccredited Bible college, and those that had a recognized degree. Additionally, six have had no formal theological education. However, all had graduated from high school, none had undertaken master's courses, and I could perceive little variance of theological opinion because of educational attainment. The unaccredited issue was a perceived acute problem to

¹¹² A. F. C. Wallace, *Culture and Personality* (New York: Random House, 1961), quoted in Werner, 170–171.

which I attend in Chapter 3 and show two different personal reactions. In any case, I have chosen someone from each of the above educational attainment categories.

Above I remarked on some variations on family and home life such as the number of children and the type of housing. These factors, however do not seem to contribute to any dissimilarities of opinion on the problems of ministry.

In the end, the most significant difference was probably the variances of personalities and attitudes common to any human set or sub-set. Thus I will present a short discussion of alternate reactions to non-accreditation in Chapter 3 and the comparison of Jun and Charlie in Chapter 4.

Which men, then, to use for the case studies came down to a process of elimination and using a little common sense. There were some of the nineteen who would have been difficult to use. Despite their educational attainments on paper, a few have difficulty articulating beyond an elementary level. Some were inaccessible or unavailable as they do not live on or near a paved road and so were particularly unavailable during the wet season. One or two frequently traveled between different destinations both within and without the Bicol region.¹¹³ Even though all of the nineteen men remained in Bicol throughout the length of the research, quite a number of the men changed the location of their ministry but this I used to my advantage in the first case study.

It was unwise to use some as case study subjects for the two reasons briefly mentioned above. For Chapters 3 and 4, I particularly limited the inclusion of two who wished to gain financial advantage from me in return for their co-operation and thus compromise ethical concerns in expecting a dependent relationship. Hostility broke out over the issue of the non-accreditation of one of the Bible colleges and within the ranks of the preachers there was at least one clear-cut division with a group of them withdrawing from EARM.¹¹⁴ Although I was still able to talk with all

¹¹³ Werner, 211, says that “selection for easy access is legitimate” and add that ethnographers should not “make their lives unnecessarily difficult by selecting a problem where accessibility, contact, or the maintenance of contact is extraordinarily difficult.”

¹¹⁴ EARM stands for Evangelistic Arm for Resource Mission, Int'l. Inc. but is also known as Evangelistic Arm for Resources and Ministry. This is in essence the voluntary preachers' association for ministers of Churches of Christ in Bicol. Originally, all preachers and many of the elders and part-time folk from Bicol were involved. As of 2011, only fourteen different leaders attend. The issue given for the division was concerning a school meeting in the Impig

the preachers at some level, it was prudent not to use four or five men to avoid being associated with the factionalism.¹¹⁵

A little reasonableness was needed too. Here, as noted by Werner and Schoepfle, my extended stay in the field and my long-term association with these men gave me good insight.¹¹⁶ In choosing, I gave some consideration to how an individual responded to my questions. It was best if I had men who would be more likely to volunteer what they believed rather than telling me what they thought I wanted to know. For this reason, Jun was a good choice for the poverty discussion in Chapter 4. He was also a good selection as he did not have complicated financial assistance from other churches or extended family. While many of the preachers had had some experience with church planting, it was rational to choose Mel for the Chapter 2 discussion as he had immersed himself in it in terms of planning, time-commitment, and persevering. While Filipinos, as noted in Chapter 3, operate on a consensus level, usually in any given group, one person will function as the spokesperson. My experience has shown that is usually best to use that person as the one with whom to interact. That was certainly the case with Gani in Chapter 3 articulating the home town prophet and accreditation issues. Finally, it was logical to use men who were keen to be used. For this I am grateful to Joseph (Chapter 1), Mel (Chapter 2), Gani (Chapter 3), and for Chapter 4, Jun—and their wives—who continued to be helpful, available, accommodating, and above all gracious, over a four year period. They are most appreciated.

Gathering information for each case study was an eight or ten step process over a five-year period. To begin, as outlined above, I held a meeting with all the preachers invited in Sipocot, Camarines Sur, on 23rd July 2007. It was at that meeting that most filled out the initial survey, attached here as Appendix 1. At various times over the next few months, I interviewed the preachers with the appropriate questionnaires attached as Appendices 2 to 5. As will be noted within the case studies themselves, I needed to change the interviewee so I asked the same

church. The actual lines of division depended whether or not the preacher belonged to one particular leading family there.

¹¹⁵ As advised by Simon Coleman in Cameron, 52.

¹¹⁶ Werner, 169.

questions of the new men. The wives were always involved as well. Initially, I tried to include only the husbands but this proved futile as the ladies regarded themselves in the ministry in many ways as much as the men who could only continue with their wives' support, finances, encouragement, and work. The women provided a companion view from the pastoral house and often, they were more articulate than the men. Next, I conducted further interviews with them. Sometimes it was just the husband; at other times, it was just the wife; often, it was both together. Initially, I requested them for clarifications and expansions on what they had said or written and then I began to write up the case study on my computer. With further queries in mind, on my next visit to Bicol, I would schedule another appointment with them. The total number of interviews for each man in the case study was five or six with two hours being the typical length. Most of the interviews were formal as I set up an appointment in advance and we scheduled times and places where distractions were minimized. The interviews themselves were, however, as Cameron puts it, unstructured and free-flowing, which I think, especially with the wives' input, allowed them to give more qualitative replies.¹¹⁷ Then, in 2010 and 2011, I found it convenient to further interview the men and asked the questions in Appendices 6 to 12. I gave the printed questionnaires to them a week in advance and asked them to fill them out. I was pleasantly surprised how well these were done. I reviewed the information that they had written with them and naturally, additional questions followed. On each of the paper question sheets were the header and footer as in Tables 1 and 2. There were additional informal interactions that included talk around the meal table, conversations in the car as we traveled from one location to another, and snippets at the end of a worship service.

¹¹⁷ Cameron et al., 31.

Table 1: Header for each interview schedule

<p>This interview forms part of my research for my doctorate (PhD degree) at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. My topic is:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A Critical Examination of Christian Ministry: Pastoral Perspective by Preachers of the Churches of Christ in the Bicol Provinces of the Philippines</p> <p>Can I have your help please by filling it in as completely as possible? Pls. use the back of the pages if you need. The more information you can give me, the better. Do not be concerned if some questions overlap with others.</p> <p>Many thanks for your help and co-operation.</p> <p>Prof. Ross Wissmann</p>
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Table 2: Footer for each interview schedule

<p>I am not in a dependent relationship to Prof. Wissmann and I am answering this interview voluntarily.</p> <p>Pls. check one box:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my name to be used.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my name to be used except where I have marked “#” in red pen. You may use this in your thesis but pls. keep these pieces of information confidential.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pls. use a pseudonym for me.</p> <p>Signature over printed name Date</p>

For research, the Belmont Report identifies three core ethical principles: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.¹¹⁸ These were axiomatic for me but in general, not problematic. Although I mention the children of the preachers, I did not interview anyone under the age of eighteen or anyone in an institution in this thesis. I will give a couple of paragraphs below describing my attempts to ensure respect for persons. Other than the incident avoiding the mountain men, I did not encounter any of David Fettermen’s “guilty knowledge” (confidential knowledge of illegal or illicit activities) or “dirty hands” (situations in which the researcher cannot emerge

¹¹⁸ The Belmont Report can be viewed at The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, “The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research (April 19th 1979).” <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html>.

innocent of wrongdoing).¹¹⁹ For participants, there were no physical or mental dangers and virtually no secrecy or confidentiality issues that arose from the research procedures as I will mention below. Most of what the men wrote in their questionnaires and told me in their interviews is at the heart of their ministry for which they are paid. It was and is publically proclaimed from the pulpit and taught in the Bible studies. Even their remuneration is routinely included in finance reports such as is given in Table 15: Offering disbursement, CCL, 30th May 2010. Likewise, there was no coercion. One preacher initially consented to be a part of one case study but informed me by cellphone text that he wished to withdraw. So I then excluded him.

However, ethical issues are constantly problematic in the third world and so there were specific circumstances that I needed to decide including accounting for *hiya*, the role of myself as the researcher, privacy, dependency, bribery and obeying the law, and becoming involved with factionalism.¹²⁰ I have already mentioned the factionalism above and I will leave the issues of bribery and obeying the law to where they arise in Chapter 4.

Reflecting on the Belmont Report, Albert Jonsen states that “Research done abroad must both respect local norms and adhere to American standards.”¹²¹ Assuming Jonsen means western standards, anyone who has lived in a third-world context knows that there are areas where local norms and western standards clash. Sometimes these are diametrically opposed as seen in Kiefer’s Tausug men for whom violence, piracy, theft, and even murder in everyday living are required for individual self-protection and preservation, to maintain reputation, honour, and avoid cowardice, and above all, shame. This is complicated further in that there is no

¹¹⁹ David M. Fetterman, *Ethnography: Step by Step* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989) 135.

¹²⁰ I reflect from discussions on research ethics found in Walter R. Borg and Meredith Damien Gall, *Educational Research: An Introduction*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 1989) 83–107; Fetterman, 120–138; James H. Mc Millan, and Sally Schumacher, *Research in Education: A Conceptual Introduction*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1984) 132–135; Sharan B. Merriam, *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988) 163 – 184; and Frederick Bird and Laurie Lamoureux Scholes, “Research Ethics” in Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (London: Routledge, 2011) 81–105.

¹²¹ Albert R. Jonsen, “On Origins and Future of the *Belmont Report*” in James F. Childress, et al., *Belmont Revisited: Ethical Principles for Research with Human Subjects* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 9.

word in Tausug for compromise and as an ideal, according to Kiefer, is completely absent. There is an absence of any ritualistic or arbitrary methods of solving disputes and the Tausug concept of rightness of the outcome is paramount over order and methodology. Thus it is unsurprising that the Muslim minority groups of the southern Philippines have been in constant resistance to a succession of Spanish, American, and Filipino governments for all 500 years of written history.¹²²

Bicolano and Tagalog society are not as radically opposed to western norms of morality and channels of justice as Tausug but revenge and resultant murders are not unknown in extreme circumstances and the Filipino society as a whole is a shame-based. As this *hiya* is a key concept, I will touch upon it and its ramifications at various places in this thesis. The contortion between traditional *hiya* and more western norms is keenly felt especially by Christians attempting to live according to what they see as Biblical standards. De Mesa couches it in terms of synthesizing colonialism and assimilation but still bemoans the “native animistic orientation,” and more importantly here, a split-level Christianity where practices are not consistent with beliefs.¹²³ Thus, as I reflect in Chapter 2, the hardest struggle for an individual is not becoming an active Christian but living as a Christian. Integrity was major issue in the beginning of ICCM and on numerous occasions, the other administrators and I faced acute criticism by insisting on what we judged to be fairness to all, consistency, and confidentiality. Balancing *hiya* and integrity—and thus traditional norms and Christian standards—was often difficult. However, Christianity is now deeply imbedded in Filipino social understanding and world view. Notwithstanding the Muslim minority, for the vast majority of Filipinos, to be Filipino is to be Christian—and for most, Catholic. (In the same way, to be Tausug is to be Muslim.) Thus, the clash in ethical standards is no longer local norms verses foreign standards but Filipino against Filipino. Even more, to take De Mesa’s split-level Christianity a step further, it may be an individual in conflict with himself/herself or what is perceived to be inconsistent behaviour by an individual in different situations.

¹²² Kiefer’s whole book reflects this but see 53, 83, and 87.

¹²³ De Mesa. Again, it is his whole book but see 1–2 and 9 to begin. I will refer to De Mesa again later.

The role of the researcher always needs concern and there is always some inevitable bias as every discussion on the topic points out. Here, my years spent in pastoral counseling, figuring out which of the sixteen connotations of an English Home Counties “um” may be meant, observing a Filipino’s eyes—not his/her smile, reading numerous sources on Filipino society, and discovering concrete evidence before disciplining a recalcitrant student had its benefits. As a permanent resident in the Philippines, I was long past culture shock and had worked with some of these men off and on for more than a decade. As both my subject men and I were Church of Christ, there was little likelihood of me desecrating the sacred. Having been a minister myself, I was in sympathy with their work and experienced many of the joys and heartaches of their vocation. In addition, using both questionnaires and interviews as well as the multiplicity of interviews I believe mitigated my bias.

Privacy is not an issue in the Philippines—or at least not as in the west. As I said above, all expected their name to be used—plus take photographs. Filipinos have been likened to eggs fried in a skillet.¹²⁴ Suggesting anonymity always raises problems as, in the Filipino mind, this is lack of transparency and appears to them as though one wishes to hide something or undertake something that is shady or less than legal. As seen in Table 2, multiple options were given in each questionnaire for using or not using real names. All participants on all occasions ticked/checked the “I give permission for my name to be used” box and signed his or her name. In Chapter 4, Jun specifically gave permission to use his family financial details.

One part of the Belmont Report calls for informed consent. I did not need to use concealment or deception as discussed by Lyall but rather, as seen above, I took particular steps to ensure that not only the preachers but also their congregations knew I was doing my research.¹²⁵ Furthermore, I made it abundantly clear from the beginning and repeated at all interviews that I was interviewing for my thesis and ensured that I had the permission of each individual to use his or her name and statements in the thesis. All thirty of the surveys and questionnaires answered had the headings and footers as in Tables 1 and 2. During the interviews, I often showed

¹²⁴ Bautista in Miranda-Feliciano, 3. I shall comment more on this in Chapter 3.

¹²⁵ David Lyall, “Pastoral Action and Theological Reflection” in Willows, 53–58 and Borg, 83.

my men and their wives what I had written in my notes and specifically paused to ensure that I was writing exactly what was said.

On a number of occasions during my research, I needed to avoid becoming a party to dependency. This was probably the biggest ethical challenge for me because in such considerations, I also needed to ensure that I did not incur expenses for others and also to avoid *hiya*. As I have already noted, I specifically thought it was best not to include a few preachers because I suspected they were endeavouring to entangle me in a dependent relationship. I have further discussion on this in Chapters 3 and 4. In a more minor way, it was intimated to me that I should provide assistance in money or goods for one reason or another as this was the Filipino culture. In consultation with my colleagues in Manila, I was told that this is the “provincial way” and was bordering on a dependency mentality. Thus, I allowed myself to bring a small gift when visiting such as dinner guests may bring flowers or chocolates and providing *merienda* when conducting an interview but avoid committing to fund yet another “emergency” or the expenses of the youth group outing. I tried to ensure that no one was incurred any expense on my behalf and so I paid P50.00 (£0.63) on more than one occasion for petrol for motorbikes.

The multiplicity of interviews, the complexity of my research techniques, and the contexting in the men’s daily lives had several definite advantages as I was able to elicit further clarification and had the ability to probe. For example, I asked, “Last time you told me that ... Can you tell me a little more why you think that, please?” I gained more understanding as I had the opportunity to produce questions beginning with “What did you mean by...?” Repeating the same questions on different occasions gave more opportunities to see beyond their politeness and glimpse what they really thought. I had some ability to check whether they just were saying what they assumed I wanted to hear or were they telling me their actual opinions. This is extremely important in a society where *hiya* is a major social concern and deny, deny, deny, unless you are caught red-handed, is the custom.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ An extreme example of this is Lacson, Theocharis R. et al. “Correlates of Sexual Abstinence Among Urban University Students in the Philippines.” *International Family Planning Perspectives* 23:4, 168–172. <http://www.jstor.org/stable2950841>. An anonymous multiple-choice questionnaire was given to Filipino university students and 82% claimed to have never had

Progress could be measured which was pertinent particularly where the issues of success were involved. I had more time for reflection and consideration of what was really important. On one or two occasions, I held back enquiries which I perceived as possibly being sensitive until a later time when fewer parties were present. This gave me the ability to receive intimate details that facilitated understanding in a particular circumstance. Interruptions were minimalized as these preachers do not have offices and do not enjoy the type of privacy expected in the West. Interviews usually were conducted in their homes and sometimes out under a mango tree as others regularly joined while some listened in the background. Mel's and Gani's homes, in particular, are a constant stream of people coming in and out. The multiplicity of visits allowed me to establish the all-important relationships demanded by Filipino society, not only with the four men and their wives who were the official case studies but also many of the members of their congregation. Talking with them, of course, gave an even fuller appreciation of the life and thoughts of the men I interviewed.

The form of spelling, the grammar to use, and the format to report what the preachers said and wrote have been a persistent challenge in this thesis, so I have taken a few liberties particularly to retain the Filipino flavor of my informants. In any quotation I have maintained whichever the person speaking or writing has used—or I think that they would have used if committed to writing. I sometimes keep colloquial phraseology that was used to explain a custom or a circumstance. As with Edrington, I have not corrected their spelling or grammar or English, including when they made simple errors, except to make notations to clarify for the reader who may not be familiar with a number of Filipino usages.¹²⁷ While Filipinos generally follow

sexual intercourse. Publishing such findings is nothing short of ludicrous because, among other things, no attempt was made to verify veracity and sexual intercourse is frequently redefined to exclude *coitus interruptus* which is widely practiced due to the societal and church disapproval for using other birth control methods. On *hiya*, see Roces, 33–37 and the various writings of Jocano. The complexities of *hiya* and its preponderance over guilt and integrity, at least as understood in a western context, are often lacking in written sources. Cannell is aware of *supog* (Bicolano for shame) nonetheless I would have liked more interaction by her on this subject.

¹²⁷ Edrington, x. I have avoided using “sic.” As so much of this thesis requires defining of words and reports what an individual said or wrote, use of quotation marks became tedious and distracting. So, as a matter of style, I have avoided using them if at all possible but I hope left sufficient and copious footnotes. In paraphrasing I still use some of the writers' same terminology. In quoting

American spelling, both British and American are acceptable and in addition, there are some unique Filipino forms and usages.¹²⁸ I also mostly retained the form of punctuation and capitalization the preacher used—or omitted. Many times the preachers enumerated a list in answer to a question, actually saying or writing 1, 2, 3, or a, b, c. In order to be given more than just a simple generic answer, the format of the questionnaires encouraged this. For shorter citations, I have removed the listing devices although I have kept them in the longer registers, where the respondent was emphatic, or where it made sense to do so.¹²⁹ As with Cannell, I retain common Tagalog terms in the text and occasionally add a final -s to make a Tagalog plural instead of using an awkward *mga*.¹³⁰ I also keep common Filipino acronyms as Filipinos frequently use them and do not know the likes of EDSA, GRS, and CHED by any other designation. The glossary is used to give definitions, usage, and some background of common Tagalog and Bicolano words, phrases, abbreviations, and inimitable Filipino usage of English words.¹³¹ I have made

sources and constructing the bibliography and footnotes, I have strictly reproduced the spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and the like as was printed. The exceptions are that on a few of occasions I removed full capitalization and occasionally added a full name or date in bibliographic entries using brackets. This was necessary, for example, to make it clear that Dean E(verest) Walker's *adventuring* and *Adventuring* were by the same author but different publications.

¹²⁸ Kintanar seeks to codify and legitimize many of these. As a University of the Philippines publication, it is highly respected in the Philippines but English purists would probably be aghast. Unfortunately for the quality of Filipino education, there are printed materials on all subjects available in bookshops that contain numerous blatant inaccuracies. See for example, Alexander Luga. *How to use Accurate English* (Manila: Merriam & Webster Bookstore, 2000). A small handy reference that points out many of the common Filipino misuses of English and is usually reliable is Elizabeth P. Ong, *Equipments, Pictorials and For a While*, rev. ed. (Quezon City, New Day, 2008).

¹²⁹ As an educational tool, listing and enumerating the list has been encouraged in Filipino education to facilitate reasoning and logic, boost expression, give multiple reasoning, and attempt to avoid poor or deficient communication, especially among students with limited educational opportunities. I found in the Bible college setting that the student who replied in bullet-point format in an exam usually scored A or B grades while the student who wrote in a paragraph format was much more likely to receive a failing grade. On worksheets given to students for assessment, if a blank was simply left below a question, I seldom received more than a simple sentence answer. If, however, I literally put 1, 2, 3, or a, b, c, etc. in the spacing, answers were considerably more comprehensive and revealing. Encouraging listing was an easy ploy to encourage the student to display better academics. I have omitted the spacing and enumerating for each question in the appendices. Thus, for example, the thirty-eight questions of Appendix 12 were spread over nine pages when I gave the questionnaire to Jun.

¹³⁰ Filipinos habitually do this. See Cannell, xxv.

¹³¹ Besides my personal experience and insights, sources for definitions and explanations include Cannell, the various books authored by Jocano, Kintanar, Roces, and various Internet sites such

extensive use of tables to document raw material that the interviewees said or gave in order to aid ease of reading. Additionally, although I have made wide use of the twelve different questionnaires (Appendices 1–12), I have mostly omitted references to their questions and numbers, again to provide for smoother reading. I have used weights and measures that are familiar to Filipinos but with conversions for the British. In the poverty assessments, it also was convenient to use American dollars. This usually means dual notations and for consistency, the conversion rates in Table 3 are used.¹³²

Table 3: Weights and measures conversion table

Money	£1.00 sterling	P80.00 (Filipino)	\$1.75 (USA)
Distance	.62 miles	1km	
Length	39.36”	1m	
Weight	2.2lb	1kg	

Assumptions, outline, and expected results

This thesis draws heavily from my own personal context. As already intimated, both this writer and the nineteen Bicolano preachers operate from a Churches of Christ faith-basis.¹³³ I graduated from an unaccredited Bible college, an accredited university undergraduate degree with majors in studies in religion and geography, and a master’s degree seminary before beginning at St. Andrews. I have been a preacher in four countries: Australia, U.S.A., England, and at the Commonwealth Church of Christ in Manila. In both England and Manila, I was particularly involved in church planting. However, I had come to Manila to lecture in the Bible college. Now I was mentoring the men who would be ministers and

as *Wikipedia* and online Filipino/English dictionaries. Some of the Tagalog words have Spanish origins.

¹³² In the six years to December 2011, the Peso/pound conversion rate has fluctuated from a high of P99 = £1.00 sterling in May 2006 to a low of P66 = £1.00 in May 2010. For the American dollar, the extremes have been \$2.08 = £1.00 sterling in October 2007 to a low of \$1.39 = £1.00 in February 2009. The general trend has been for Filipino prices to become more akin to Western prices. Any reference to dollars in this thesis is to American dollars.

¹³³ This has both advantage and disadvantage that I am personally acquainted with a number of the Restoration Movement writers and personalities. I have attempted to document such relationships as an effort to maintain academic integrity. It should be noted that Cheryl Wissmann is my wife.

lecturing in subjects such as preaching, theology, church growth, missions, church history, and Bible. Additionally, during the writing of this thesis, I held the position of Academic Dean and an administrator at ICCM, one of the Church of Christ training colleges in Manila. To cite Aguilar, Ward, Lyall, and Anderson again, as a lecturer—and a foreigner—I wanted to ensure that the pastoral ministry I was teaching reflected the experience of the people, not just from textbooks. I did not want ivory tower theory with a theology that could talk but that would not walk but be immersed in culture and contemporary issues. I wanted to ensure that my students were prepared for ministry.¹³⁴

One drawback that Swinton and Mowat highlight is the complexities of relationships between researcher and those being researched but they believe that the best participatory research is carried out with and by local people rather than on them.¹³⁵ I am not local to Bicol and none of the preachers who are the subjects of the case studies were students at ICCM yet I was a part of Churches of Christ in the Philippines. Therefore, as the professor, missionary, and foreigner, I was expected to be, in part, a patron or a *datu*. I have assisted the preachers' churches with some evangelism projects and typhoon relief and they all donated considerable time in helping the less fortunate of their churches and communities but none of them were paid. I have been very careful to avoid any dependent relationship. Joseph wanted my aid for the medical problem of his mother-in-law and Mel wanted me to “connect” him with contacts for funding for church planting but I was unable to contribute for these. Gani was the one who particularly requested typhoon relief for his community and all of the Bicol Churches of Christ, not for himself. Although Jun never requested anything, I had complications with two individuals who expected me to provide their wishes and when I did not, they became angry with me.

As Table 4 shows, I use the four case studies to examine eight of the nine *mga problema* in ministry perceived by the preachers of the Churches of Christ in Bicol. Six of the dilemmas are dealt with specifically, two are treated incidentally,

¹³⁴ Aguilar, *Ministry*, x and xi, Ward in Cameron et al., 18, Lyall, 22, and Anderson, *Shape*, 7 and 12.

¹³⁵ Swinton and Mowat, 143.

while a few topics like ministry, success, and poverty will be recurrent throughout. Only one, “8. Is our church in the right location?” is not considered.¹³⁶

Table 4: Perceived problems

Challenge	Chapter	Case Study Person
1. Is the ministry worthwhile? Is it worth the sacrifices?	1	Joseph Sevilla
2. How can we plant new churches?	2	Mel Pel
3. I am ministering to my own home congregation. Can I be accepted?	3	Gani Ibarrentos
4. My education is not accredited. Is it sufficient? Is it acceptable?	3	Gani Ibarrentos
5. How can I minister when the church offerings are so small and they cannot pay me but the barest minimum?		
6. How can I grow the church? How can I be successful?	3	Gani Ibarrentos
7. What resources can we use?		
8. Is our church in the right location?	-	
9. How can I get out of poverty?	4	Jun Bataller

The foundation from where this thesis begins is the men and their eight articulated *mga problema* as outlined in Table 4. As I continue to let them express their pastoral perspectives there are many fragmentary themes and issues, and so some of them regrettably I will leave undeveloped.

In Chapter 1, with Joseph, I explore the dichotomy between the perceived satisfaction in the pastoral ministry with the crisis of role and identity. I will argue that crisis is due to factors such as poor remuneration, forced exits, insecure tenure and casual employment arrangements, imprecise job descriptions, and unevaluated personal abilities. On the other hand, I will present various facets throughout this thesis that allow the pastoral minister to find a satisfying role and identity.

Specifically, with Joseph, I will set forth baptism and preaching.

¹³⁶ The main reason is the complications with those involved. This was an issue in Chapter 1 with the location of the Banites/Tacbac church but it was not possible to pursue with Joseph Sevilla’s resignation from that church. The gentleman who withdrew in Chapter 3 particularly consulted with me on this issue and resulted in a number of members leaving the church. In one church in Albay, it became such a contentious matter that the church split. With all three churches, the question arose when rebuilding the chapel after it was destroyed in the typhoon.

Chapter 2 centres on the conundrums that Mel experienced in planting a new church. I will reason that despite being a lone church planter with limited finances, insufficient resources, and “untrained soldiers,” he is able to build his new church.

I will consider three challenges in Chapter 3 that Gani presented. To begin, I will argue that it is possible to minister with one’s home congregation but integration of outsiders may be a difficulty. Next, I will contend that offering unaccredited degrees lacks integrity and accruing an accredited degree may be vital for the welfare of the preacher and his family. Finally, I will maintain that Gani’s perception of success is sufficient for him and his congregation.

Never far from the thoughts and actions of any of the Bicolano ministers is the *problema* of poverty, so, in Chapter 4 using the perspective of Jun, I consider poverty. I will argue that one’s perceptions of poverty should be complexified and that various spiritual, personal, and Filipino attributes need to be factored in any consideration of alleviation of poverty. Finally, I highlight a number of issues for ministry in light of poverty.

In conclusion, I will draw together some additional fragments presented by the preachers to show supplementary recurring themes and suggest further areas of study.

Like Edrington’s men, these ministers are ordinary people who are honest, decent, and respectable. They are not big people with big ideas and are not recognized beyond the confines of their churches, their neighbourhoods, and their *barangays*. Like Edrington’s men, they do have, in part, a sense of despair, however there the parallel finishes.¹³⁷ These preachers do know what they believe, and to some extent why and they are not lost in either an ordinary or a theological sense. Life has not richly rewarded them but I will argue that they have found some solutions and that, despite limitations and deficiencies, they use their lives and work to achieve in their pastoral ministries.

¹³⁷ Edrington, 1.

Chapter 1

The Crisis of Ministerial Role and Identity

A Case Study with Joseph Sevilla

The dichotomy

The men in the ministry often feel a dichotomy in that they perceive exhilaration in performing and achieving in their ministry and yet are beset by doubting their relevance and receiving criticisms from many quarters. Andrew Watterson Blackwood states that it is the most difficult vocation in the world, “harder than that of any other mortal” and yet he maintains that ministry ought to be “the happiest life here below.”¹³⁸ Sam Stone asserts “I love the ministry. It is the greatest work in the world. Nowhere else does one have the opportunity to use his talents in a more influential way for God.” Later he continues, “What other career can equal the potential for good that is available to the Christian minister? Not only has he many opportunities to serve others, but his career also provides him with the largest field possible for the growth of his soul.” On the contrary, Stone can also lament that “many preachers admit to discouragement and disillusionment.”¹³⁹ In addition, Ballard informs us that “the clergy have largely lost their unquestioned place in their local communities” and that there is a “crisis in ministerial role and identity. What are clergy for, and what role should they perform in church and in community?” He continues “the clergy role had become problematic both in theory and practice.”¹⁴⁰

The crisis for the preachers of Bicol may not be quite the same since those such as Ballard perceives in Britain as the Filipino ministers whom I interview in this thesis are still basically parish priests going about their pastoral duties. Furthermore, I do not wish to explore the social perception of ministry but Ballard’s view is still pertinent as the Bicolano preachers regularly voiced some personal concern about their ministerial significance. It was not articulated with the use of

¹³⁸ Andrew W[atkinson] Blackwood, *The Growing Minister: His Opportunities and Obstacles* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), 15 and 20.

¹³⁹ Stone, *Minister*, 11 and 37.

¹⁴⁰ Ballard, in Woodward and Pattison, 63.

words like relevant or crisis but, as usual, as a *problema*. Each and every preacher indicated a frustration with what he is doing, what he should be doing, or how worthwhile was his ministry. Often, it was presented in the form of a justification of his actions or a recitation of his achievements rather than an academic reflection. Frequently too, it was expressed in the negative so there was an excuse why something did not materialize or did not prosper.

In this first case study, I use as the subject Joseph B. Sevilla, a preacher in the railway towns of Camarines Sur. I seek to explore the dichotomy between the perceived satisfaction in the pastoral ministry with the crisis of role and identity to which Ballard, Stone, and Blackwood allude. To begin, however, I am side-tracked by three issues: poor remuneration, forced exits, and stress. When I return to my main theme, I will argue that insecure tenure, casual employment arrangements, imprecise job descriptions, and unevaluated personal abilities are contributors to this pastoral identity crisis. I will present various facets throughout this thesis that allow the minister to find a satisfying role and identity but as an outflow of the observation of Joseph, I will examine in more detail two areas of his work that seem to provide positive identity for him: baptism and preaching.

Besides Stone, Woodward and Pattison, Blackwood and others mentioned above, I need mention a few additional works on ministry. Ilion T. Jones' *Principles and Practices of Preaching* reflects an era long past in Britain nonetheless his insightfulness and call to the highest of standards supersede the limitations of writing in a past age. Along with Stone's *The Christian Minister*, Robert and Michael Shannon's *Practical Ministry: In the Real World* have been appreciated by the theological students in the Philippines.¹⁴¹

The man and his ministries

Joseph Sevilla is thirty-eight years old (2011) and is a native of Siroma, an isolated town in the east of Camarines Sur where he finished high school in 1993.

¹⁴¹ Ilion T. Jones, *Principles and Practices of Preaching* (London: Independent Press, 1958), Stone, *Minister*, and Robert C. and J. Michael Shannon, *Practical Ministry: In the Real World* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press, 1997). See also the bibliography for a list of several of Blackwood's writings.

Both in Siroma and Manila, he worked at various jobs including salesman, factory worker, farmer, and in his own small business. He has had no formal education beyond high school and so his only ministry preparation was growing up in the church and through the SBI (Summer Bible Institute).¹⁴² In 2002 he moved to the railway towns in the western part of Camarines Sur and married Eva Eborra from the town of Godofredo Reyes, Sr., always known simply as GRS and deemed as part of the town of Ragay. Since that time, they have lived in GRS, renting a number of different houses. They have a little girl aged three. Their most valuable possession is Joseph's motorbike which is on time-payment for which they pay P1,600.00 (£20.00) per month. Its main use is for Joseph's ministry but it also aids their personal mobility. They have had at least one bike repossessed because of lack of finances.

Eva teaches Filipino and MAPEH at GRS National High School. For four years, she worked as a volunteer without any salary or benefits in order to gain experience. She explained that for her to be offered a permanent position, she needed sufficient ranking which was obtained with gaining teaching experience, passing the LET exam, attending trainings and seminars, passing interviews that evaluated personality, and demonstrating successful teaching. Six years ago, she secured a permanent position with a gross salary of about P12,000.00 (£150.00) per month but her net pay is only P4,500.00 (£56.25) with the rest deducted for taxes, social security, PhilHealth, and loan repayments.

Joseph has had a series of ministries, beginning at Siroma and Bagong Sirang Churches of Christ in the Siroma area, then to GRS where he served for four years and then to Banga Caves for three years. In 2000, as part of the effort to begin 100 new congregations for Churches of Christ in the centennial year, the Banga church began a new outreach at Banites and Joseph became their minister. The small group built a native construction chapel—coconut lumber, *yero*, without walls—on the land of the leading family. It was difficult to reach as it was more than a kilometer off the nearest road. After Typhoon Durian/Reming destroyed the chapel in 2006, the Banga church purchased a property on the road in the hamlet of Tagbac.

¹⁴² SBI is simply a camp for young people led by the Bicol preachers.

Through finances provided from America, the church people built the walls and roof of a chapel. Since then, certain improvements have been made although the doors, windows, and floor remain temporary. The original main family in Banites ceased to be a part in the newly-located congregation but a number of neighbor families in Tagbac joined the church. According to Joseph, offerings at the Banites church had averaged P30 to P50 (£0.40 to £0.63) per week, increasing to P100 to P150 (£1.25 to £1.90) when the congregation moved to Tagbac. Attendance at Tagbac in 2010, however, still only averaged ten or fifteen adults each week with Joseph receiving between P60 and P120 (£0.76 and £1.51) per week from the church. Sometime in 2010, the church moved back to Banites and Joseph ceased to be involved.

Recently, Joseph began ministering at a new group at Nabuntugan where services are held at 2pm each Sunday and where attendance is also only about fifteen adults, no youth, and a few children. His pastoral work is done on an irregular basis: whenever he happens to be in the neighbourhood selling his frozen products, he also does visitation. Joseph has been back at the GRS church, preaching there on a somewhat regular schedule. As frequently as twice a month, he assists at the Apad congregation, mainly in the music area and he occasionally travels to Mambongalon, Camarines Norte. By 2011, he was usually working Sunday morning, Saturday morning, and two days during the week in ministry. In the past, Joseph did extensive work as part of the Railroad Evangelism but he is no longer chairman. Efforts had ceased due to lack of finances and personal differences among the preachers.

GRS, Banga Caves, Tagbac, and Abad are four of the thirty-eight rural *barangays* of the municipality of Ragay which had a total population of 44,154 in 1998 expanding only to 52,021 by 2007 census. Census figures reveal that about half of the population lived in Ragay town itself with 3,460 in GRS, 2,679 in Abad, 2,282 in Banga Caves, and 1,581 in Tagbac.¹⁴³ The population growth of Ragay has been low for the Philippines, with several of the *barangays* actually experiencing decline. One-third of the area is claimed to be native Tagalog speakers while for

¹⁴³ “2007 Census of Population: Camarines Sur”
<http://www.census.gov.ph/data/census2007/b051700.pdf>.

two-thirds, Bicolano is supposed to be the mother tongue but the majority of the people whom I contacted in this area speak mostly Tagalog. In GRS and Banga Caves, which probably only exist because of the railway, the only commercial establishments are the obligatory *sari sari* stores and a small petrol station out on the main highway. The locals still extensively use small trolleys on the single railway track as a means of transportation but otherwise, the line has been defunct in this area since Typhoon Durian/Reming. The main transportation link is the Quirino Highway that is a shortcut off the main Maharlika Highway from Manila to Sipocot, Naga City, and the rest of Bicol. The area is poor, relying mainly on coconut production and some fishing in the nearby Ragay Gulf.¹⁴⁴ As only a small amount of rice is grown in this area, nearly three-quarters of the land remains as open grassland on which a few cattle roam. Little natural forest remains because of indiscriminate cutting of trees and the proliferation of *kaingin* practices.¹⁴⁵

Most of the interviews with Joseph were conducted in 2010 and 2011. When I began to talk with him in 2007, he devoted all his time to the ministry. Then, during one visit in 2009, he and Eva specifically sought my advice whether or not Joseph should stay in the ministry. The presenting *problema* causing the crisis was lack of finances but there was more than just a shortage of cash.¹⁴⁶ The ensuing conversation showed a crack in the armor, a soul-searching, the usual dichotomy of enjoying the work of the ministry while doubting if the sacrifice was worth it. The decision that Joseph and Eva made in the long term was for him to continue to work as a preacher as he was able but for him to seek supplementary income from odd jobs and what, in common Filipino parlance, is called a small business. Since then, off and on, Joseph has bought and sold dried fish and frozen foods such as ham and *longanisa*, driven a tricycle, worked at making *uling*, and making copra. In reality, getting additional finances has been difficult. Making copra, a seasonal occupation, requires long hours on a plantation and only pays P500.00 (£6.25) for about forty-

¹⁴⁴ Income derived from coconut production is usually one of the lowest of the agricultural sector.

¹⁴⁵ "Ragay Town, Camarines Sur Province, Region V, Philippines"
<http://oasis.fortunecity.com/acapulco/215/region5/camsur/ragay.htm>.

¹⁴⁶ As on countless other occasions, *problema* was the word that they used and it was presented as a crisis requiring immediate attention.

eight hours' labour. The additional complication was that their baby had no *yaya* when Eva was teaching.

More than with the other case studies in the following chapters, I perceived that I faced three complications in conducting the interviews with Joseph: losing face, telling me what he thought I wanted to hear, and a language barrier.¹⁴⁷ In an attempt to circumvent—or at least minimize—these, I used a number of tactics. I conducted interviews with Joseph and Eva on at least six occasions over a four-year time span which presented the opportunity to ask various questions on more than one occasion. I used a mixture of both written and oral interviews. As Joseph's English is limited, verbally he prefers Tagalog or Taglish and in writing he will answer initially in pencil in Tagalog or Taglish and then rewrite in pen in English. Sometimes, in the oral interviews, the two of us muddled along as best we could but usually Eva was with us and the three of us worked out what we thought was the best English translation. At other times, one of the faculty, staff, or students from ICCM or Helen Inchiong, a member at the Banga church and the *ninang* of Eva and Joseph, translated. Eva consistently wrote in English and although she commonly talks very swiftly in Tagalog, she would mostly translate herself.¹⁴⁸

Before I proceed further, I need to do theology which begins from below.¹⁴⁹ I am reminded that Woodward and Patterson say that an essential characteristic of practical theology is that we take “contemporary people's experiences seriously as data for theological reflection, analysis, and thought.”¹⁵⁰ Joseph raised three initial *mga problema*: financial deprivation, what is commonly called forced exits, and the obvious result which is stress. I reflect briefly on them before returning to the key crisis of role and identity.

Financial remuneration

There is the deplorable situation where the full-time man in the ministry is paid a pittance, and, as in the case of Joseph, he has had to devote much of his time

¹⁴⁷ See Chapter 3 for further explanation on some of these.

¹⁴⁸ I did specifically talk with Joseph and Eva about these procedures.

¹⁴⁹ Browning, *Fundamental*, 1–12.

¹⁵⁰ As already quoted, Woodward and Pattison, 15.

outside the ministry to seek further financial assistance for everyday essentials. There is no easy solution when a man like Joseph believes he is called to ministry and his heart and soul long to pastor the people he sees around him. The *walang pera problema* will be specifically treated in the fourth case study with Jun Bataller but here I give these brief observations:

Joseph has sought answers to his financial dilemmas in seeking part-time work and so has not particularly succumbed to what I will later call a welfare mentality. Here I simply point out that the outcome of blaming someone else is a counter-productive exercise so that any attempt, as is so commonly done, to not take personal responsibility or adopting the attitude of *bahala na* is escapism at best. It is more fruitful to seek for solutions—as Joseph has attempted—or at least take measures to counter-balance the problem.

It is worthwhile for the preacher to evaluate himself and the work that he does for, as with every other occupation, he must set out to achieve. Any preacher will find himself in crisis and destitute if his small congregation does not grow and so I will consider growth and success in the following chapters. Here, I emphasize that there can be no substitute for advance planning. It is common sense that every minister enlarges his flock so that the finances that come from the offering plate can increase his remuneration.

However, even with a congregation of more than 100 adults, the offerings of the church are going to be insufficient if, as is the case of most of the Bicolano churches, the income of the members is below the poverty line. The care of the souls of the poor is reliant on men of dedication and in spite of financial destitution. Little in ministerial literature deals with this challenge.

Even though Joseph has attempted to supplement his income outside the ministry, he is still in the same poverty, especially when transportation costs and expenditure of time are factored in. Fortunately for Joseph, his wife is a school teacher with an accredited degree. This facet I will examine in more detail in Chapter 3 and also in Chapter 4.

Good ministerial training may not provide many of the solutions for the material well-being of the preacher but can certainly be of significant preparation in

anticipation of circumstances of the future. I would argue that any man may doubt himself and his calling if, after all his hard work and dedication, he is paid just a pittance.

Forced exits

Joseph's ministry career is not untypical of other men. He has been the preacher in seven congregations with four years the longest time in one place. Joseph is caught in a game of musical chairs or musical pulpits as Rodney Crowell entitles it. In following up on his ministry at Tagbac in 2011, I realized that it was a forced exit—again using the terminology of Crowell. While I had to be careful not to cause *hiya* for Joseph, I did ask him for his explanation. Joseph claimed that the elder from Banites “kicked him out” and, as the elder is also an elder at Banga and Tacbac was an outreach of Banga, Banga agreed to have him separate from them but Banga was “covering” for the elder. Banga also wanted Joseph not to be associated with Nabuntugan but as Nabuntugan is not an outreach of Banga, they had no jurisdiction. Joseph continued, “The congregation in Tagbac cried to me but they have nothing to do as it is an outreach of Banga. The members want me to preach but Banga don't want. The members are always requesting me to do services for funeral, thanksgiving and birthday.” Joseph said that meetings had ceased in the Tagbac chapel and instead there were worship services once more at Banites with about ten attending.

From here, I considered discretion was best for I did not want to run the risk of Joseph losing face by asking more questions. I cannot know whether or not Joseph omitted any relevant details and I could not risk involving myself in local politics by raising the issue with the Banga folk. Although I remain mostly unaware of the reasons for discord, as Crowell observes, forced exits are painful, embarrassing, and aggravating. For any man or woman, being dismissed from or having to change any occupation brings a crisis of identity. This is a subject that is difficult to acknowledge yet Crowell's findings are that up to three-quarters of congregations have terminated at least one preacher. For the preacher, many of whom must change pulpits numerous times during a career, this is a definite

contemporary issue for which there are no easy solutions but the subject, and the personal crisis which results, cannot be taboo.¹⁵¹ Additionally, the usual wisdom is that little of a permanent nature is achieved in a ministry of fewer than five years.¹⁵² Both preachers and churches need to be encouraged to pursue longer ministries.

Stress

As Mary Anne Coate points out, any involvement in ministry is accompanied by stress and so Blackwood's assertion that ministry is the most difficult vocation in the world.¹⁵³ The word stress is not articulated by Joseph or others however it is clearly evident in their lives and their actions. Coate continues that "the management of potential stress is properly part of growth and development." She suggests solutions can come from support from religious superiors and hierarchy but as Churches of Christ do not possess these, the best Joseph can do is seek solace from his fellow ministers. Attendance at a ministerial fellowship may be one of the more important anchor ropes—to borrow Ward's terminology—that a preacher can have.¹⁵⁴ Coate goes on to advocate that specialist support be sought in counseling and psychotherapy yet for the rural poor, these are completely unattainable. These specialists are not available in the province and the poor cannot afford the time to travel or their fees in Manila. Further, Coate notes that stress is compounded by physical problems such as ulcers but the rural poor have little opportunity to see even a general medical practitioner and insufficient finances to undergo appropriate tests and buy medicines.¹⁵⁵ While practical theology solutions for the first world are frequently not applicable for the third world, stress is just not a rich man's crisis; the poor suffer just as much.

¹⁵¹ Rodney J. Crowell, *Musical Pulpits: Clergy and Laypersons Face the Issue of Forced Exits* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992).

¹⁵² I am uncertain where this idea originated however long ministries are advocated by many. See for example, Rick Warren, *Purpose-Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 31.

¹⁵³ Blackwood, *Growing*, 15.

¹⁵⁴ Ward, 4–11.

¹⁵⁵ Mary Anne Coate. *Clergy Stress: The Hidden Conflicts in Ministry* (London: SPCK, 1989), 192–206.

The crisis in ministerial role and identity

The ministry described

Returning to the central issue of the crisis in ministerial role and identity, as Ballard phrases it, Joseph was consistently passionate about his ministry and excited to inform me of successes although there was unfailingly a sense of some frustration of how much he was achieving. I was able to talk with Joseph at some length on at least three different occasions. I typically began interviews with Joseph with general questions about successes and the *mga problema* he faced. Usually, the first thing that came into his mind was something about lack of finances. Once he said he could not work full time for the church because the church did not give him enough money. He paid for expenses out of his own pocket. He continued, “In my own view, I am not in focus because I am working outside as a sideline but if I have to do something for the church, I [have to] leave those job for me to do the church responsibility.” On one occasion, he was agitated by a family who “controlled the church.” At that time, he and the majority of members of the Banga church wanted to move the Banites church to Tagbac but the leading family at Banites did not agree. Deeper into each conversation, however, there was frequently that apprehension about the worthiness and effectiveness of his ministry.¹⁵⁶

I asked Joseph to describe himself as a minister. “I am an ordinary leader. I only had a low education but I can say that I did the same with those who had high education. My traits include perseverance. I give ways to others. I let them have the position that they want me to have in an election. I have a strong Christian faith. I always support church activity” was his reply. Table 5 is a compilation of the various lists that Joseph gave me that he did in his ministry in his order of importance. It is of note that in conversations, Joseph and Eva were always

¹⁵⁶ Filipinos will rarely tell you directly and precisely what they think and feel although it is usual that they express their frustrations about being poor. Rarely will they begin a conversation with the issue that is the vital concern for them. Veteran missionary, Charles Littell, tells stories of visitors to his house taking three hours of conversation before they plucked up enough courage to ask for financial assistance or for Charles to be a *ninong*. Interview by the author, 31st October 1997. Joseph and particularly Eva were more straightforward than this, but still, it took some time to see their real passion.

passionate about evangelism, visitation and Bible studies with prospects, and baptism although this zeal is not particularly reflected in Table 5. Likewise, Joseph loved to preach but because of his forced exits and shared ministries, there were periods during these years where he was not preaching each week on a Sunday morning.

Table 5: Joseph’s ministry activities in order of importance

2007	2009	2011	Activity
1	7	1	Prayer, prayer meeting
2		2	Personal Evangelism
3	2	3	Conducting revivals, pastoring
4		4	Fellowship <i>sa bahay-bahay</i> , serving the brethren
5			Baptizing
6	6	7	Home visitation
7			Doing physical therapy to sick people
8	3	9	Leading Bible study
9		6	Training new leaders
10	1		Message – [preaching]
11	4	8	Guitarist <i>and Naglead sa</i> [lead] praise and Worship
12	8	10	Service for anniversary, birthday, and <i>patay</i> ¹⁵⁷
13	5	5	Counseling

Joseph said in 2007 that he became a minister “to bring souls to God, to worship God, and to [be] added to the vineyard workers.” Later, he wrote, “I saw the need of the Lord. I saw that many people go to the wrong direction. I saw that the Lord needs me and I was afraid that I would also be out of the Lord—without knowing salvation.” On yet another occasion, he responded “I was called to do it. I know that I have responsibility with God, to others, and even to my family. I saw that the Lord needs workers. My parents are church workers too and I grew up in a Christian belief.”

The ministry passion and achievements

I probed if he thought his ministry was worthwhile. In 2007, he wrote:

- a. Yes, I feel the presence of God.
- b. Yes, because I feel that it was effective for me. Why? Because many were accomplished eg. Evangelism, outreach [began at] Sinuknipan by GRS. I lead the people in Banga church to

¹⁵⁷ He means leading services for wakes and funerals.

decide to use their P100,000 instead of storing it up. It was used for another church building.¹⁵⁸

- c. Yes, because I see the fruit of it. I baptized 60 last year—now 70 + revival.¹⁵⁹
- d. It is pleasing to God.¹⁶⁰

Sometime later, Joseph said that because he is called for ministry by God he found joy and pleasure in doing ministry.¹⁶¹ He continued, “People need the Lord. People need something. People need to get connected back to God. In the first place, even if you are tired of this job, I find pleasure of seeing people happy because they find answers to their questions.” In 2010 his response was:

I felt happiness in doing ministry. Even without pay I receive happiness every time I do ministry. People say that I am really doing ministry to them. Not me saying [that] I am doing something to them but they themselves say it to me that I am ministering to them. People always ask for my presence. If I tell them that I won't be available, they ask these questions, “When will you come back?” and “How many days will you leave?”

When I inquired about Joseph's achievements in his ministry in 2007, he included bringing souls to God, restoring the backsliders to God, training new workers, and leading the railroad evangelism work. A year or two later, he responded that more than 200 had been baptized. I pointed out that the attendances at services were still low and asked where all those who had been baptized were currently. “Some went to Manila. Some are backsliders. I don't consider. Some are irregular. Most are here in the railway towns.” He always enjoyed being the chairman of evangelism in the railway towns and a lecturer at SBI. On a different occasion, he listed five things:

1. Big problems that was solved; e.g. misunderstanding from the church members are resolved.
2. People were revived during my term.
3. My wife that supports me always. My family also.

¹⁵⁸ This is a reference to the new building constructed at the Banga Church of Christ that is now used as their new chapel.

¹⁵⁹ By revival, he means that he has revived lapsed members who are now active in the church again.

¹⁶⁰ This and the other lists and enumerations below are Joseph's and sometimes Eva's.

¹⁶¹ For various understandings of the Restoration Movement on the call to ministry, see Johnson, *Duly*, 76–85.

4. I personally experience his [God's] works in me. E.g. financial. My daughter got sick – convulsions – and I went to private room in hospital with P4,000.00 only but ending up of P20,000.00 bill. God used other people to help me.
5. I become a chairman of the Railroad Church leaders and experience to have twenty-nine souls accepted Christ and been baptized in a small church activity. I was amazed about it.”

I requested what successes he thought he had achieved in his ministry in 2010. He wrote five items and verbally added a sixth:

- a. Answered prayers—e.g. conflict over the musical instrument.
- b. Received material needs like foods, clothing, shelter etc. from the other churches like GRS and Abad for Nabuntugan.
- c. Trained leaders in the Nabuntugan church.
- d. Have lead people to Jesus. (He said he had eight baptisms in 2010.)
- e. Received piano instrument [electric keyboard].
- f. Got Bibles for prospects.

In another variation, I asked Joseph how he attempted to meet people's needs. In 2008, he noted:

First I do pray for him because I believe God loves them. I'm finding first what they need. Loving, when they've seen they're loved, they will love too in return. [I am] increasing quantity, improving life, and improving leadership. I am serving Him. God loves to see people serving Him so that others will be saved also. I have equipped others in ministry.

In 2009, he responded, “People have many needs. Material needs—I can only do *konte lang*. Spiritual needs—there I can give my best, give my whole.” When I pressed him to give me an example, he continued:

If they have a spiritual struggle, they share it to me. ‘Pastor, can you pray for me.’ Or maybe it's like this, ‘I have a brother who is sick. Can we pay him a visit?’ And, for example, they have an activity—like a birthday, an anniversary, a reunion, or a thanksgiving—they say [to me] ‘You can have a Bible study here.’ The people ask to have a study. That is why I believe my ministry has a worth and they give importance to it.

When I asked him directly if he ever have any doubts about his ministry, Joseph specified,

Yes, I had because one time our brethren said something to me. For example, an elder doesn't want me and he said something bad to me.

Another example, other leaders who wants to teach other teaching from what we had before, for example G12 principle. Another example, other church offers me a better job but I don't easily get into it because I know that I will have other big problems like transportation.

Eva added,

Frustrated sometimes, but by the Spirit of Jesus Christ we encountered it.¹⁶² We share the Word of God but the prospect does not commit. Sometimes, [we] feel insulted by the prospect. The prospect will say [that] they don't know what is the truth. We're frustrated at all the failures in the church. The blame goes to the pastor.... Sometimes the church members promise—e.g. giving but instead of giving, they forget to give.... No growth in giving—just P70 or P150 per week. Every third week of the month, the offering goes to the preacher.

Joseph explained that he went part-time in his ministry because his family needed financial support and that most churches in the area were unable to support a full-time preacher. When I asked why he did not leave the ministry altogether and get a full-time job his reply was, “We love doing ministry. It's our passion. We cannot leave it even [if] we experience poverty and depression. Ministry is the life of a Christian. We are made to do it. I love God. I know it is my responsibility. I need to continue what has been done before.”

I was not able to see Joseph perform any funerals during my research but I did attend the funeral service of Eva's elderly grandfather in 2009 when the small GRS chapel was packed to overflowing. All five of the deceased's children and about another 150 people were there for they waited to hold the funeral until those from California and Manila were able to be present. Not all the grandchildren and great-grandchildren were in attendance, however, even though several of them live in or close to GRS. Besides the locals, many of the Bicol preachers and a number of elders from other churches were in attendance. As I arrived from Manila just as the service began, there was no place for me to stand inside. During the service, I spent a little time counseling and comforting one of the adult children outside under the mango tree. It was blistering hot and everyone inside was sweating profusely. The children of the deceased wore *barong tagalogs* and the preachers wore *barongs* or

¹⁶² She meant endured rather than encountered.

short-sleeve shirts with dress shoes. However, most of the others, including the grandchildren, wore casual clothing, including jeans, shorts, flip-flops, and t-shirts. The music was a mixture of hymns and praise and worship choruses and Mel Pel led the service and preached the sermon.¹⁶³ The general atmosphere was subdued as most attempted to contemplate the ways of God and reflected on a life well-lived whose soul now assuredly, as far as they were concerned, was at home with his maker. There were those who shed tears as they said good-bye to their father or grandfather and there were younger ones who laughed and joked but there were none of the shrieks of desperation as described by Cannell in a funeral she attended in the same province.¹⁶⁴

The ministry crisis explained

I have already described the ministry of Joseph and let him tell about his passion and achievements. At the beginning of this chapter, I allowed myself to deviate to consider three *mga problema* that Joseph articulated: financial deprivation, forced exits, and stress. However, more explanation is needed to account for the ministerial crisis that Ballard, Blackwood, and Stone recognize.¹⁶⁵

A challenge arises because of both the historic conception of ministry in Churches of Christ as well as a heightened leadership role of laity across Christendom. I have already stated that ministry in Churches of Christ is not limited to a clergy class but includes everyone because of the concept of priesthood of all believers. Additionally, ministry of the elders can include all functions that a full-time man performs. Thus, the full-time Church of Christ preacher like Joseph—and I presume any congregation where the laity is heavily involved in leadership—often finds himself with an insecure tenure and very casual employment arrangements. He can offer no exclusive service for he is not, for example, a priest offering a sacerdotal role who is understood to be a conduit to absolve sins in either a

¹⁶³ See Chapters 2 and 3. For a description of death, wakes, and funerals among the general population in Bicol, see Cannell, 137–164.

¹⁶⁴ Cannell, 166–167.

¹⁶⁵ Ballard, in Woodward and Pattison, 63; Blackwood, *Growing*, 15 and 20; and Stone, *Minister*, 11 and 37.

confession box or at communion.¹⁶⁶ Baptisms are frequently performed by other members of the congregation, particularly family members. In the worship service, often the full-time man's only responsibility is to preach however in his absence, the elders will deliver the sermon. The minister wields no ultimate power. He cannot excommunicate like the medieval priest nor grant salvation as some cult leaders claim. Full-time ministry in Churches of Christ is not an exclusive guild since neither ordination nor a license to preach or perform office is required. Joseph himself has no degree, no formal education beyond high school, and no Bible college training. As counseling becomes more professional and regulated as a vocation, the perceived value of pastoral care that the average minister can offer is proportionately limited. The minister is the servant leader who just happens to get paid.

When the preacher is hired by a local congregation, he has no ability to increase his compensation beyond what he is offered by the church and seldom is he recompensed at a rate expected in secular fields. "As the Lord provides" is scant solace. In the Philippines, the preacher is rarely offered the DOLE standards such as minimum wage, contributions to the government health and social security programs, or the three-step process required of employers to issue a written warning and written final warning before dismissal. Except in large churches where the youth minister may become the senior minister—there are very few of these in the Philippines—the minister has no recognition as given by promotion in the civil service or the armed forces.

Beyond prayer and an exemplary life, the only tool the minister has is his personal ability to persuade the very people who pay him. That is a herculean task for the man must continue to rebuke, correct, encourage, and train his congregation to live a more exemplary life. His personal life should be centred in Christ and is forever open to scrutiny so that any slight failure on his part will subject him to criticism and charges of hypocrisy.¹⁶⁷ Most church folk respect the man for his

¹⁶⁶ See Chapter 3 for considerations about the Lord's Supper in Churches of Christ.

¹⁶⁷ See Shannon, *Ministry*, 18–23; Johnson, *Duly*, 165–176; and Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1983), 8–15. I have no sense

spiritual leadership and his dedication. Many elders provide excellent support but as Joseph experienced, the precariousness of the circumstances of the minister is seen particularly once things go wrong. Typically, when there is discord in the church, tithes and offerings are withheld from the offering plate, gossip—whether true or not—circulates in the church and the community, unhappy members leave the church, and even the intimate details of a minister’s private life become the subject of church board meetings. The man in the pulpit is particularly vulnerable to gossip as he is the one leading in front. The painstaking prayers, the sweat and tears, and the hard work that make ministry successful, relevant, and meaningful can be swept away in an instant. The results for the man frequently include humiliation, dismissal from his job, and recurring feelings of unworthiness, weariness, doubt, stress, and spiritual failure.¹⁶⁸ While these are not of course unique to the ministry, in the context of the independent congregation where the man’s personal demeanor is often the topic of conversation, the preacher is regularly the expendable one and forced to exit. Many a preacher pays the full price for not only his own but also his congregation’s shortcomings. Joseph’s changing of churches every few years is unfortunately the norm, not the exception.

For a Filipino, Joseph has been openly honest allowing us to see his fears and failings and for that I believe we should be appreciative. I think he is relatively representative of men in the ministry. His life revolves around ministry and he genuinely desires to perform it well. Although he does the best he knows how, he is beset by challenges such as financial deprivation, forced exits, and stress, and as I have just explained, insecure tenure, casual employment arrangements, and susceptibility to criticism. However, the roots of his crises go back to his ministerial preparation. Joseph has had no formal theological education and so has had to rely on the examples he learnt growing up and from other ministers around him. He has few resources such as books and, to date, little accessibility to the Internet.

that Joseph has lived anything but an exemplary life and I do not know of any wrongdoings by either the Banga folk or Joseph.

¹⁶⁸ I am not attempting here to theologize on the general Restoration Movement conceptions of ministry. I am also not insinuating any denigration of either eldership or the priesthood of all believers. In fact, in my own ministry, I very much appreciate elders like Tom Davis and Fred Schneider who were of much personal assistance to me. My objective here is to give the perspective of the full-time man and the insecurities he can face.

Unfortunately, many of those preachers that did spend four years at a Bible college still flounder in their ministry role and identity because they were given little practical guidance. Naturally, then, the ministry can be a place of heartbreak and crisis.

Towards a healthy ministry role and identity

In reflection, the crisis that Joseph senses and the heartbreak of Blackwood's most difficult vocation will continue for the men who still feel the call of God to take up full-time ministry. There is no magical wand that will resolve every problem, and the solution is not, at least I believe, in attempting to turn back the clock so that the clergy are the only ones who serve in the church. However, a few practical suggestions may be a little help.

Even though criticism will always come, the preacher will be wise to make some attempts to guard against such censures. The pulpit is never to be used as a personal vendetta nonetheless a good sermon on gossip every year is probably at least in part preventative. However it is defined, the preacher must not only have integrity but also be seen to have integrity so that, even in this permissive age and at the risk of being seen as an old fogey, he will be prudent to maintain the old rules such as to take a companion if he is visiting a house where the only occupant is a younger woman. He should strive to ensure that his elders are good friends and that any major changes he makes in the congregation have their prior approval, or better still are presented to the congregation by them. The preacher will also be wise to ascertain who the powerbroker in his congregation is for such knowledge is critical.¹⁶⁹

Fundamental to any employment position is a clear delineation of the work that is expected to be successfully completed within any given timeframe and for this, ministry is no exception. It is natural for any person to be in doubt or confusion if he or she is uncertain of what work he or she must perform. In the Church of Christ faith context of looking to New Testament precepts and with each

¹⁶⁹ From experience, preachers know that is usually not one of the elders, rather one of their wives, and so the old ironic comment that it is not the Saturday night board meeting that is most important but the roast (of the preacher) at the Sunday lunch table.

congregation being independent, there are few written job descriptions and often only vague notions of what ought to be done and accomplished. Stone states that the New Testament does not provide a concise job description.¹⁷⁰ Multi-staff churches tend to define roles however most of the 1,000 preachers of Churches of Christ in the Philippines are the sole employee of their congregation. Most of the churches give the preacher no clear guidance. On the positive side, that allows the man to make his own decisions but as Stone points out, there can be inefficiency when a job description is not precisely defined and followed. Using himself as an example, he reviewed his list in an early ministry and evaluated as a poor use of his time activities such as attending a Halloween party and turning lights and sound systems off and on.¹⁷¹ It is not uncommon for preachers to joke among themselves about getting out of bed at midday and playing basketball all afternoon. The church board should provide more guidance than the generic preach the word and do evangelism while the minister himself must know his abilities and determine his priorities. As observed with ministry activities in Table 5 and the omission of preaching at times, Joseph may benefit from a simple written job description. If the church does not provide it, it would be worth the time and effort for the preacher to create one for himself.

The minister should consider where his emphases in ministry lie. Speaking from an American position, Shannon highlights preaching, discipleship, administration, shepherding, and performing marriages while Stone lists preaching, counseling, administration, motivating, calling, conducting services, and implementing the program.¹⁷² The local preacher in the Philippines must decide how many hours in his forty-eight or fifty-four hour work week he ought to allot to each of these components. To be an effective minister—and I would argue to avoid stress and remove uncertainty in ministry role and identity—Stone suggests three crucial questions:

1. How does the New Testament picture your work?
2. What do you feel that your work should be?

¹⁷⁰ Stone, *Minister*, 15. I would argue that the New Testament had no intentions of providing one.

¹⁷¹ Stone, *Minister*, 27–29.

¹⁷² Murch, *Manual*, Shannon, *Ministry*, and Stone, *Minister*. These are their chapter headings.

3. What does your church expect of you?¹⁷³

Adding three additional concerns I believe would produce further benefits and while these may flow out of Stone's second or third questions, my feeling is that they should be deliberated specifically. First, examine the circumstances of the congregation, so, for example, the man's time should be spent differently if a high portion of the membership is elderly and shut-ins than if the church is located in a young neighbourhood where ethnic problems are critical concerns. Second, a vision and time element needs conscious attention. Circumstances will change with time: the day after the typhoon has struck or the volcano exploded demands a completely different response than months later. Contingency plans are desirable for natural disasters like typhoons. Whereas a new church will desire to become established in the beginning, its felt needs will be entirely different in five years. Every church should explore its expected requirements for the next five years. Thirdly, by evaluating a man's gifts and abilities, the congregation and the man himself can capitalize on his natural ability and training in areas such as worship, pastoral ministry, counseling, teaching, administration, and evangelism. In my experience, it is naturally done if the man is musical but seldom consciously deliberated upon for other areas.

Finally, as the preacher often finds himself with insecure tenure and very casual employment arrangements, it is essential for him to receive from his elders or local church board a written signed contract that specifies a job description, salary, holiday leave, and mandatory government benefits such as health insurance and social security payments. In the Filipino context, the more meticulous and the more details, the better as such a document will categorically be referred to whenever there are any queries or disagreements. Even the small rural congregations like those that Joseph has served can be encouraged to draw up a contract. Not to do so is unprofessional and the preacher will invariably be the one who will find himself in crisis.

¹⁷³ Stone, *Minister*, 16. As the official Filipino work week is forty-eight hours, the thinking is that the preacher should tithe his time as he includes attendances in worship and other church functions in his work hours but expects the members of his congregation to attend on a voluntary basis.

Baptism

Thus far I have highlighted more of the crisis aspect of the ministerial role and identity to which Ballard alerts us and so now attention is turned to two specific roles in which Joseph particularly found identity and satisfaction—baptism and preaching.

Baptism has been a common topic for debate. Oscar Cullmann's *Baptism in the New Testament*, Karl Barth's *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism* and the interchange between Joachim Jeremias and Kurt Aland on baptism are well known. G. R. Beasley-Murray's *Baptism in the New Testament* remains a classic but may now be surpassed by Everett Ferguson's comprehensive *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the first Five Centuries*.¹⁷⁴ Alexander Campbell's writings solidified Restoration Movement thinking while William Robinson's works were influential in Great Britain. Cottrell remains a current prominent voice in both the American and Filipino Independent churches.¹⁷⁵ Articles in the *Christian Standard* and other Church of Christ journals on the topic of baptism have kept the people in the pew relatively knowledgeable.¹⁷⁶ Two tracts, Isaac Errett's *Our Position* and P. H. Welshimer's *Facts concerning the New Testament Church*, have been distributed by the millions but the most persuasive

¹⁷⁴ Oscar Cullmann, trans. by J. K. S. Reid, *Baptism in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1950 [1973]); Karl Barth, *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism*, trans. by Ernest Payne (London: SCM Press, 1948 [1956]); Kurt Aland, trans. by G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Did the Early Church Baptize Infants?* (London: SCM Press, 1963); Joachim Jeremias, *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries*, trans. by David Cairns (London: SCM Press, 1960) and *The Origins of Infant Baptism: A further study in reply to Kurt Aland*, trans. by Dorothea M. Barton (London: SCM Press, 1963); G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962); and Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the first Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009). Ferguson is a professor at Abilene Christian University, one of the non-instrumental colleges.

¹⁷⁵ Cottrell, *Baptism: A Biblical Study* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company, 1989) and *Faith*.

¹⁷⁶ These weekly magazines are available by private subscription but continue to be ordered in bulk by churches and given out freely in adult Sunday School classes and at the front door. *Christian Standard* was begun in 1866 with Isaac Errett, President James A. Garfield, and two oil magnates as board directors. Isaac Errett and Sam Stone have been long-time editors. The magazine is now available online at *Christian Standard*, <http://christianstandard.com/>.

writings on baptism for Churches of Christ remain the New Testament.¹⁷⁷ Using their Lockean philosophy, no Church of Christ member hesitates quoting a New Testament text such as Acts 2:38, Romans 6:1ff, and 1 Peter 3:21; many being able to quote them verbatim. Bible studies and sermons frequently directly address this topic and most Christian Church/Church of Christ members can articulate who, how, and why a person should be baptized. The conversations below with Joseph and Eva could have been carried out in nearly any one of the 1,000 congregations of Churches of Christ in the Philippines. The purpose here is not so much to give a theological defense of baptism as much as to describe baptism as practiced and how it is perceived in a rural Church of Christ in Bicol. I am returning to Richter's denominational cultures again as well as attempting to show why men like Stone think that ministry is the greatest work in the world and men like Joseph, who despite all the crises, stay in the ministry.¹⁷⁸

A baptism service

It was 10am, Saturday morning, 14th December 2007, when we gathered in the small Banga Church of Christ chapel for seven baptisms.¹⁷⁹ Joseph was particularly insistent that I be present and include this in my description of his ministry. A congregation in Banga began as early as 1933 and the chapel, near the railway line, was neatly finished with a tiled floor and had fourteen bench seats which each held three or four people.¹⁸⁰ At the front was a small platform and behind that was the baptistery, built into the floor of the platform but, of course, it was opened and filled with water for this event.

¹⁷⁷ Isaac Errett, *Our Position* (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Company, n.d.) and P. H. Welshimer, *Facts concerning the New Testament Church* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing, n.d.). The latter included a section written by Garfield.

¹⁷⁸ Richter, in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 169–184.

¹⁷⁹ In Churches of Christ in western countries, baptisms are typically held as a part of the regular worship service on Sunday. For some unknown reason, the Filipino Churches of Christ have tended to hold the baptisms after the end of the service or at another time. In the case of these baptisms at Banga, these people came from either the Tagbac area or the Banga town itself.

¹⁸⁰ *Centennial Book*, 275–277. The congregation ceased to meet during World War II and located in the *poblacion* of Banga Caves in 1955 or 1957. The *Centennial Book* gives conflicting dates. Actually, the chapel has now been replaced and the old chapel is being used as the Sunday School.

Joseph welcomed the approximately thirty adults and a dozen children who gathered, introduced the candidates for baptism, read Matthew 11:28, and opened the service in prayer. Eva then took over, leading a singspiration in both English and Tagalog.¹⁸¹ For the congregation to see, the words were written on large two feet by three feet sheets of paper. Above the singing of the final song, “All to Jesus, I surrender,” Joseph offered an invitation, asking any of those who wished to be baptized to come to the front of the congregation. Six people initially came forward but as the invitation ended, one of the women found another lad who was playing outside and brought him to the front too. The oldest, a grandfather of seventy-two, also had his family members there: his son, aged forty-five, the son’s wife, and their daughter of seventeen, and a daughter, aged thirty-nine. Two boys, aged ten and eight, made up the party of seven. The daughter of seventeen had her infant in her arms but the infant was not considered as a candidate for baptism. Once the singing stopped, Joseph directed each to place one of their hands on a Bible he was holding and repeat after him in Tagalog, the good confession of faith.¹⁸²

Joseph prayed for each who had come forward. The baby in her mother’s arms was given to another family member and the seven went out the back behind the platform area to the kitchen and CR areas to prepare for their baptism while the congregation sang more songs. As usual, a dog strolled in and sat under one of the pews, a number of the people wandered in and out, and some were outside preparing food. When the candidates re-entered, dressed in white gowns over the top with shorts and t-shirts underneath, Joseph went down and stood in the baptistery while

¹⁸¹ Congregational singing, or it is also known as a song service. It is usually at the beginning of a service. The singspiration—and all singing in the church—may be in either English or Tagalog or both and be traditional hymns, praise and worship choruses, or a mixture of both. There are some hymns in the Cebuano and Ilocano languages and the Ilocano Churches of Christ have their own hymnbook. Hymns in Filipino languages are usually translations from English but there are three exceptions. The first, written by Juan Baronia include *Mabuhay* and *Paninindigan* which are often sung at conventions and particularly reflect Church of Christ theology. Translations by Baronia of a number of other hymns have been used without permission in a number of other Filipino hymnbooks. Second, are a few Tagalog Christmas carols, including *Ang Pasko ay Sumapit* and *Himig ng Pasko* which, along with the traditional Christmas carols, both religious and secular, are played at all malls and supermarkets from 1st September until *Tatlong Hari*. Thirdly, *Papuri*, a subsidiary of the radio ministry, FEBC, writes contemporary Christian music. See Wissmann, “Worship” for more details.

¹⁸² The approximate English translation was “I do believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God and I take Him as my Lord and personal Saviour.” See below for further explanations.

the congregation left their seats and gathered around. One by one, the seven candidates entered the baptistery, a tiled pool approximately six feet long and two feet wide with about three feet of water in it.¹⁸³ Each candidate kneeled on entering the baptistery and Joseph held up his hand and then explained, in Tagalog, that each was being baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and his or her name was being added in the Book of Life. He then put his arms on the arms and back of the candidate and baptized the person. Each lent forward under the water and was totally immersed by Joseph.¹⁸⁴ Joseph pronounced that each was buried with Christ and then was rising to walk a new life in Christ.¹⁸⁵ As the person came up out of the water, Joseph declared that the person was now a child of God. The newly-baptized stood up, walked up the steps out of the baptistery, was given a towel to dry off, and joined the rest of the congregation. The congregation, meanwhile, sang “Lord I offer my life” and clapped as each person came up out of the water. Some folks were serious, others smiled, and a number of cameras took pictures.

Once all the baptisms were finished, Joseph gave a charge to the newly-baptized still sitting in their white robes on the front pew. It did not matter that they were still wet in the warm tropical weather. He encouraged them to read their Bible daily, pray, and go to Christian meetings including church regularly. Another prayer was said and a chorus, “*Purihin Natin*” was sung. The congregation moved around greeting and shaking hands with each other. As an announcement, Joseph explained that certificates of baptism would be given later. When the service was finished, most of the congregation filed out the back to eat lunch.

¹⁸³ Most Church of Christ church buildings around the world have a built-in baptistery not unlike the size of this one. Usually it is in the same place, behind the platform area. Those congregations who do not possess a baptistery use a neighbouring congregation’s chapel, a creek, the seaside, or the local swimming pool. The shape and location of the place of baptism is of little importance in Church of Christ thinking. When there was none other available at ICCM, a forty-four gallon drum was used and the candidate was bobbed up and down. The main condition is that there is sufficient water to immerse the whole person.

¹⁸⁴ Likewise, the positioning of the candidate is not significant. I personally prefer to baptize the candidate by lowering the person backwards as, in my view, it gives greater significance to the act of dying to the old life and then rising to walk a new life. I have heard of elderly or heavy weight persons sitting on a chair in the baptistery and then the chair is tipped over and back up. Again, the only importance is the total immersion of the candidate.

¹⁸⁵ The words spoken at this time vary slightly from preacher to preacher but all use a formula similar to this one.

A group, however, remained in the chapel for a baby thanksgiving. The young mother of seventeen who had just been baptized, her husband by her side, and her baby in her arms, stood at the front centre of the chapel facing Joseph with the *ninongs* and *ninangs* on each side. Joseph led a short service of dedication, mostly in Tagalog, beginning with a prayer and then a short homily. Joseph said that the child was a gift of God and therefore, we should give thanks to God for this blessing. Further, it was our responsibility to “suffer the little children to come unto me” and offer the child to God.¹⁸⁶ Next, he gave a charge to the parents to bring the child up in a correct and spiritual manner. Before a final prayer, he also gave a charge to the *ninongs* and *ninangs* to assist in any way they could to raise the child.

The concept of baptism

After the baptisms, I interviewed Joseph and Eva about them. Compared to other interviews, this was easy and quick-flowing for mostly they answered with numerous bullet points in quick succession and with much enthusiasm. Later, in 2011, I followed up with another interview.

I asked why they performed the baptisms. They replied:

- It's God's command.
- It is the way to receive the grace of God.
- To receive the Holy Spirit.
- For the person to become a child of God.
- To receive eternal life.
- To receive God's promises of personal guidance, help for financial needs, peace, and spiritual growth.
- To reach people who have not yet received God.
- To share the love of God to other people.
- So they are prepared and ready to accept God as Saviour.

When I requested an explanation of the last item, they recited, almost in unison, using their fingers and saying: 1. *pananampalataya* (faith/belief), 2. *pagsissi* (repent), 3. *magpahag* (confess), 4. *bautismo* (baptize), 5. *sumulod* (follow) God's commands.

Eva and Joseph were questioned who should be baptized and they said the ones who truly have faith in God, those who hear the Word of God, those who

¹⁸⁶ Reference to the KJV of Matthew 19:14.

confess their sins to God, and those who want to serve God. They said babies are not baptized because they lack knowledge, lack capacity to understand the Word of God, have *walang kasalanan* (no sins), children are holy, and they cannot confess or declare their sins.

Baptisms could take place, I was informed, in a baptistery, a stream or river, the sea, or in a drum if needed, but there must be plenty of water. Babies should not be sprinkled as it is essential to immerse. It is God's command and it is written in the Bible—Matthew 28:19–20, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38. Joseph was quite precise that 120 buckets of water fill the Banga baptistery. They continued that the water must be deep enough to immerse the whole body.

I queried when should a person be baptized and who should be the one to perform the baptisms. As usual, they replied with a string of answers: when he or she makes a decision, when a schedule was made, when he or she wants to receive God, anytime, anywhere, anyone if they decide, and even at midnight. Pastors, elders, deacons, and evangelists were initially named as responsible people to perform baptisms but they added a woman if no men are available and anyone who would like to do the baptism, although they were firm that the person conducting the baptism must be a Christian.

I asked how the people who were just baptized were prepared for their baptism. Joseph and Eva explained that Joseph had led the one family in a personal Bible study over a period of three months in their home. Although only five were baptized, there were eight who attended in the studies. The family had had contacts with the Jehovah's Witnesses nevertheless their neighbours, who were Church of Christ, talked to them about Christ. The family then requested the studies and they had numerous questions including:

- Do I need to be baptized?
- Do I need to accept Christ?
- How should I be baptized? and
- Is it true that there is a judgment day and eternal life?

Thanksgiving

The thanksgiving was done, they elucidated: to give thanks to God and to ask God to bless the child. As the child is holy, there is no need to baptize him/her.

Joseph and Eva said that the *ninongs* and *ninangs* serve as second parents, guardians, and consultants. They are there to help discipline and mold the child, to support the family financially if and when required, and to teach the word of God to the child. I asked Eva and Joseph why they believed the child was holy. While they had difficulty expressing their thoughts, their basic understanding was that the child was not a sinner.

Church of Christ philosophy and practice explained

Despite Joseph's minimal theological education (and Eva's even less), both very much reflect the traditional Church of Christ position. Joseph requested his candidates for baptism to repeat the good confession. Confession is not the traditional Catholic confession of sins but a confession of faith as understood in calling Edward, the Saxon king of England, the Confessor. The purpose of the confession is precisely so that the candidate may profess verbally and publically one's faith in Christ and declare the intention to become a committed Christian. Variations on the precise wording of this good confession abound across Churches of Christ although the version "I do believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God and I take Him as my Lord and personal Saviour" is typical. Sometimes, after the preacher says the confession of faith in the form of a question, the candidate is asked simply to respond with "I do." Repeating the confession after the minister phrase by phrase is the preferred practice.

Baptism is regarded by Churches of Christ as part of salvation. Walter Scott defined this for the Restoration Movement in the 1820s with his famous simple mnemonic five-finger exercise. His original five components are faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.¹⁸⁷ Over the years, there have been variations but all include baptism as the final step in becoming a Christian. The common formulations include:

1. hear, believe (faith), repentance, confession, baptism;
2. faith, repentance, confession, baptism, receive the Holy Spirit, and

¹⁸⁷ See "Walter Scott (Clergyman)," *Wikipedia*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Scott_\(Clergyman\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Scott_(Clergyman)). All of the general history books of the Restoration movement give references to this.

3. the one frequently used in the Philippines: *pananampalataya* (faith), *pagsisisi* (repentance), *paghahayag* (confession), *bautismo* (baptism), (then you are a Christian), *pagpapatuloy kay Kristo* (continue in Christ).¹⁸⁸

Churches of Christ on occasion find themselves at odds with both sides of the Christian theological spectrum. On the one hand, they do not consign everyone to hell who does not believe as they do—but there are those with lesser theological understanding or more conservative views that do. Mostly, Restoration Movement people do not think that everyone who believes (whatever that can mean) or everyone who is good (whatever that means) is going to heaven. While they have retained adult immersion baptism, there are those in the Disciples wing of the movement who have tended to be more universalist and either downplay the significance of baptism in salvation or accept variant forms of baptism. Manila was the catalyst for the split between the Independents and the Disciples in the 1920s so ninety years later, the Churches of Christ in the Philippines remain very conservative in their theology of baptism.¹⁸⁹

The practice for the individual who wishes to be baptized is for that person to signal one's intention in one of four ways. Traditionally, the majority have come to the front of the congregation at a time of decision or invitation, usually held during the singing of a hymn or a song at the end of the sermon. It has been customary in most American churches to offer an invitation at the end of every worship service, both in the morning and in the evening. Australian and British churches usually only offer an invitation at a so-called gospel service on Sunday nights. The Filipino churches mostly do not hold a Sunday evening service and have not been consistent in giving an invitation on Sunday mornings. Usually, they offer an invitation only if they know someone wants to respond or during special times of concerted evangelistic effort. Second a few candidates may personally approach a church leader, perhaps the preacher in his office, to request baptism. Third, individuals are approached by a friend who is church member and asked to consider becoming a

¹⁸⁸ See, for example, in Ross B. Wissmann, *More Precious than Pearls (Mas Mahalaga pa sa Nga Perlas)*, trans. to Tagalog by Nezhiah Cabalteja, Joel Reyes, and Richard Gasco (Antipolo, Rizal: by the author, 2005).

¹⁸⁹ See Wissmann, "Wolfe."

Christian. This may be a part of a concerted personal evangelism effort or may just be in the flow of a natural conversation. Lastly, and more commonly now, Bible studies are held in family homes, as a part of small groups, or at camps or retreats. Perhaps after a few sessions, those in the study are asked to make a commitment to Christ. Often, those who make a decision to be baptized then respond to the invitation on the following Sunday morning.

Complications in administrating baptism for Churches of Christ

As seen in Joseph's and Eva's explanation of baptism, it was a topic in which they found much joy and to which they—and Churches of Christ as a whole—attach considerable significance as baptism is believed to be a part of accepting Christ's salvific grace and it is understood to be a culmination (although not the end as we shall observe below) of evangelistic work and bringing people to Christ. As Joseph shows in his answers to why he stays in the ministry and why he believes ministry is worthwhile, it is a quantitative way to measure his role and stimulate his identity. Without justifying the Church of Christ position on baptism—or otherwise—there are three perpetual thorny issues that they face.

The age of the candidate, or as frequently expressed, how young a person can be baptized has always been problematic. The four ways above allow a person who wants to be baptized to signal his or her intention. Although this is deliberately designed to give the individual full responsibility, parental, family, community, and peer pressure can and does play a part. In the case of the two boys, then aged ten and eight, the concern is whether or not they understood what they were doing and its theological ramifications. A perennial problem is that young adults often request re-baptism saying "I didn't know what I was doing when I was baptized as a kid."¹⁹⁰ Special care should be taken to ensure that a youngster is aware of some basic doctrinal facets and that one is baptized in accordance with one's own volition.

¹⁹⁰ Re-baptism is, at least from a Church of Christ position, theologically impossible. Ephesians 4:5 says, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Either the act called baptism at aged ten or twelve was baptism or it was not. In practice, the quandary is usually brought to a resolution by a discussion with the individual on what is known and believed. Most agree that imperfect theological knowledge does not negate the validity of the baptism.

A further delicate issue is how much an individual ought to know and be committed to before being baptized. With the expectation by many that baptism should be done as soon as possible, the open invitation system can put the preacher in a difficult situation if someone with whom he is not acquainted responds. Some preachers are not in favour of those based primarily on an emotional response, wanting a more deliberate rational commitment. Sometimes the attitude taken is to baptize now and teach later but the wiser course is probably to delay the baptism until the candidate has undergone some study.

Finally, the retention rate or the commitment level of one baptized is repeatedly a challenge as every minister is disappointed when his new convert does not come to church or does not become a regular member of the church. While a person may desire to be baptized, it is entirely another matter to be an active part of the congregation with a complex set of separate, unrelated, and distinct decisions essential for assimilation into the church. For Churches of Christ, these include the following seven before baptism: receiving teachings about Christ, church, and similar topics, believing that Jesus is the Christ, being willing to accept Christ as Lord and Saviour, being willing to acknowledge and repent of sins, asking and accepting forgiveness of sins, publically owning Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and publically being immersed in water.¹⁹¹ Then, being baptized, the person has at least ten further considerations: being prepared to change one's life, being prepared to grow as a Christian, praying regularly, reading the Bible regularly, being a good witness and attempting to evangelize, formally becoming a member of the church, attending church services (and how regularly), being accepted as a church member, finding a place of service in the church, and becoming a part of a small group that cares, shares, and holds one another accountable.

Often, the core of this commitment—that Jesus is the Christ—is the simplest decision to make. Obviously, each person makes resolutions in different ways and with different levels of intensity but the decision process can be long. Research in

¹⁹¹ While others have alluded to such needed commitments, both this list of seven and the following ten steps are mine. There are rare instances when a baptism is performed privately such as because of poor health or a person of excessive weight. Most preachers are reluctant to baptize a candidate who otherwise does not wish to receive a public baptism.

England shows that it takes up to four years from the initial interest to a commitment to become a Christian.¹⁹² In the Filipino context, it is usually easy for the individual to believe, repent, and be baptized—and even attend church regularly—but the difficulty is in the change of lifestyle and the adoption of a Christian code of ethics and behaviour. De Mesa is correct in recognizing a split-level Christianity which he says:

It is not uncommon for a Filipino identifying himself as a Roman Catholic to actually mean that by that he has overtly accepted the doctrine, ritual and administrative organization proposed, approved or maintained as normative by the officially designated authority of the Roman Catholic Church. His activities and day-by-day behavior however, are heavily oriented in practice toward the observance of popular beliefs and practices sanctioned by the community and not necessarily by the Church.

In the post-Vatican II world, one could question how much of the doctrine an individual Catholic accepts however that is not relevant here. The point is that the theology of the church is accepted but the lifestyle may not be in accord with the practices espoused by church teaching. This applies to all Filipinos, not just Catholics. De Mesa is again correct alleging that “The process of evangelization, after all, comes only to maturity when the Gospel is listened to, accepted for what it really is and not for what people would like it to be. It must be interiorized, finally evoking a genuine commitment in the believer.”¹⁹³ In all countries, the decision to have a personal faith in Christ and the assimilation into regular church life remain major distinct decisions.

Thus, although performing baptisms is the delight of every Church of Christ minister’s heart and is able to provide simple justification for his existence and dedication, I have shown that there are further challenges. When I was last informed in 2011, all of those baptized at Banga Caves that day in 2007 remain in the church.

¹⁹² John Finney, *Finding Faith Today: How does it happen?* (Westlea, Swindon: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1992), 25.

¹⁹³ De Mesa, 8–16. Whether De Mesa’s contention that the Christianity of the Philippines is “an adaption of Christian practices to the pre-Christian pattern of beliefs” which he describes as “native animistic orientation, which was part and parcel of the people’s religiosity before the Spaniards’ efforts at evangelization, [which] was not radically altered, much less erased” makes an interesting proposition but beyond my ability to explore here.

Preaching

Preaching has been an integral part of church services since the very beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost. Particularly valued in Reformed churches and most evangelical Protestant churches, it is very rare for a Church of Christ service not to include a full-length sermon.¹⁹⁴ In the Philippines, even birthday parties will include a sermon. Austin Phelps defines a sermon as “an oral address to a popular mind, upon a religious truth, as contained in the scriptures, elaborately treated, with a view to persuasion” and this will suffice for this short discourse on preaching.¹⁹⁵ I asked Joseph if I could observe his preaching but as it is a part of a worship service, it would be inappropriate to be judgemental and I was not particularly interested in the opinions of the congregation. As with baptism, the aim was simply to observe Joseph and understand why he believed it contributed to his role and identity, and, as there is no unique form of preaching for Churches of Christ, reflect on a few concerns pertinent to the Filipino setting.

Delivering the sermon

On 20th February, 2011, the GRS worship service began at 10.40am, just ten minutes late. The congregation of sixteen adults, three youth, and ten children sat on the ten wooden pews while the obligatory dog lay on the cement floor and wandered in and out at his pleasure—as did numerous members of the congregation. When Joseph arose to preach, he used the small pulpit draped in a yellow and blue cloth especially made for it. It bore the words:

Church of Christ 33AD
Mateo 16:18
GRS Ragay Cam Sur.

To begin his sermon, Joseph wished everyone a good morning, read his Bible text, Titus 3:4, and proceeded to define love. On this occasion, he did not seem to have a normal outline as such but made points like God wants to see his people joyful and loving, God shows his love through his son, we are all sinners,

¹⁹⁴ See, for example, Niebuhr, *Historical*, 110ff.

¹⁹⁵ Phelps’ definition is often quoted. See Don De Welt, *If You Want to Preach*, (Joplin, Missouri: College Press, 1957), 40.

God sees everything in our life, God is kind, and God loves everyone, even you. Joseph quoted numerous Bible texts and used a number of illustrations including the life of Job and a story of a man with a big field and only one son. As application, he exhorted the congregation to present their problems to God as he is willing to help and he encouraged them to be joyful.

Table 6: Joseph’s sermon outline on Romans 1:1–16

The Gospel of God (Romans 1:1–16)
I. It is the source of God–Romans 1:1
II. Its subject is His son–Romans 1:3
III. Its nature is power–Romans 1:16
IV. Its object is salvation–Romans 1:16
Application: Do not be ashamed of the gospel. Preach the gospel.

Joseph wore grey slacks, black shoes, and a grey and white polo shirt and he did not use the microphone. Placing his small notebook on the pulpit, generally he stood behind the pulpit, holding it with his left hand while with his right hand he gestured to emphasize his points. This time, his notes were in Tagalog and he spoke mostly in Tagalog although he quoted his several Scriptures in English. He modulated his voice without undue emotion or shouting, maintained relatively good eye contact, and his facial expressions showed earnestness interspersed with smiles. He spoke only eighteen minutes from 11.09am to 11.27am, then closed in prayer and sat down again at the keyboard.

Table 7: Joseph’s sermon outline on Romans 8:26

The Practice of Prayer (Romans 8:26)
I. Schedule of Prayer
Single Prayer
a. David’s Prayer (Psalms 55:17)
b. Daniel’s Prayer (Daniel 6:10)
c. Peter’s Prayer (Acts 10:9)
Group Prayer
a. Peter and John (Acts 3:1)
b. Prayer of church member (Acts 16:25)
II. Spontaneous Prayer
a. The prayer of Jesus (Luke 6:12)
b. The prayer of Nehemiah (Neh. 2:4)
c. The prayer of Israel (1 Chronicles 5:20)
d. The prayer of the church member (Acts 12: 4, 5)
III. Pray without ceasing
a. Happy together (1 Thessalonians 5:16, 17)
b. Continue prayer and thanksgiving (Co. 4:2)
Application: deepen your prayer life

Prior to his preaching, I had asked Joseph to see his small black book with his sermon outlines. He uses small lined notebooks, one page per sermon and for each sermon, he writes down the title, the Bible text, three to eight points, and sometimes a conclusion. His previous notebooks were eaten by *anay*. He chose to specifically give the outlines reproduced in Tables 6 and 7.

Joseph presented the following steps for his preparation of his sermons:

- Prayer
- Read the Bible
- Read it more
- Then, with conviction from prayer and reading the Bible, get a passage.
- Then, jot/write down notes for yourself
- Look for supporting verses
- Reading again the verses, get the points out
- Then outline
- Reread and rewrite the outline.

The average time it took him to prepare his sermon, he thought, was one or two hours. He said that he remained flexible with his outline and may even change it once in church, depending on the needs he sees, the visitors, or if he sees something “not good.”

The methods and objectives of the preacher

Joseph understood his preaching was important “because it concerns to the salvation of people. It gives strength, growth and development of the church. It help to trained members to become a new and effective leaders.” His definition of a sermon was “an address delivered by the minister to instruct or exhort a congregation, a serious reproof or exhortation expressed through [the] preacher.” For his purposes in preaching, he listed exploring the Word of God, experiencing God’s love, reaching our world for Christ, leading the body of Christ into a genuine experience of worship, and soul winning.

Joseph thought that he usually preached for fifteen to twenty-five minutes and for special occasions, the length was up to forty-five minutes. He did not attend a Bible college or a seminary so most of his learning to preach came through the guidance of his minister in Siroma, his attendance at the SBI, reading a few books,

and attending certain training and seminars. He believed that 30% of his sermons were expository although generally he used textual and topical sermons. He defined expository as taking just one verse and exploring it while the topical sermon was taking one topic and getting many supporting verses for it. His favourite topics and key themes in preaching, he said, are love, Christian lifestyle, Christian history, witnessing, salvation, and giving but I was somewhat surprised he did not include prayer in his list. Table 8 shows his sermon series for 2010, each of which contained at least five sermons. Although he did not have his sermons planned for the rest of 2011, he did know what he was going to preach on the next week and he held that his preaching was “simple style.” The results of his preaching, he maintained, were that people were being saved and “transformed relationships of the body of Christ to Jesus.” He thought that it is important “to connect the church to a deep, passionate, and genuine relationship to Jesus.” To make sermons interesting, he tried to put “grace in our conversation,” make it logical, make it touching, let it be understandable, and have transparency.

Table 8: Joseph’s sermon series in 2010

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Worship as one instrument for Spiritual Growth b. Why there is preaching c. What the Holy Spirit has done for us d. The practice of Prayer e. Be a conqueror f. Let God be happy g. Be continuous to serve God

Joseph offered a long list of qualities which he believed ought to be the characteristics of a man who preaches: effective, efficient, dynamic, humble, knowledgeable, prayerful, constant Bible-reader, well-groomed, honorable, and respected. The delivery of his sermons should not be “boring.” He must set a good example so that his message can be seen in his life. In apposition he wrote that in his opinion those who should not preach are:

- a. Those people incapable to teach
- b. Those people [who] did not understand the gospel
- c. Someone who is not sure of his salvation
- d. Those people [who] are not yet accept Jesus Christ
- e. Not those with a hidden agenda
- f. Some just want to have fame.

Joseph was asked what education a man should have to preach. He responded that “you can preach even if you don’t have a proper education. The apostles of the Bible do not have a proper education. Much better to have educational attainment. But even if you are still studying, you can still preach.”

When I solicited from Eva what she thought were the results of Joseph’s preaching, she replied:

Many believe. People get educated. They understood better about their relationship of people to God. Joseph preaches and the listeners learn and share it to others. There is new Christian behavior. [It] helps them to renew themselves – people learn to stop things like drinking of liquor, cigarette smoking. Traits – bad words, judging others, *chismis* – gossip – superior attitudes. People learn to understand each others’ situation. They learn good attitudes.

Joseph’s aims and methodology in preaching are relatively typical in the provinces of the Philippines. He, like others, devoutly attempts to bring God to the people and the people to God, and endeavours to make pertinent themes such as God, sin, salvation, and love. He tries to appeal more to the rational rather than the emotional, and much less so than many preachers. Again, his educational preparation and his lack of resources limit him but he still has a reasonable hermeneutic—an element that is a woeful deficiency in many Filipino preachers.¹⁹⁶ He does not have access to a lectionary or any other resources about sermons and preaching.

Exposition, persuasion, and presentation

Joseph expressed his joy and his aims in delivering sermons and other preachers are even more ardent and focused. Along with baptism, it is another very public trust and privilege given the preacher and thus an important role of the minister. My brief reflection is confined to four pertinent concerns for the Filipino context and the faith perspective of Churches of Christ.

¹⁹⁶ For example is the Valentine’s sermon that proof-texted from John 3:16 (which does happen to use the word love), immediately degenerated with some reference to a love song with suggestive lyrics sung on the radio with inappropriate chuckles from the audience, and spent much of the rest of the time summarizing a book on Nostradamus.

As Joseph would undoubtedly appreciate, the preacher needs guidance and resources for his sermon preparation. Even basic attention to facets such as the aims and goals of preaching, the appeal to the mind or the heart, language comprehension, hermeneutics, logic, and sermon outlining would be helpful. Men like Joseph need resources beyond their Bible in the province.

Whether or not there is there any right method of preaching is always concerning for the preacher. Assuming that Phelps is correct in that a sermon is contained in the scriptures, there are two basic methods: topical and expository.¹⁹⁷ The topical begins with the preacher's choice of theme whereas the expository begins with a Bible text or passage which the preacher attempts to expose. Joseph's sermons tend to be topical. The recommendations of Blackwood and others for expository passage preaching—systematically going through one book of the Bible, or a significant part thereof, preaching on one passage each week, and taking all three points from the one passage—would seem to avert many of the shortcomings of poorly educated preachers. There are at least eight advantages of expository sermons. (a) The preacher preaches the Scriptures, thus minimizing himself and his biases and centres his congregation's mind on God. (b) The expository sermon enables a balance so that subjects otherwise overlooked are treated and men like Joseph can avoid repeating his favourite subjects such as love and prayer. (c) Biblical knowledge and thinking is promoted for expository sermons reinforce Thomas Campbell's "Where the Scriptures speaks, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."¹⁹⁸ (d) Authority is given to the message as the preacher can assert, "Thus sayeth the Lord." I have already noted that an important aspect of the preacher is his personal ability to persuade. (e) The listeners are given spiritual food and souls are enriched not by oratory or by fervency but hearing the Word of God. (f) Abuses of the pulpit such as proof-texting, theological error, grandstanding, and subjectivism can be curtailed. (g) The preacher can minimize being accused of targeting or "getting at" his hearers. Joseph is vulnerable to

¹⁹⁷ Jones, *Principles*, Blackwood, *Expository Preaching for Today: Case Studies of Bible Passages*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1953, and *The Preparation of Sermons* (London: Church Book Room Press, 1951) and W. E. Sangster, *The Craft of the Sermon* (London: Epworth Press, 1954), remain some of the more practical books despite age.

¹⁹⁸ [Campbell], *Declaration*.

criticism here with his changing his outline even as late as the beginning the service.

(h) Lastly, when education is limited, even the poorest academic can choose three ideas in the text that make sense and on which his listeners can feed.¹⁹⁹ Thus I would suggest that in order for the preacher to be more confident in his preaching, he consider delivering expository sermons.

As suggested by Joseph and required by Phelps' definition that a sermon possesses a view to persuasion, attention should be paid to the application and suggested action. Sermons often seem to stop short and leave the congregation feeling guilty or at least unfulfilled. Everyone knows, to take a trite example, the Bible commands us to love God, love one's neighbour, and love one's enemy. Many in the congregation may be able to tell the various Greek words for love, recount how each was used in the first century, and provide some definition of a word like love. The preacher's responsibility is not only to teach about love but to give suggestions for the person in the pew to apply during the rest of the week. The "So what?" question becomes vital for a Filipino congregation where individuals possess a split level Christianity, as de Mesa describes it, and so have difficulty in connecting faith with action, theology with ethics, and theory with integrity.²⁰⁰

In this age of electronics and technology, the form of the sermon presentation may not be just an oral address as Phelps definition of years before suggests. Whereas preachers of old could preach for an hour or two, the attention span of the audience today, reflecting television programming, is about twenty minutes.²⁰¹ Many times I have observed that the congregation becomes restless at about twenty-five minutes while at twenty-eight minutes, handbags rattle and two or three of the congregation walk out to go to the CR. Preachers and congregations have long found it helpful to print an outline in a bulletin and a PowerPoint presentation is now a possibility in many churches. Use of more than one of the senses has long proven to be good education.

¹⁹⁹ This is my compilation based on many writers and not a little frustration evaluating student preaching. Sermons do not necessarily have to have three points but three points have some rhetorical, comprehension, and retention values.

²⁰⁰ De Mesa, 10.

²⁰¹ See Johnson, *Duly*, 154–156 for a short discussion on length of sermons through the years in the Restoration Movement.

As I have explored ministry in this chapter, I have shown the dichotomy that a preacher like Joseph feels, at least at times, so that he identifies a personal crisis of his role and identity and yet he senses a strong satisfaction in performing his ministry. I have argued that poor remuneration, changing pulpits, stress, insecure tenure, casual employment arrangements, criticism, a lack of clear concepts of what the preacher believes that he should be doing, and unevaluated personal abilities detract from ministry effectiveness and contribute to this perceived crisis. I have finished by reflecting on two of the delights of Joseph's ministry—baptism and preaching—that provide him with role and identity. I have suggested that the preacher will sense more confidence and competence—and thus avoid some of the feelings of crisis—if he gives contemplation to the likes of the volition and the knowledge of the candidate and the incorporation of the ones baptized into the body of the church, the possibility of delivering expository sermons, and more attention to suggested action and presentation in his preaching.

Chapter 2

The Conundrum of the Founding Minister in a New Church

A Case Study with Ismael (Mel) Pel

Church Planting

This chapter presents a case study concerning the conundrums related to church planting, specifically describing how it has been done in the town of Libmanan, Camarines Sur by one man, the founding minister, Ismael Pel, or Mel, as he is known. In doing so, the theology of the Day of Pentecost and a brief overview of church planting through the centuries and in the Philippines in particular will be presented. Despite being a lone church planter with limited finances, insufficient resources, and “untrained soldiers,” Mel is able to build his new church.

An ubiquitous topic

Planting new churches became a lively discussion in the Church of Christ brotherhood in the Philippines when the 2001 centennial convention set a goal of planting 100 new churches across the nation. As result, nearly all of the preachers in the Churches of Christ in Bicol have been involved in church planting, albeit most with limited results and duration. Mel was chosen for this case study as he has developed some strategies of how and why he would do the church planting, been relatively successful (as Table 9: Attendance statistics for Church of Christ Libmanan shows), and continued in his church planting efforts. In questioning about the problems Mel believed he faced, he specifically named providing for the family, shortages of finances, false leaders, what he saw as spiritual opposition in the town, and his health. In further conversations, it became obvious that all these problems centred on his ministry to plant the new church.²⁰² Mel used his computer to keep

²⁰² In Britain, there is some confusion between referring to the charismatic house churches (which, at one time, were new churches) and the planting of new congregations. This thesis always refers to the latter in general rather than the former in particular. Others have the same predicament. See for example, Kristin Aune, “The Significance of Gender for Congregational Studies” in Guest,

good records, is methodically carrying out his plans and thus a progression could be observed. His work is, at the time of writing, eight years old and this has been his full-time occupation. He was always willing, available, and hospitable in the various times I visited him for interviews.

Internationally, two groups have been particularly influential in championing church growth and thus church planting, the first being Donald McGavran and his Pasadena School of Missions. For example, referring to Peter Wagner's book, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*, Michael Shannon wrote in 2004:

This groundbreaking book on church planting is out of print, but is still available at Internet sites and in libraries. Some of Wagner's views have been controversial, but he is an effective analyst of church growth and church vitality and is well-known as a teacher of church-growth principles at Fuller Theological Seminary. His book, based on a seminar he offered, is a practical guide to critical aspects of starting a new church.²⁰³

Win Arn and others of the Pasadena group likewise conducted numerous seminars and touted books promoting church planting.²⁰⁴ The second has been Jim Montgomery and his DAWN strategy that spread across 140 nations. Beginning as a missionary in the Philippines in 1980, Montgomery strategized one church for every 1,000 people around the globe. His website makes the claim that there have been 3,000,000 churches planted directly or indirectly through his movement and that there are 4,000,000 more to start.²⁰⁵

Tusting and Woodhead, 192, Walker, *Restoring*, 17–71, and Martin Robinson and Stuart Christine, *Planting Tomorrow's Churches Today* (Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Monarch Publications, 1992), 72.

²⁰³ C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990) and J. Michael Shannon, "Leader's Toolbox – News for New Churches." *Christian Standard* (6th December 2004): 796. <http://www.christianstandard.com/pdfs/940.pdf>. Note Shannon's caution. He is unlikely to be as complementary about some of Wagner's later works.

²⁰⁴ Donald McGavran's seminal work, *Understanding Church Growth*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), hardly mentions new churches but starting new churches became a focus in later books and seminars. See for example McGavran and Win Arn. *How to Grow a Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1973).

²⁰⁵ See Dawn Ministries, <http://www.dawnministries.org/>. For a summary of the DAWN ministry, see Stuart Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 2001), 98–104. Martin Robinson was employed by DAWN for many years and his *Training* is actually a manual for implementing DAWN strategies. Montgomery died in 2006 and the Dawn website has not been substantially updated since 2008. Robinson cites an estimation of 1,820,308 as the total number of churches worldwide in his 1995 book with "approximately 2,000 more being added every week." See Martin Robinson and David Spriggs. *Church Planting: The Training*

Other populist books about church planting of the “how to” genre have abounded in certain circles in America and a variety of other countries in the latter third of the twentieth century, including Britain. Special conferences were held, people were employed to facilitate new church planting, a number of church censuses were taken, new denominations were started, and many new congregations were reported.²⁰⁶ The former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, was noted for his encouragement to plant new churches.²⁰⁷ In the more academic circles, however, church planting as a topic has been understudied. The only book in the Classmark BV652 section of St. Andrews University library is Ezra Earl Jones’, *Strategies for New Churches*, published in 1976.²⁰⁸ Kristin Aune, in her contribution on gender studies in *Congregational Studies*, centres her attention on the role of women in a new church plant in an unspecified British city.²⁰⁹ A few of the more worthy works on church growth include Tom Jones’ *Church Planting from the ground up*, Aubrey Malphurs’ *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*, Stuart Murray’s *Church Planting* and Martin Robinson’s books to which I refer below.²¹⁰

The history

The church began in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, either in AD29 or AD30.²¹¹ As James Dunn notes, Jesus had been gathering around him a movement but it was not yet a community.²¹² Then, after Jesus’ death and resurrection, during the Jewish feast of Pentecost, Peter and the other disciples began to preach and

Manual. (Oxford: Lynx Communications, 1995), 8–12. Obviously, substantiating these church numbers world-wide is hazardous and maybe not quite believable.

²⁰⁶ See Robinson, *Today’s*, 11, 66–81, and 160, Walker, *Restoring*, 17–113 and Brierley, 177–190. Martin Robinson, Stuart Christine, and Stuart Murray (mentioned in this chapter) have all been employed for facilitating church planting on a national level.

²⁰⁷ George Carey, et al., *Planting New Churches* (Guildford: Eagle, 1991).

²⁰⁸ Jones, *Strategies*.

²⁰⁹ Aune, in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 185–202.

²¹⁰ Murray, Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the Twenty-first Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992) and Tom Jones, ed., *Church Planting from the ground up* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Co., 2004).

²¹¹ F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1969 [1972]), 141.

²¹² James D. G. Dunn, *Unity & Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 104–106.

about 3,000 who believed the message were baptized and were added to the church that day. The church spread as the believers were persecuted according to Acts 8:1. The Book of Acts reports Paul establishing churches in cities like Philippi but there were already established congregations in Ephesus and Rome. Roland Allen was probably a little optimistic in stating that the Apostle Paul thought that his work was done in the main Greek provinces of the Roman Empire by AD57 although, by the end of the first century, there were many churches in the eastern half of the Roman Empire and probably already further afield in places such as Spain, England, and, if legend is to be believed, as far as India to the east.²¹³ Quoting the *Edessene Chronicle*, Bruce Metzger says that the earliest reference to a church building is AD201 when it was destroyed by a flood.²¹⁴ The barbarian invasions that led to the collapse of the Roman Empire and the Islamic invasions across much of the Middle East and North Africa resulted in a decimation and even annihilation of churches in some areas— from which most have never recovered. Christianity has remained a disenfranchised tiny minority in the Islamic countries to this day.

With the reintroduction of the church into most of Europe, almost all of Western Europe was converted to Christianity.²¹⁵ The entire country was divided in strictly geographic terms—parishes—so that to this day, 53% of all Anglican churches in England are known to be established before the Reformation which changed little in church planting terms.²¹⁶ There were only small groups like the Waldensians in northern Italy who attempted reforms outside the established Roman Catholic Church who attempted to establish new congregations but these were unable to proliferate.²¹⁷

It is only with the rise of dissenters and subsequent official permission to build places of worship that was there a significant effort to plant new churches in

²¹³ Roland [J.] Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), 3 and J. Herbert Kane, *A Global View of Christian Missions: From Pentecost to Present* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1971), 107–108.

²¹⁴ Bruce M. Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 7.

²¹⁵ This is well documented from a church-planting perspective in Robinson, *Today's*, 59–63, and Murray, 87–105.

²¹⁶ Brierley, 182.

²¹⁷ One of the better attempts to document this is E. H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1931) but he does so in populist terms.

England albeit still with much opposition. The oldest continuing Church of Christ, for example, at Wallend, Kirby-in-Furness, Cumbria, with their chapel outside the town because of restrictions on Dissenters, probably began as a Baptist church during the early years of the Restoration of the monarchy.²¹⁸ The Wesleyan revivals and the Catholic Emancipation Acts allowed more in the 1800s and other denominations including the Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Churches of Christ added many new churches across England up to World War I.²¹⁹ In Scotland, splits in the Presbyterian Church and the rise of independents like the Glasites led to hundreds of new chapels there. In general, the twentieth century saw the decline of church attendance across Western Europe, resulting in the closure or amalgamation of numerous congregations. Despite a massive loss of 1,000 worshipers each week over a fourteen year period from 1975 to 1989, many new congregations still began in England.²²⁰

White settlement in America gave opportunity for thousands of new congregations to commence. Importations from Europe account for the strength of denominations such as the Anglicans in various Atlantic states, the Lutherans in central northern states, the Presbyterians in Appalachia, and the Catholics in the large eastern cities while Latin American migrants have led to the expansion of the Catholic Church across the country in recent years. But church planting has been unequal among the growing local population. In earlier centuries, the Congregationalists grew out of proportion in the north-eastern seaboard and in Appalachia and the Mid-West, it was the Baptists, Methodists, and Restoration Movement who particularly flourished. In the last four decades, with the encouragement of McGavran and others, there has been aggressive church planting among the Baptists, Churches of Christ, and the newer charismatic and Pentecostal

²¹⁸ William Robinson, "History of the Churches in Furness," *Christian Advocate* (1883) 360, quoted in Watters, 17–18. Robinson, who himself came from this area, quotes a Minute Book of the Tottlebank Baptist Church that goes back to 1669.

²¹⁹ The best listing of Churches of Christ in Britain up to 1980 is in Thompson, *Sects*, 202–205 however he does not include the non-instrumental people.

²²⁰ Despite all Brierley's figures, summations are sometimes difficult to determine. See Brierley, 31 concerning the losses. For the numbers on new congregations, Murray reports 3,000 being started but Brierley's figures maybe just half that. See Murray, 100 and Brierley, 178.

denominations, and a proliferation of independent non-denominational congregations.

In the Philippines, Spanish Catholic friars established an extensive parish system across the entire archipelago except in the Muslim parts of Mindanao. Spain governed through these friars and their churches for 300 years and so, in provincial towns generally, the largest and grandest buildings still include the Catholic Church built during Spanish rule. Libmanan is no exception. The arrival of the Americans allowed the importation of Protestant missionaries and the establishment of thousands of more churches giving allegiance to numerous denominations and the rise of many completely independent congregations.

When Church of Christ missionaries arrived in Manila in 1901, there was a vigorous church-planting effort that resulted in about 6,975 members in eighty-three churches centered in Manila, Vigan, and Laoag.²²¹ Controversy over modernism or liberalism in general and baptism in particular led to a division into Disciples and Independent congregations but the Disciples congregations did not grow significantly and became a part of the UCCP, or in case of the Ilocano areas of northern Luzon, were absorbed into the Methodists. The Independents, under the leadership of Leslie Wolfe, mounted on an aggressive evangelistic and church planting campaign so that they grew from about forty-five congregations in 1926 to eighty-eight in 1939. The Japanese occupation in 1941 forced the closure of many, at least for a time.²²²

In the years since the end of World War II, the number of congregations has mushroomed to about 1,000.²²³ There seems to have been a persistent general

²²¹ Archibald McLean, *The History of The Foreign Christian Missionary Society* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1919), 351.

²²² Wissmann, "Wolfe," 8–13 and 41.

²²³ There is no official list. Effort was made around 2000 to compile such a list but was very much incomplete as there are four problems. First, there is no mechanism for contacting all groups or no central agency to which a congregation reports. Second, is the splinter and sectarian nature of some groups. For example, when conducting the relief in Bicol for Typhoon Durian/Reming, an initial list of forty-one congregations was drawn up but by the end of the distribution that lasted for about a year, the list was up to forty-six, excluding additional countings for congregations that met in multiple sites. Third, is defining what constitutes an independent local congregation. Sometimes there is confusion whether a particular group is a church or an outreach, or just a Bible study group. For example, in Rizal province, until recently, the Palmyra group had its own building, conducted its own worship services including the Lord's Supper, had its own preacher,

grassroots desire to see more churches planted but the efforts are usually relaxed affairs. Often, without reference to anyone else, an individual congregation simply decided to plant a new church in an another area, usually beginning in the home of an ardent member who had established residence in a subdivision some distance from the family's home congregation. As a result, many of the new congregations, meeting in a home hidden away within the sub-division and with limited funds and resources, grow to an attendance of only forty or sixty members and thus always dependent on the mother church or a particular family for decades. Sometimes entirely separate congregations establish themselves within the same community.

There have been at least three concerted efforts to plant churches within Filipino Churches of Christ in the post-war years. On the southern island of Mindanao, the first Church of Christ was started in 1947 but by 1983, there were still only sixty-two. That figure greatly increased to 357 by 1996 due to the leadership of the Charles Littell family.²²⁴ Dennis McKinney and his family came to the Baguio area in 1970 and began at least twenty churches. After 1989, his son, Chris, was involved with thirteen of these of which nine or ten still exist, ranging in size from about forty to 200 adult members with the typical being about 100.²²⁵ Lastly, as mentioned above, the 2001 centennial convention set a goal of planting 100 new churches across the nation. Conrado Montefalcon wrote:

In order to celebrate the 100 years of victorious preaching of the truth in the Philippines and to the Founder of the True Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, the CACD led by this writer (CIM) as chairman directed the early planning for the celebration. As early as 1998, an Executive Committee was organized to oversee the plans and preparations for the Centennial Celebration. The goal of the Centennial Year is to establish 100 local congregations throughout the country.²²⁶

and had its own offerings and finances but it still regarded itself as an "outreach" of the Village East Church of Christ. As seen below, Mel at times has problems differentiating these and his definitions overlap. Fourth, some groups fail, or at least do not continue their independence or expansion. A group that formally deemed itself an independent congregation may revert to an "outreach" or a Bible study, or cease meeting altogether.

²²⁴ Littell. Traditionally, the Ambassadors for Christ group, the name by which the Littell mission is known, has kept a reasonably up-to-date list of congregations in their area. Recent reports from Mindanao suggest that the number of congregations there may have shrunk to 250 rather than the former 357.

²²⁵ Chris McKinney, former missionary to the Philippines, interview by the author, 9th April 2010.

²²⁶ Salvador, Leonardo L. and Conrado I. Montefalcon, "The Convention and Samahan," in *Centennial Book*, 116. Virtually nothing further is mentioned in this programme about the church

Although 164 churches are recorded as beginning as part of this effort, the most complete list has 130 congregations, the first being the Church of Christ at Commonwealth in Quezon City. It has been one of the more successful ones, running an attendance in excess of 100 each Sunday but still meeting in rented premises. In Bicol, new churches were started in Del Galiego (Sugsugin), GRS (Sinuknipan), Banga (Banites/Tagbac), Sipocot (Lubigan and Villazar), Libmanan (Mabini and CCL), Naga City (Canaman), Pasacao, Barcelonita, and Pamplona. With the exception of CCL, on which this chapter will concentrate, the attendance at the others remains only about ten to forty people each week.²²⁷

The man, his church, and the town

Mel grew up in a strong Church of Christ family at Bolo Norte, just north of Sipocot, about thirty minutes journey time from Libmanan. Born in 1972, he finished a Bachelor of Education in 1999 and received a little theological training at a Presbyterian college. From 1996, Mel preached in churches in Sipocot and Pamplona in Camarines Sur and in 2003, Mel and his family moved to Libmanan to take over the leadership of a new church plant in the town. He is married to Moriel, a school teacher, and they have four children, from ages fifteen to two as of 2011. Mel is always smiling, not one to complain, and a man who achieves his goals.

By 2010, the town of Libmanan has a population of 100,002 including seventy-five *barangays* which cover a rather vast land area of 336 square kilometers and so the town proper has only a population of fewer than 20,000. First named in 1574, it has seen more prosperous times when the railway and river transportation were more important but today, it is by-passed by the national highway which is

planting but Montefalcon did champion the cause during those years. It should be noted that at this time there was a major division across the Churches of Christ and the *Centennial Book* reflects only one side of the division. Because of this, the *Centennial Book* is only a limited source for Churches of Christ.

²²⁷ 92nd National Convention of the Churches of Christ and Christian Churches in the Philippines and 2001 Centennial Celebration, *The Church of Christ: Conquering the Challenges of the New Millennium*. (Philippine International Convention Center, Pasay City, Metro Manila. April 2001, Souvenir Program), 176–184. The total grew to 164 after the convention but few statistics have been kept and in all probability, less than 100 continue. Of the 164, there were thirteen attempts in Bicol including the eleven above which survived until 2011. There are unconfirmed reports that two or three of these eleven have ceased to meet since 2011. Banites/Tagbac is referred to in Chapter 1 and Mabini will be mentioned in Chapter 4.

eight kilometers from the *poblacion*. From the time of the Spaniards, Libmanan has been known as the rice basket of Camarines Sur and the town has had pottery works for centuries yet, essentially, it remains a market town. The only educational tertiary institution is an extension college. The Roman Catholic Church elevated Libmanan to a diocese in March 2009.²²⁸ In addition to the four Catholic priests and one bishop, about twenty Protestant ministers serve in Libmanan, fourteen of whom are from Pentecostal/charismatic types of churches, one each are Methodist, UCCP, and Baptist and three Church of Christ. According to Mel, attendance at the Methodist church is about sixty people while the rest are only about fifteen to forty. Only about three percent of the municipality are Protestants but generally all of these would be active communicants.²²⁹

The Church of Christ in Libmanan (CCL) was started by CSE (Camarines Sur Evangelism) and EARM, both small Church of Christ organizations, in August 2002. Mel was involved from the beginning and took up residence and the position of minister in Libmanan in January 2003 when there were just eight adults and a few children. Since then, the church has grown as Table 9 shows.²³⁰

²²⁸ Municipality National Statistics Coordination Board.

<http://www.nscb.gov.ph/activestats/psgc/province.asp?regName=REGION+V+%28Bicol+Region%29®Code=05&provCode=051700000&provName=CAMARINES%20SUR>; “Libmanan, Camarines Sur.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libmanan_Camarines_Sur; and Diocese of Libmanan. http://libmanan.com/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1. There was talk of starting a Catholic seminary however it seems it has never eventuated.

²²⁹ Although these statistics come from Mel, they are as reliable as is available. Mel is the president of the LMDI and he is on friendly terms with the Catholic priests. The guess is that attendance at Catholic masses still are far superior to the total Protestant church attendance even though the number of Protestant ministers is four times the number of Catholic clergy. The overall Protestant percentage in the Philippines is usually thought to be about 8% but this may be understated. Most people who call themselves Protestants usually attend a worship service at least once a month. See CIA. Much valuable work could be done gathering precise data.

²³⁰ The figures show totals but there is overlap between attendance at the main church on Sunday and attendance at cell groups during the week. In February 2011, forty-one out of ninety-five people attending at the main church did not also attend a cell group. Thus there were 327 different people who attended out of a total count of 381.

Table 9: Attendance statistics for Church of Christ Libmanan

		Adults	Youth	Children	Total					
					Jan 03	Dec 07	May 09	Feb 10	May 10	Feb 11
Main Church	Jan 03	8	0	4	12					
	Dec 07	32	15	22		69				
	May 09	27	10	9			46			
	Feb 10	31	12	11				54		
	May 10	33	27	16					76	
	Feb 11	33	28	34						95/41
Outreaches										
Punta Tarawal	Dec 07	12	10	35		57				
Cubusao	Dec 07	8	5	8		21				
	May 09	11	0	60			71			
	Feb 10	5	0	2				7		
	May 10	12	2	8					22	
	Feb 11	3	1	9						13
Labao	Dec 07	15	0	15		30				
Taban	Dec 07	22	3	15		40				
	May 09	20	10	25			55			
	Feb 10	17	5	33				55		
	May 10	15	3	6					24	
	Feb 11	15	15	30						60
Sigamot	Dec 07	4	5	15		24				
	May 09	15	0	25			40			
	Feb 10	4	2	10				16		
	May 10	4	4	12					20	
	Feb 11	4	4	9						17
San Juan	Feb 10	16	26	20				62		
	May 10	20	34	33					87	
	Feb 11	18	19	8						45
Tuguak	May 10	10	15	4					29	
	Feb 11	8	7	12						27
Conception	Feb 11	0	5	3						8
Libod	Feb 11	7	9	6						22
Mancayan	Feb 11	8	1	16						25
Inalahan	Feb 11	5	5	5						15
Bagong Bayon	Feb 11	4	2	1						7
Patag	Feb 11	3	5	2						10
Poblacion	Feb 11	10	2	25						37
Total	Jan 03	8	0	4	12					
	Dec 07	93	38	110		241				
	May 09	73	20	119			212			
	Feb 10	73	45	76				194		
	May 10	94	85	79					258	
	Feb 11	118	103	160						381/327

The building that Mel and his church rent for both their personal living quarters and for use of the church is a Spanish-style two-storey home built for a wealthy family but now derelict. It is located on a main road leading into and only

about a half kilometer from the *poblacion*. The church has rented this facility since 2003 yet has no contract on the building. A rental of P2,000.00 (£25.00) per month was paid in 2007 but this had increased to P2,700.00 (£33.75) per month in 2011. Many of the gutters, fascia boards, and *yero* are rotted and much of the glass is missing from the windows. There are empty flower beds, loose electric wires, peeling paint, graffiti on some walls, and rusty or missing iron bars on the fence and the security grills. The neighboring houses are in similar degree of dilapidation although all are still inhabited. In the tropical heat, a stench often rises from the drains outside the fence.

Inside, the poverty is just as evident. Over the years as I conducted the various interviews, small improvements have been made. Still the electric installations are old and have no or bare light bulbs, rice sacks replace rotted ceiling, and the porcelain in the room that is both a toilet and a bathroom is broken. The *sala*, which doubles as the sanctuary area, measures just nineteen feet by twenty-five feet. Upstairs, buckets catch water leaking through the roof, mattresses are on the floor as there are no bed frames, and the furniture and belongings in the personal living quarters are sparse. But it is clearly a family home with a cheerful atmosphere and everything is clean.²³¹

As with the other case studies in this paper, description of Mel's ministry is available from observation, answering of questionnaires by him and his wife, Moriel, and personal interviews.²³² In addition, whereas most of the churches in Bicol have no documents of any description written about them or for their use in their entire history, Mel has produced a number of written planning and promotion documents. Mel's ministry has revolved around prayer, planning, evangelistic efforts, worship services, cell groups, teaching, and community chaplaincy. Aspects of his worship services and his prayer and evangelism ministry are described below. The issue of cell groups is treated in Chapter 3.

²³¹ Actually, as poorer Filipino families do not have any mattresses, they sleep on bamboo frames or thin *nipa* mats placed on the floor.

²³² See Appendix 3. Mel and Moriel also answered the questionnaires in Appendices 1 and 10. My personal interviews with him began in December 2007 and stretched over the next three years.

MeI’s leaflets are not ostentatious but are functional and he strictly adheres to his plans. They include his own resume, a list of participants in the church, updated each month, monthly financial reports, annual financial reports, a brochure of the ministry of the church, a copy of the “Community Religious Survey” used for his evangelism efforts, local Libmanan maps and church statistics, a vision and mission statement, a church covenant, and his five-year plan for the church beginning October 2007. The total annual offering is seen in Table 10.

Table 10: CCL Annual offering totals

Year	Amount	
	Filipino pesos	Sterling
2003	P33,365.75	£417.07
2004		
2005		
2006	P68,188.50	£852.36
2007		
2008	P100,630.80	£1,257.89
2009	P134,531.25	£1,681.64
2010	P146,666.50	£1,833.33

The vision statement tells that “CCL is committed to fulfill the great commandments and the great commission of Jesus by sharing our lives for His cause starting here in Libmanan, and to the nearby town, and to the world.” The mission statement is seen in Table 11. Members of the church are requested to sign the “Church Membership Covenant” reproduced in part in Table 12. The brochure on the ministry of the church describes the congregation as “an independent local church bringing out the good news of salvation starting [in] Libmanan.” Various miscellaneous ministries included a list of cell groups and outreaches, Sunday School and DVBS (Daily Vacation Bible School) in the summer for children, monthly feeding programs, gift-giving to the poor at Christmas, scholarships for three students, and a medical, dental, and optical mission.

Table 11: CCL Mission statement

<p>To lead people to God–Evangelism To incorporate God’s people into the family of God–Fellowship To educate the family of God–Discipleship To serve people in the name of God–Ministry To celebrate the presence of God–Worship.</p>

Table 12: CCL “Church Membership Covenant”

Having received Christ as my lord and Savior and been baptized and being agreement with the church Strategy and Structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the church family. In doing so, I Commit myself to God and to the other church members to do the following:

- I. I will protect the unity of the church by acting in love towards other members...
- II. I will share the responsibility of the church by praying for its growth...
- III. I will serve the ministry of the church by discovering my gifts and talents...
- IV. I will support the testimony of my church by attending faithfully...

Mel’s five-year plan outlined overall and annual goals for church planting including the number of baptisms and developing team leaders. For each year, he added three or four specific extra goals, so, for example, in Year Two (October 2008 to September 2009), they included planting churches in every *barangay* of Libmanan, baptizing 250 people, and developing ten team leaders. Additionally, each year lists twelve to nineteen specific items which he planned to implement. For example, he planned in January 2009 to purchase a 909 square meter vacant property, and in September 2009 to start “Joint Sunday Worship.” Others such as “imparting vision” are more amorphous while some are of a personal nature, such as continuing his study for his BTh Degree.²³³

Table 13: Mel’s typical day

5am prayer time, communion w/ God
7am family concern
9am reading books
10am visitation—a program to visit all the members of the church till the last member & start all over again. The visitation of non-Christian is by appointment & the daughter church do the schedule.
12 noon free
3pm family concern
5pm preparation for home Bible studies
6pm home Bible studies
10pm rest.

²³³ Ismael (Mel) Pel, unpublished documents for the Church of Christ Libmanan. These are computer-generated and reproduced by photocopying. Most were produced in the years 2003 to 2008. Mel’s definition of church is a little different than that of this thesis. He establishes cell groups, Bible studies, and the like which meet in homes in scattered *barangays* across Libmanan. Some of these begin to hold their own worship services but all remain an integral part of Mel’s congregation. Mel calls any of these cell groups and Bible studies a “church.”

Mel described his typical day as in Table 13. In listing the main things that he did in his ministry, Mel believes his priority is in this order: praying, studying, planning, teaching, preaching, mobilizing, discipling, training, attending seminars and workshops, “network with other ministry,” church planting, and finally conversing and meeting with other leaders.²³⁴

Table 14: Steps to plant CCL

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He had been connected with other mission teams—CSE and EARM—with which he had been a member for a number of years. 2. On arrival in Libmanan, he became the pastor. He began a concerted prayer effort, accompanied by fasting. 3. He and others conducted house-to-house evangelism in the town proper for six months. 4. Bible studies with contact persons were begun. 5. Then, a few simple services were held. 6. A major prayer summit was held on three occasions. 7. The first regular Sunday worship services began with his permanent arrival in January 2003. |
|---|

In a follow-up interview in May 2009, Mel described in some detail the seven steps in Table 14 that he took to start the church and get it growing.²³⁵ His prayer efforts involved prayer walks, prayer summits, and chain prayer. In the prayer walk, which consumed about a half day at a time, he and about thirty others, simply walked every street in town and just kept praying. They asked God to limit the vices such as gambling, videoke, cock-fighting, poverty, quarreling, idolatry, and *baklas* and they prayed that the people of Libmanan would know the “good life” of salvation and prosperity and that they would come to know God as a “good father.” The three special prayer summits they held were joint meetings of all the members of the churches in Camarines Sur, held in and for his new church. With about 100 attending each summit, they began with singing at about 8pm, had some exhortation (preaching), and prayed until about midnight. The chain prayer originally involved the thirty in the team praying around the clock, two or three every hour, day and night, for six months. Mel’s slot was 3am to 4am and Moriel’s time was 7pm to 8pm. Both of them have continued this prayer since its inception. The chain prayer

²³⁴ Mel’s terminology.

²³⁵ My summation but Mel’s terminology.

was revamped in August 2008 when local members took the slots vacated by members from out of town.

For house-to-house evangelism, Mel used a “Community Religious Survey,” his version being one page with thirteen questions, mostly multiple-choice with answers provided, almost all in Tagalog.²³⁶ Mel and the other surveyors systematically went from one residence to the next, introduced himself or herself, explained to the resident that he or she was from the Church of Christ, was conducting a survey about religious matters such as Jesus and the Bible, and asked if he or she would mind taking a few minutes to fill out the survey. If the resident declined, the surveyor politely thanked him or her and went to the next house. If the resident consented, the surveyor read the questions one by one and wrote down the resident’s responses so the resident could see them. Key questions on the survey included personal details such as name and occupation; “Are you a member of any religious group or church? If so, which one?; How often do you attend meetings?”; “Do you own a Bible and how often do you read it?”; two questions about who is Jesus Christ in their opinion with multiple choice answers such as the second person of the Trinity, God/man, and “my Lord and personal Savior” provided; and “Would you like a personal relationship with God?” During the completing of the survey, Mel explained, opportunities often opened up for further conversation, so, while the survey could be filled out in a matter of a few minutes, sometimes a visit at one house might take an hour. Mel and the others covered the entire town of Libmanan in six months from August 2002. Out of the surveys, Mel and his surveyors identified four groups: the very positive, those who wanted Bible studies yet did not commit to a specific time, those who also wanted Bible studies but did not know when, and those who did not want Bible studies. Over time, those who indicated that they would appreciate Bible studies were re-contacted, beginning with the most positive category. If the response was positive again, an appointment was made to conduct a Bible study in the house. Mel said that the number of studies conducted in each house varied from three to six.

²³⁶ Original source is unknown. Mel says that he received his from a church planting seminar of CSE but I have seen variations in Australia, USA, and the Philippines as far back as the 1970s.

Usually, Mel devotes three nights per week to his current pastoral visitation work, sometimes making appointments and sometimes not. He performs two basic types of visitation: with his other leaders, discussing problems together and to inactive members with whom he prays and shares the Word of God. He does little of the latter now (2011) and so concentrates on the former.

Mel has been actively involved with a number of community affairs and particularly with three types of chaplaincy work. These have not been ministries that he has exclusively undertaken but been in conjunction with his association with the LMCI preacher's meetings. For thirty months, he preached and held services in the local jail each Friday from 9am to 12 noon. The fluctuating jail population usually has between sixty and seventy male inmates held in a room measuring twenty feet by twenty feet with a smaller room for the female population. His second chaplaincy has been once a month on a Monday morning, preaching inside the police station to twenty-five to thirty policemen. The third chaplaincy, with the town council and the 100 or more municipal workers, was a prayer and short exhortation each week in the mayor's office. He had been leading it once a month.

Over the years, I attended a number of the services of the Libmanan church. Mel's service exhibited the main features as those I will describe with Gani in the next chapter and so here I only include a limited account of the CCL service on 30th May 2010 to highlight a few of the efforts Mel has made to grow his church. Some members arrived before the official beginning time of 8.30am although at least one individual was still finishing his bath at that time. The service began just five minutes late and it was a blistering hot day. The small *sala* was stuffy and there was just one fan—and it was new that week. Besides the regular florescent lights, a few blue, green, and red spot lights were centered on the pulpit while the walls still supported some Christmas tinsel. Virtually every chair was taken and an undersized keyboard, an overhead projector, three microphones, a tambourine, an electric guitar, and a beatbox were all in use. The music team consisted of seven males and three females, most of whom were under the age of twenty-one. The majority of the eighty-two congregation present (thirty-four adults, twenty youth, and twenty-eight children) were dressed in jeans and *tsinelas*.

After the praise and worship song service, as is expected, I delivered the sermon. I spoke mainly in English, but it was interspersed with various members of the congregation reading a few Bible verses in Tagalog and a number of members translating odd words and phrases into Tagalog and Bicolano. It became very much an interactive learning and encouragement process with occasional laughter and joking. My style is not typical of most Filipino preaching, but certainly, sermons usually include a mixture of languages and an element of congregational mirth. At the end of the sermon, Mel, speaking in Tagalog, offered an invitation for those who wished to accept Christ. As a song was sung, eight responded: three middle-aged adults, three teenage girls, and two twelve-year-old boys. Mel asked those who came forward two questions to which they responded in the affirmative: “Do you believe that Christ is your Lord and personal Savior?” and “Are you going to continue serving the Lord for the rest of your life?” Following lunch that day, these people were baptized in a local stream.

The communion was conducted in a vibrant atmosphere in the common Church of Christ manner. After a communion song, Mel, instead of one of the elders, gave a short communion meditation, prayers were said, and two deacons distributed the emblems to the seated congregation. The usual round wafers, jokingly referred to as styrofoam were served on a porcelain plate and then small plastic cups, available commercially, filled with a grape juice drink bought at the store in a tetra pack were used for the communion cup. The cups were served on a specially made wooden tray.

For the offering, a short exhortation to give cheerfully was made by one of the female leaders. As upbeat song was sung, all the individuals in the congregation moved to place their small plain white offering envelopes in a large, two foot high, wicker basket covered in satin, set in front of the pulpit. One person also placed a blue plastic bag with her home-grown produce in it in the basket as her offering and Mel, who had been given some medications during the week, also laid them in the basket. A second offering was taken to particularly pay for the rent of the building. At the end of the service, the treasurer and a helper counted and distributed the cash

offering as in Table 15 while the medications and the produce were given to the poorer members and to the preacher.

Table 15: Offering disbursement, CCL, 30th May 2010

Offering		Regular	P2,590.00		
		Special	P117.00		
		Designated	P150.00		
		Total		P2,590.00	
Disbursement	Administration	Pastor	P800.00		
		Directress	P200.00		
		Teachers	P200.00		
		Treasurer	P50.00		
		Mission House	P300.00		
		Coffee	P97.00		
		Speaker's Gift	P250.00		
		Total		P1,897.00	
	Mission	Gas [petrol]	P200.00		
		Sigamot	P125.00		
		San Juan	P50.00		
		Cubusao	P50.00		
		Total		P425.00	
	Miscellaneous	Electric Wiring	P60.00		
		Youth Event	P150.00		
		Special Offering	P117.00		
		Total		P327.00	
	Total Expenditure				P2,649.00
	Balance	From last week			- P131.70
Balance 5/30/10				P76.30	

After a special number by a handful of children from the San Juan fellowship came an extremely unusual segment for Churches of Christ—a confession of faith. Mel adopted ideas from elsewhere but largely composed it himself. He said it was an attempt to undergird the personal confidence of the individual members, encouraging self-esteem, empowerment, and responsibility rather than the traditional creeds being mainly a statement of doctrine, particularly about the trinity and Christology. The first line or so of each section of Mel's statement of about twenty-seven lines is given in Table 16.

The announcements reported on a variety of past and coming activities. There would again be a prayer and fasting meeting on 4th June. Fifty-three attended the youth gathering the previous night and thanks were extended to the ICCM group who led the program. Were there any birthdays this week? None! The leaders for the

next week's service were announced. It was "really a very big blessing" for the congregation to have received a new ceiling fan, twenty-eight Tagalog New Testaments, and thirty-five new chairs that week, all being already occupied this week. The web-site for the church was being developed. Visitors were then welcomed by name and asked to stand. Once the service closed with the usual song, benediction, and prayer at just before 11am, a few left immediately, most talked for a little and departed in about fifteen minutes but some were still there at 12 noon.

Table 16: CCL confession of faith

<p>I am who the Word of God says I am I can do what the Word of God says I can do... Because I am: Chosen, justified, glorified, redeemed by His blood... I am the head and not the tail I am the lender and not the borrower... Because... It's no longer I that lives, but Christ lives in me... Greater is HE that's in me Than he that's in the world... What's mine is HIS what's HIS is mine.</p>

Rationalization

Methodology

A little explanation is required to explain certain of Mel's circumstances and methodology. Mel's use of the religious survey would meet with considerable consternation with a section of the population in Western countries but that is certainly not the case in the Philippines. In anyone's estimation, the Philippines must rate as one of the most religious Christian countries of the world. Belief in God is a foregone conclusion and generally a simple Nicaean understanding of the Trinity and Christology is assumed. Most unquestionably believe that the man Jesus is God and died on the cross to save mankind from sin, the exceptions being the Muslims, the INC, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and some of the small groups of mountain peoples who have rejected westernization. The INC typically goes to great lengths to try to justify its position. Equally, the veracity of the Bible and its pertinence for today is taken for granted and is quoted in court cases. The existence of heaven, hell, the devil, the reality of sin, the need for salvation of some type, and afterlife in either

heaven or hell is assumed. The religiosity is not confined to inside church buildings or individual homes as the malls and the supermarkets play the specifically Christian Christmas carols frequently from 1st September, common jeepney decorations include images of Jesus and Mary and words including “In God we trust” and “God bless our journey,” and government offices and police stations often start the week with prayer. Officially, there is supposed to be a separation of church and state however in reality that is not the case and so having a Bible study at work or leaving one’s Bible or Daily Bread on the desk is not remarkable. Even for those who do not attend any religious services on a regular basis, the belief and even commitment level of their religion will be intense and maybe even fanatical. Unlike Gibson’s minority highland group of Buids who are fervently religious but primarily non-Christian, Cannell’s anthropology about her majority-population lowlanders laced throughout with various Christian beliefs is typical.²³⁷

However general beliefs of the population often verge on the simplistic or the magical and may not translate into any high moral ethics. De Mesa asserts that they are synchronistic with the superstitious and the pre-Christian beliefs.²³⁸ Cannell’s washing the dead Christ is particularly striking.²³⁹ The intensity of beliefs such as “living stones,” *duwende* and *aswangs*, and the *bahala na* fatalism vary from something akin to a Westerner’s aversion to walking under a ladder to absolute fear and trepidation.²⁴⁰ Whether Protestant or Catholic and whether one attends church or not, lip-service is zealously given to everything that is good and right and correct although actual behaviour may be quite another thing. Face-saving is paramount, every vice is tolerated just below the surface, and all is acceptable so long as one does not get caught. All too often, life is lived in reaction to the emergency of the moment and the expediency is often to take a short-cut to alleviate a problem. Thus Mel (and the other ministers in this thesis) has no problem in being “radically” Christian. His methodology presumes a fundamental relevance and acceptance of basic Christian tenets as held by the population at large. Mel’s challenge is not the

²³⁷ See Gibson and Cannell.

²³⁸ De Mesa, 9.

²³⁹ Cannell, 165–182.

²⁴⁰ Further research into the wide predominance of the image of Jesus as a child-king perhaps benefiting from pre-Hispanic beliefs may prove interesting.

obtaining of a hearing but the translation of his and the general public's beliefs into permanent lifestyle changes. From a pastoral view, it is a persistent problem of ethics, not doctrine.

Motivations for church planting

I asked Mel specifics about his efforts of church planting and why and how he saw the challenges. Mel wrote that he decided to plant a new church "because of the great commission & great commandment; I believe throughly [that in] new churches, new people come to Christ; and This is the fastest way of evangelism." Moriel quoted Acts 1:8 and said that it was their vision to plant a church in Libmanan as it was a large town without a Church of Christ. Originally, Mel told me, Pili, the provincial capital of Camarines Sur, was the choice to start a church but he did not know why the group ended up in Libmanan. In addition, he jotted down: "I believe it is God's leading; This is one of the biggest municipality in Camarines Sur; and Our church location is along the provincial road & easy to look at." To reply to the question why a new church was needed, Mel wrote:

I believe this new church was stablish by God to fulfill His purpose in this form:

1. To glorify God in this place
2. To evangelize people & make disciples
3. To serve people in ministry according to each gift,
4. and to plant daughter churches.

In subsequent interviews, Mel made the point that, prior to the establishment of his church, there were only two Churches of Christ in Libmanan and both were in rural isolated *barangays*.²⁴¹ The new church, he believed, was "for many souls to know Christ." Without the new church, he asserted, "no-one will worship God," there would be "no preaching the Word," "no discipleship," and "no one to show how God is good." He did not think that he had a large enough group to begin the church with but he said "I just move on and move on. I know God will provide."

²⁴¹ The other two are Udoc and Mabini. There is no road access to Udoc but Mabini's meeting place, although only a short distance off the main Maharlika Highway, is in a rural *barangay*, whereas CCL is in the *poblacion*. Mabini was probably established after CCL but before Mel came to be the minister of CCL. It is unlike Mel not to be precise but above he had just mentioned Udoc. Mabini is the church of Jun in Chapter 4.

As there already were numerous churches in Libmanan, I was curious what Mel believed was special or different about his new church. I requested this information three times as seen in Table 17. In a discussion about these, Mel thought that every Christian should have a job in the church. His list included cell group leaders, worship leaders including the instrumentalists, serving at the Lord’s Table, taking up the offering, beautification, maintenance, trainers for each ministry, ushers, preparation of facilities, secretary, preachers, program leaders, and Sunday School teachers.

Table 17: Why CCL is different or special

First	Second	Third
a. To be focused b. Excellence, according to their gift c. A church planter church d. Mission oriented And, will become a blessing to other	a. only church that asks for commitment and a covenant b. teaches real salvation—only Jesus is the way c. we mobilized the March for Jesus d. you need many hooks to catch many fish e. many other leaders were older f. he had done education g. he was not accepted by all the others his church taught baptism by immersion.	a. We have a passion other churches don’t have. b. We have many leaders and we’re promoting every Christian to become a leader. c. We are mission minded. d. The members give liberally. e. Our brotherhood is strong. f. Theologically, there are differences.

To prepare himself to plant a church, Mel said that he prayed and fasted and did extra studies in church planting including attending a course in Naga City one day a month for a year. Mel believed he was 80% prepared. He read two books—*Natural Church Development* by Christian A. Schwarz and *Balikbayan Church Planting* by David White—that had been particularly helpful to him. Mel’s new church was copying the principles of these two books plus patterning from *Purpose Driven Church* and Robert Schuller and Paul Yonggi Cho’s *Expand Your Horizon*. From Dan Balais’ “Intercessors for the Philippines,” he understood that the church should be a “lighthouse in the community that helps the eight pillars of society: family, religion, government, business and economy, media and entertainment, science and technology, and arts and sports. Mel did not know how Balais formulated these eight. Mel had never heard of McGavran while he knew the name

of C. Peter Wagner although he did not remember anything about him. He knew of Jim Montgomery and his DAWN strategies and specified that their methodology was “mass evangelism in every barangay” and goal was to have one pastor for every 1,000 believers.²⁴² I inquired why he chose the ‘founding pastor’ model for church planting.²⁴³ Really, he concluded, he had no choice, so he just read a few books, borrowed materials from seminars he attended, and added a few of his own ideas.

In relation to his five-year plan, Mel thought that radio ministry was too expensive for the congregation and he did not take his LET exam, purchase a lot (land) for a building, or secure SEC registration. In addition, he said that the programmes that were particularly running behind schedule were his finishing of his BTh degree and “raising up leaders.”

The question in February 2011 was “If, due to some unseen circumstances (God forbid), you and Moriel were to leave the church today, what would happen to it? How would it survive?” In our conversations about this, Mel thought that they would miss his way of leading them. He said, “It is not the same as I am there but [I] already have imparted in their heart the mission-vision.” He believed the church would still grow, probably a little more slowly; perhaps in two or three years, it would “move again.” He supposed Richard (one of the young leaders) would take over “for mission,” his sister, Wheng, the administration, and Brother Franco (one of the elders) for finance.

Theological explanations

Mel often mentioned Acts 2 and so I followed up on what he believed it taught. He replied that Acts 2 quoted from the book of Joel and that Acts 2:42 records the first communion. He also specified the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to all believers, the beginning of the New Testament church, the first preaching, the first baptism in Jesus’ name, a new way of salvation through Christ, and the

²⁴² See Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches*, <http://ncd-international.org/public/>, Warren, and Dan Balais, “Intercessors for the Philippines,” http://www.nationalprayerwatch.net/launching/bp_dan_balais.html.

²⁴³ Martin Robinson uses this terminology. See below.

beginning of a new brotherhood. When explicitly asked what was important about the Day of Pentecost, he wrote:

- a. On the Day of Pentecost, the promise comforter came and the church stablish with a kind of power & authority that never before.
- b. It is important because it shows that the church Jesus stablish here on earth can conquer the earth.
- c. It[‘s] power, authority, passion, boldness, and other character[istics] of the first church can be a basis that this present generation church of Jesus can conquer also because they are of [the] same god.
- d. I do believe the Pentecost Day is the point of transition from old to new testament church/covenant.

Table 18: Church of Christ general understanding of Acts 2.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. This was a movement begun at the instrumentation of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).b. The Holy Spirit enabled the people listening in Jerusalem to hear in a multiplicity of their own native languages (vv. 4, 6, and 11).c. Peter and the other disciples stood up and “addressed the crowd” (v.14) and they “accepted his message” (v.41).d. Peter proclaimed that the events of this day were a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel that the Spirit would be poured out on all people (vv.16–21).e. The message of the disciples, however, focused not on the Holy Spirit but on Jesus. He is the one who was crucified, resurrected, and now saves all who requests such (vv. 22–36).f. Peter exhorted them to “save” themselves (v.40).g. He specifically instructed his hearers to do two things (repent and be baptized) for two results (forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit) (v.38).h. About 3,000 who believed the message were baptized and “were added to their number that day” (v.41).i. They gathered themselves into a “community” (to use Dunn’s term) (vv. 42–47).j. The new assembly gathered for worship which included four things: “the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (v.42).k. Initially at least, they met daily in the Jerusalem temple courts and they “broke bread” in their homes (v.46).l. To the original 120 including the disciples (Acts 1:15) plus the newly-baptized 3,000, “the Lord added” “daily those who were being saved” (v.47).

In wanting to emulate and restore the New Testament church, Luke’s account of the beginning of the church on the Day of Pentecost either in AD29 or

AD30 has always loomed large in the minds of Churches of Christ.²⁴⁴ Table 18 gives a common Restoration Movement understanding of Acts 2.

In his Bible studies Mel instructed the “way of salvation,” “how to come to heaven,” and “the good news/the bad news.” “You can enter heaven through Christianity” however the bad news is that “you can’t enter heaven by ourselves.” “Two things will happen, but we don’t know when: death/physical death and *pagahuhukom*,” he said. There was then a discussion with three or four others in the vicinity and they decided the best translation for the latter Tagalog term was “judgement day.” Mel continued that he centred his studies on how to become a Christian. “I make sure that they know that they are sinners and can’t save themselves and therefore [they] need salvation and it only [comes] through Christ.” He explained that the individual needed to confess that Jesus is his or her Lord and Saviour and then be baptized. Using his fingers, he then repeated one variation of Walter Scott’s mnemonic five-finger exercise: hear, believe, confess, repent, accept through prayer and be baptized.

The unequivocal answer when I asked Mel the focus of the prayer was “salvation of souls.” Salvation, he clarified, was “the way to heaven that we need and the only way is to have Jesus.” In reference to John 14:6, he stated that Jesus is the only way as “no man comes to heaven without Jesus.” Citing 1 Timothy 2:3–4, he declared that God wants all people to be saved. He continued, “You have eternal life/everlasting life with Christ in heaven with joy and a place we all want.” Jesus, salvation, and eternal life were “inextricably combined.” When we receive Christ as Lord and Saviour, we are “forgiven and receive new life. We are forgiven of our sins/transgressions.” Mel asserted that sin happens when we have committed wrong or disobeyed God. He continued, “Many people are doing sin and not know that they are sinning. When we know Christ, then we understand what sin is.” He continued that we know Christ from His Word, the Bible, particularly the New Testament. There were, according to him, two kinds of sin: “transgress” which is breaking the

²⁴⁴ See for example, Campbell, *Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things*. Lincoln, Illinois: 1960 and Murch, *Christians Only*, 9–10. There is a controversy in Churches of Christ in the Philippines concerning this date. Some popular opinion holds that the Day of Pentecost was “33AD” but if Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the Great who died in 4BC, AD29 or AD30 is correct.

law of God and doing wrong and, secondly, to “know good but don’t do it” or “doing things outside of faith.” We know whether or not it is wrong “through the Bible plus the Spirit convicts us,” he asserted. “The Bible shows us if we [are] wrong or right.” For eternal life, he explained that “we have it now and when we die, our body goes to the tomb, the cemetery. Flesh turns to dust...But the essence of the person is identified as the spirit. The spirit of the people with Christ [is] in heaven. The people without Christ go to hell.”

Still in a theological vein, his definition of evangelism was “sharing the good news, the gospel.” The essence of the gospel, he said, is “Christ, the death, burial, resurrection. Because of this, people have a new life.” He explained “a new life” as “a new status in God’s eyes, a new creation. The old is gone. We have a new hope, new perspective, new name, family, spirit, heart, place, destination, power, life, creation, regeneration. All new. Therefore, we are a child of God and therefore [we are] going to heaven, saved.” He continued that evangelism is “sharing of what God has done for us. He died for us, buried, resurrected and has full authority for everything.” The result is “giving us new life. Our sin [he] took away. We are cleansed from our sins. He redeemed us. He bought us back. We are saved.” He believed he should evangelize because:

Jesus commanded. We are authorized to evangelize. We have the power. I don’t want to go to heaven alone. I love my family, my children, my friends, my co-classmates, my neighbors, and the people of Libmanan. I want to them enjoy what God provided for them – spiritual joy, peace, many things now plus also the next life to come.

Obstacles

Mel indicated that he had faced a number of obstacles including “false leader to overtake; false member or wrong motive member; and rental problem for 4 months.” Among his failures and disappointments he listed:

- a. Stop of some outreaches ‘cause of lack of financial
- b. To cancel some plans cause of financial assistance
- c. The cut-off of support of CSE
- d. Some of our leader criticize the way we go on great commission & great commandment.

Mel explained that CSE and EARM gave some good support before Mel became the full-time preacher in Libmanan but once in the town, Mel received little assistance. The CSE had planned to give P6,000.00 (£75.00) yet they gave only P2,500.00 (£31.25). The CSE was dissolved, Mel said, because it was formed only to fulfill the centennial convention purposes. EARM members did not possess the time or the finances to invest further. Following up about the “false leader,” Mel explained that in 2005, a small group, whom he called church-hoppers wanted to take over the church and the leader wanted to dominate and wanted to take control of his church. He said that the man became angry over minute matters and that he had “bad suggestions.” The leader wanted to change the name of the church and teach “falling down, speaking in tongues, charismatic things.” According to Mel, this man hurt the church and was “tearing the church apart.” Other members were not happy with him and eventually, he left and started attending yet another church. One of the major continuing obstacles as far as both Mel and Moriel were concerned was lack of financing. The hardest things for them was provide sufficient finances to pay the monthly rental on the property and to “deal with false leader and member.” At one juncture, he had had high hopes that an outside group, known to him as Compassion, would give scholarships for disadvantaged children in school. However, after some time, Compassion decided not to assist. The reason they gave was that the Libmanan church did not own its own property.

As Table 9 shows, a number of the outreaches begun did not continue. Labao, Mel said, was because of jealousy as the woman in the home where the group used to meet “speak no good words.” Punta Tarawal, being on an island where the people are very poor, stopped because of “financial & no leader.” The return boat fare per person was P160.00 (£2.00) and Mel’s church simply did not have the funds for the fare. Additionally, there was no real leader among the group. Several of them still come to Mel for prayer when they are sick, however. In 2009, the Taban group began actual worship services on a Sunday afternoon, ceasing by February 2010, Mel explained, because the leader “doesn’t have the ability to lead a church. He is good at sharing but not at leading.” In addition, in 2009, Mel started a group at Puro-Batia but it did not flourish as it was the same leader as at Taban.

Once, in our conversations, there was a digression about the preachers in the Church of Christ in Bicol as a whole. Some of the other preachers had criticized Mel's ministry as they did not approve of clapping of hands in worship or that he was called a pastor. They also took exception to Mel's teaching on spiritual warfare and to his joining in the inter-denominational minister's fellowship and chaplaincy work. Mel's opinion was that most of the ministers are "maltreated" because they were not given respect, not given enough salary, not included in the eldership and the decision-making of the church, and sometimes fired.

Mel thought that of the more than 100 members in his church, only six were professional people with government employment or teachers. Four of the six were his team leaders and his wife, Moriel, was probably the highest paid in the congregation. Some members operated "small businesses" or a *pajak*, and many were farmers although a good proportion was students. Several members were illiterate. Out of the sixteen leaders in the church, five were related to him: his wife, his daughter, two of his sisters, and a fifth-cousin.²⁴⁵

Progress

Beyond all of Mel's frustrations, Mel has a strong sense of success. Mel believed that beginning the church was productive because "many soul heard the Word of God and be saved for His glory." His greatest success, he considered, was "to have a strong core group w/ deep commitment to the mission & vision of the church." Later, he explained that the core group, at that time, consisted of five men and five women. Other successes he listed were the beginning of five outreaches within five years, establishing a team for mission, encouraging members to tithe, and having a supportive family. In interviews, he added that twenty-seven were baptized in 2006 and in 2007, twenty-one. By December 2007, there had been eighty-three baptized and by May 2009, that number increased to 106. Mel thought that about half remained active and about ten had moved away from the area. In discussion, I asked how did he "get out of the slump" when numbers were down and

²⁴⁵ For further reflection on family in the church, see Chapter 3 concerning ministering with the home congregation.

an outreach stopped. He listed three things: prayer and fasting each first Friday of the month; strengthening the twenty-four hour prayer chain; and training more leaders. In response to how he was making a difference in the community, Mel replied:

- Through the church, the barangay, was being blessed by Word of God, used clothing, advices, physical therapy w/ prayer and others.
- Some political leaders approaches me to be prayed
- Some people ask for funeral services
- Some are ask for prayer in dying person
- Some ask for therapy
- Some ask for advice.

Mel perceived growth in the church to include:

- a. Spiritual growth → they are desiring to be in a ministry
- b. leadership growth → they want to be taught to become a leader
- c. financial growth → they learn tithing & more giving in the church & mission.

Besides the attendance statistics in Table 9, in 2010, Mel felt that his church-planting ministry had improved as he was no longer “doing instrumentalist music” for others now played the guitar and drums and led the worship. Two men assisted in preaching now and he was leading fewer of the regular and introductory Bible studies. He was advising more and “feeding the leaders” while they were conducting the baptisms.

In February 2010, I interviewed to update on Mel’s progress in his five-year plan. He had needed to make certain adjustments, he said, because of lack of finances, the availability of people, the hosting of the National Convention in Bicol, and the requirements of his youngest child. He expounded that some people were not able to spend as much time as in the past because they were “working for their own foods.” As it was a necessity to work to ensure they could purchase their daily food, less was being done on evangelism. Although only thirteen souls were baptized in 2009, he hoped that in 2010 at least fifty would be baptized. He himself was spending more time on discipleship and his role as secretary for the National Convention, as his family depended on the income of Moriel, she needed to continue

her school-teaching and so that meant that he took time to look after their eighteen-month-old boy.

Mel then patiently described each action of his five-year plan. In Year 1 (October 2007 to September 2008), he tried to “connect with the church planting and mission organization and foundation” but had not succeeded. This was in reference to the Compassion group who required property ownership. His aim was to mobilize and train five leaders; instead he had recruited four. The first was a rice farmer aged about sixty who was studying for his second degree in theology and who now helps Mel preach in the main service. The second, his sister, aged about forty, single, holds a commerce degree, and works as a secretary for the government. She lives in Sipocot, commuting to Libmanan for her church work as a team leader supervising the praise and worship team. The third is another gentleman aged about sixty who has worked abroad for some years where was “converted to Christ.” In the past, he was a teacher, an insurance agent, and a pig farmer, but now his only income is from his children. Although he has no formal theological education, he uses all his time to assist the church. He assists with the preaching, teaches the middler’s class, and is helping train other leaders. The fourth leader is a twenty-three year old single male who was a first-year college student in computer technology but stopped because of lack of finances. At this time, he has no permanent employment doing only occasional construction jobs. He leads a discipleship training group and the Bible study at San Juan. His home Bible studies and the Bible study each Monday with the government officials was continuing, Mel said, with fifteen to twenty in attendance. He had not begun a radio ministry, any medical missions or his “saturation drive” but he had shown films two or three times. He was continuing his “imparting vision and training leaders” and his “discipling new believers” and each December, his group was giving gifts and used clothing to some of the poor.

In the second year of his plan, he had not taken his LET exam and his BTh studies stopped as the college ceased holding classes. He had not been able to secure marriage licenses for his fellow leaders and although he tried to buy property, the only money he was able to raise was P4,500.00 (£56.25). On a more positive note, the church had raised P4,500.00 (£56.25) for three young people to attend the annual

youth training camp and they had a special “leaders fellowship and empowerment day.” There were now thirteen people in leadership training. Now halfway through, Mel was positive that he and the church were still “on track” with the five-year plan. Most of the items in the third year were “not yet” achieved but he had reestablished the “platoon of prayer warrior.”

Chaplaincy

I was interested to see if Mel thought that his chaplaincy work was beneficial for his church planting effort especially as he had not been active in all three types consistently. The jail ministry, he said, had seen definite results as he baptized thirty-three inmates and another fifteen were baptized in the summer of 2009 when eight ICCM students held their practical evangelism there. From this ministry, a church was started in Barangay Sugsugin, Del Galiego, now led by Emmanuel (Manny) Eborra. He stopped doing the jail ministry on a regular basis, he stated, because “I can’t give what they demand, shoes, bags.” He continued, “The family don’t come to see them. They [the inmates] have only one dress—one shirt plus one shorts.” Each inmate in the jail in Libmanan is not yet sentenced but once the individual is sentenced, Mel explained, he or she is transferred to Manila and the inmate “has nothing to go with.” From Mel’s work with the police chaplaincy, one man is now a member in his church. An example of other ways he thought his ministry helped was when he assisted a *padjak* driver. The police caught the driver with no business papers on him proceeding in the wrong direction down a one-way street. The police impounded his *padjak* and so the driver, having lost his source of income, came to Mel to request his help. Mel informed the police that the driver’s papers were in process and so the *padjak* was released and the driver began earning his food again. However, Mel has been unable to do further ministry in police chaplaincy as he has not been invited to do so recently and he did not know why. Mel obviously enjoyed his time in the council chaplaincy. He admitted that there were “no big results seen thus far” however, when he was present in the meetings, they went “fine” but if he was not present, many were “speaking wrong words.” Mel took a break from this chaplaincy in order to give more time to help co-ordinate the

national convention of Churches of Christ that was held in Sipocot in April 2010. Since then, his chaplaincy work has been only occasional as he concentrates on his main church-planting efforts.

Reflection

In reflection on the conundrums of church planting as raised by Mel, I consider selected points that Martin Robinson makes, add a number of my own practical and theological deliberations, and finish with a future perspective.

The founding minister

In the terms of Martin Robinson, with his co-authors, Stuart Christine for *Planting Tomorrow's Churches Today* and David Spriggs in *Church Planting: The Training Manual*, CCL is a church planted by a group with a founding pastor.²⁴⁶ As much as Mel talks about assistance from the area evangelistic groups, once he moved to Libmanan, he was left in a conundrum. He was left on his own to dream, implement, and consolidate his church planting efforts. He remains the undisputed leader of the church supported by his wife and his sisters. Martin Robinson asks, “as the needs of the church change, can he [the founding pastor] adapt in terms of his ministry gift area?” He points out that an evangelist-type personality is required to launch the church although pastoral abilities are essential in addition once the church is established. He continues asking if the founding pastor’s leadership gifts can keep

²⁴⁶ Robinson, *Today's*, and *Training*. See *Today's*, 100–121 particularly. Martin Robinson has been a leading member in the small Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Northern Ireland but he is no relation to the British Church of Christ theologian William Robinson. Martin Robinson has been involved in starting a church himself in his own home in the Kings's Norton/Selly Oak area of Birmingham. Robinson says that his categorization draws heavily from the School of World Missions in Pasadena, pioneered by McGavran, but Robinson devolves the church growth and church planting concepts from many of their Californian roots and presents it through the prism, in my opinion, of a more realistic twentieth century English suburban life. Incidentally, McGavran was a Disciples missionary in India where he developed his original church growth ideas. Robinson was born of British Church of Christ missionary parents in India. The School of World Missions models were adopted by the BFBS (British and Foreign Bible Society) for whom Robinson then worked. It is a little difficult to separate Robinson's “founding pastor” and “independent church planter.” The terminology of Malphurs, 91 and 103, is a “lone church planter.”

pace with the congregation.²⁴⁷ Mel is naturally both the “visionary” and the “implementer,” continuing his drive in an evangelistic ministry and yet is able to operate in a shepherding capacity.²⁴⁸ As I observed, it was not a case as to whether or not Mel’s abilities had kept pace with the changing needs of the church as much as Mel was still well in advance of them. This raises serious issues of the long-term viability of the church which I will treat below but at this juncture it is clear that Mel is a man of a variety of talents which is a requirement of anyone who fulfills the role of a founding pastor.

Martin Robinson adds that “the worst paid pastor of any church is always its first pastor.” Sacrificial commitments, he states, include that a founding minister will take a part-time job and other family members will take paid employment. Martin Robinson maintains that this “is to be admired” although “to the ultimate detriment of both church and pastor.” He continues, “The church may lose the best asset it has by simply taking such a sacrifice for granted.”²⁴⁹ That certainly holds true for Mel as church funds pay him only P800 (£10.00) per week although they also pay for his housing and utilities. He has accepted part-time jobs to supplement his income and his wife has a full-time teaching position. Again I will reflect further on this below and in the next chapter.

The “lone pastor” model for church planting is not a recommended method with the terminology used by Martin Robinson and Malphurs even being pejorative. Martin Robinson states that “nearly all of these people have not really succeeded in their goal.”²⁵⁰ Other methods are touted to be more likely to be “successful.” Even though we may wish to disagree, Robinson and Spriggs suggest five factors to give us a baseline for “measuring success:” (a) people become “disciples” and thus there is “the growth of the church,” (b) a church becomes “accessible to a different nationality or sub-culture,” (c) help and care is given so that, for example, “someone is helped to cope with poverty” and someone is “taken into a family,” (d) the “oppressed are defended,” minds are “given access to the Bible,” or “prisoners are

²⁴⁷ Robinson, *Today’s*, 32 and 116.

²⁴⁸ Malphurs’ terms, 103.

²⁴⁹ Robinson, *Today’s*, 117.

²⁵⁰ Robinson, *Today’s*, 117.

visited,” and, (e) finally, “broken marriages restored,” people are “freed from materialism or spiritism,” and “people learn to serve and value others.”²⁵¹ At this point, the “lone pastor,” Mel, has some achievements in all of the five factors. Mel’s effort is not as a “synagogue planter” who transfers Christians from another congregation, merely giving “provision of worship centres for those who already believed” but as “an evangelistic strategy.”²⁵² Only a few of the Libmanan membership have a prior active Christian background with members mainly being converted by the new church since 2002. While Mel has a major concern for salvation and evangelism intrinsically in line with Martin Robinson, Mel does not fall into the trap of the church being “only the unfortunate by-product of the extension of the gospel, a kind of evangelistic agency whose sole purpose was to be a vehicle for the proclamation of the gospel.”²⁵³ Mel’s mission and vision statements and his five-year plan seem to reflect a broader understanding such as propounded by Rick Warren.²⁵⁴ Mel wants to be “restoring the New Testament Church in terms of doctrine, ecclesiology, and daily living” as Martin Robinson puts it.²⁵⁵ In short, it is refreshing to see the results of this relatively balanced effort.

More practical and theological aspects

The day of Pentecost: If Bosch is correct in calling the Day of Pentecost one of the six major “salvific events,” and I believe he is, it is important to reflect in depth on this as a matter of good hermeneutics and for a better metanarrative of the church and of salvation. Results may include a superior understanding of Biblical covenants (and thus refutation of a number of Seventh Day Adventist practices in favour of mainline Christianity), a good basis from which to begin an academic

²⁵¹ Robinson, *Training*, 168 and 170.

²⁵² Robinson, *Today’s*, 18, 25, and 75. Robinson uses his phrase, “synagogue planters” in reference to the time before there was a thorough break between Judaism and the emerging Christian religion. The first Christians continued to worship in synagogues until they were evicted by those who rejected the new Christian teachings. New congregations thus started were all Jewish. Another common phrase that could be used at this juncture is “sheep- stealing.”

²⁵³ Robinson, *Today’s*, 23 and 24.

²⁵⁴ Warren, *Church*

²⁵⁵ Robinson, *Today’s*, 73. The differences come due to Robinson’s adoption of some facets of charismatic/Pentecostal thinking and to the fact that Mel has not trained in a Church of Christ college. Likewise, Mel has borrowed a little thinking from his minister friends and from the courses he has taken at a Presbyterian college.

consideration of the Holy Spirit controversies, and more light on the doctrine of salvation. Space does not permit a full exegesis of Acts 2 here or a comparison of other theological viewpoints such as Ray Anderson's. However, I have seldom seen a compilation addressing the full significance of the day. In summary, if the Church of Christ understanding of Acts 2 above is acceptable, the Day of Pentecost needs to be recognized as the day in which a new covenant (as in "New Testament") began, replacing the old Mosaic covenant of the Law; the Holy Spirit was given to all Christians rather than just a few selected individuals as in the Old Testament; a new way of salvation was proclaimed, centering on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus; the church was begun; and the people baptized into Christ that day became the first Christians.²⁵⁶

Justification for church planting: Mel substantially has tried to achieve the five measurements of success that Robinson and Spriggs outline but Mel's justification for church planting basically encapsulates the three main arguments given by proponents for church planting today.²⁵⁷ Mel wrote: "a. Because of the great commission & great commandment; b. I believe throughly [that in] new churches, new people come to Christ; and c. This is the fastest way of evangelism." The importance one assigns to each of these depends on one's theology. The first assumes the veracity of the New Testament text, that the Christian should take Matthew 28:18–20 relatively literally, and that it applies to Christians today. Murray, points out that "there is no explicit mention of the church in this famous passage" although he does concede that this passage "would certainly require the formation and multiplication of Christian communities."²⁵⁸ The second of Mel's reasons adds the supposition that Jesus is either the exclusive way of salvation or, at least, the most effective or important in providing either or both a better life here on

²⁵⁶ Bosch, *Transforming*, 84–122, and 512 and 516–517. See also Anderson, *Shape*, 318–326 and 61–63; Dunn, *Unity*; Hans Küng, *The Church* (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1976); and Cottrell, *Faith*, 400–459. Mont W. Smith, *What the Bible says about Covenant* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company, 1981), gives a good overview on the concept of covenants. Acts 11:26 notes that the actual term, "Christian" was not used until a few years later in Antioch, Syria.

²⁵⁷ Robinson, *Training*, 168 and 170.

²⁵⁸ Murray, 68–69. Bosch, *Transforming*, devotes a whole chapter (pages 56–83) on the Great Commission but of course generally discusses in light of mission rather than church planting.

earth and in eternity. Tom Jones simply quotes his daughter as saying, “To tell people about Jesus” while Martin Robinson expresses: “Church planting is not an optional extra for Christians, it is an intrinsic expression of the redemptive action of God in his world.”²⁵⁹ Mel’s third point probably assumes all of the above but is in essence pragmatic, asserting that church planting is the best way to get the job done. Wagner states precisely the same and, tying in with Matthew 28, Elmer Towns, adding a more global aspect, says “planting New Testament churches is the means to reach lost people in every culture of the world.”²⁶⁰ Many, like Malphurs quoting Win Arn and Met Castillo citing the DAWN achievements in the Philippines, claim that new churches grow faster than established churches.²⁶¹ As I would prefer a clearer theological justification to support church planting, one can agree with Murray who looks for a more responsible use of the New Testament. However church planting is very much a belief-based exercise for men like Mel need a thorough conviction of their faith in order to endure the ordeals of church planting, yet if there is any truth in the claims given to justify church planting, Martin Robinson will certainly be correct—church planting is not an optional extra.

Sufficient resources: On a more pragmatic note, Mel has at least nine aspects in his favour for starting his new church: his unswerving faith, the support of his wife and family, his winning personality, his dogged determination and steadfast commitment to the project, his integrity and unblemished reputation, his education degree, his five-year plan, and a population that is relatively receptive to his message. However consideration should be given to ensuring that the minimum requirements and resources to start a new church are present.

Mel’s commitment to his faith is undoubted nonetheless he agrees that it would be good to have had more theological education. He would welcome more training and guidance in all aspects of church leadership and church planting. Johann Lukasse sounds a warning about “untrained soldiers” but that begs yet

²⁵⁹ Jones, *Planting*, 9 and 17 and Robinson, *Today’s*, 22.

²⁶⁰ Wagner is quoted in Robinson, *Training*, 13 and 181 and Elmer Towns, *Getting a Church Started* (Lynchburg, VA: Church Growth Institute, 1985), 11.

²⁶¹ See Malphurs, 32–39 and Met[osalem] Castillo, *Let’s Plant Churches: A Manual for Church Planting* (Pasig, Metro Manila: Alliance Publishers, 1991), 13–21.

another consideration and that is a definition of “untrained.”²⁶² Given the global steep decline in seminarian numbers, this challenge is critical.²⁶³

As Mel had only eight adults and a few children at the time when he began in Libmanan, he admitted that this was not enough although he rationalized, “I just move on and move on. I know God will provide.” Martin Robinson refers to a particular incident at a DAWN conference in Birmingham in 1992 in which Peter Wagner stated that it was advisable to begin a church with at least fifty people. According to Martin Robinson, a “ripple of laughter echoed around the hall” for the majority of the 400 or 500 preachers present were from sending churches smaller than fifty. Alan Robinson, Martin Robinson’s father, maintained that the minimum number of adults is ten.²⁶⁴ Aune’s Westside congregation numbered just twelve adults twelve months after it began.²⁶⁵ I experienced problems in Hertfordshire and Suffolk with groups that did not have at least ten committed adults. For this aspect, most would judge that Mel had not enough committed adults to begin his church yet he has managed to overcome that deficiency.

By all accounts, Mel has had and continues to have the conundrum of insufficient funding for his church planting project. Somehow, though, he has managed not only to keep going but also to go from one success to another. Waiting for enough money is not always a good option.

Mel certainly could gainfully use more resources for he has only a few books, no library in his local vicinity, and limited Internet connection. He receives some inspiration from the various ministerial groups he attends although they all have as little as he does. His trusty Bible and a few handwritten notebooks are his constant companions. This case study shows the accomplishment of rising above the various deficiencies but the other church plants from the same era generally remain

²⁶² Johann Lukasse, *Churches with Roots*, trans. Machteld Stassijns, (Bromley, Kent: STL Books, 1990), 139.

²⁶³ See for example, Lucas Grollenberg, “Forward,” in Lucas Grollenberg et al, eds., *Minister? Pastor? Prophet? Grassroots leadership in the churches* (London: SCM Press, 1980), 1 and Terence Card, *Priesthood and Ministry in Crisis* (London: SCM Press, 1988), 14–17.

²⁶⁴ Robinson, *Training*, 122–128. I was present at that meeting. To the group in which I was a part, the response was dismay, not laughter. Alan was a long-time minister in the Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and then the Fellowship of Churches of Christ. In his earlier years, he was also a missionary in India.

²⁶⁵ Aune, in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 192.

disappointingly small. Martin Robinson's statement that "nearly all of these people have not really succeeded in their goal" may well hold true.²⁶⁶

Targeting strategies: Andrew Walker, in his book portraying the House Church or Restoration churches in England, expects the members to be "radical" and ready "to adopt a total way of life." He outlines a number of theological premises and practices to which he fervently aspires including "baptism in the Holy Spirit," deliverance from demons, a strong eschatology, a current prophetic voice, and the reintroduction of apostles. His radical brand of "the kingdom," he alleges are "a nice class of people" but those who wish to join "will be expected to behave according to the laws and customs of your hosts." "If you want to leave ... the fellowships are unlikely to let you go without a real effort to keep you inside."²⁶⁷ These churches have a small, strong, and dedicated following however for the majority of Englanders, it is not attractive and maybe even repugnant. The folks in Mel's Libmanan church are generally poor families, some illiterate, most not of a professional class, but living within society. Mel's comments about "false leader to overtake," are all too common in any church and indicative of obstacles a preacher must address. Church planting needs to focus on the type of people who are being attracted, at least in terms of ethics, economics, and social acceptance.

Ethically, Jesus' example is perfectly clear: invite both the prostitute and the one who has led, in the eyes of society and religion, a blameless life. Yet all within and without the church expect church-going to result in improvements in behaviour and attitudes. Integrity remains an indispensable part of the life and aspirations of the church. Church members are all too often accused of being hypocrites precisely because they do not live up to the integrity to which they aspire.

Mel's group is definitely disadvantaged economically as only four or five receive a reasonable regular income. In his summation on missions in Asia, J. Herbert Kane observes that "Converts have come mostly from the lower classes."²⁶⁸ Some would argue that the poor possess a privileged place in the kingdom. The

²⁶⁶ Robinson, *Today's*, 117.

²⁶⁷ Walker, *Restoring*, particularly pages 117–119, 187, 189, and 197.

²⁶⁸ J. Herbert Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1982), 125.

reality is that 80% or 90% of all in Libmanan are in the same financial conundrum as the majority of Mel's members. An interesting sideline to note is that Mel's chaplaincy work has not been successful in getting many to join the church. One policeman and his family are now regular attendees but none of the city councilmen have come, even though a previous mayor did permit and attend several of the Bible studies. One of the prior councilmen, Teng Besa, however, started another Church of Christ in Libmanan in his home in Barangay Mabini and more is said of him in the case study on poverty with Juan Bataller in Chapter 4. Clearly, it may be to Mel's advantage to attract more middle class persons with stable incomes who would then be prepared to contribute finances to sustain the church.

At least one writer sounds a caution concerning acceptance in society. While Stephen Neill's "discontented Roman Catholics" who accepted Protestantism in the Philippines is probably an overstatement yet still disconcerting, the focus here is on the individual rather than the acceptance of the corporate body of the church.

Lukasse presents the problem at hand well when he talks of "religious freaks" in his own book and "religion runners" in his chapter in Monica Hills' book.²⁶⁹

Furthermore he informs us that:

We make a false start if we attract people with all kinds of difficult social problems right from the beginning. We preach a gospel of love, and people who are living on the margin of life realize that they are fully accepted in our circles and that is why we attract them. But if we start off with several difficult social cases, that is the image we will carry and other people will hesitate very much to join this group. It is much better to start with 'normal' people and take care of some of the social cases later. Of course, the Church of Jesus Christ has a responsibility towards the people who live on the edge of society, but you must have a church before you can take care of them.²⁷⁰

As the church targets and attracts new members, it needs to Lukasse's warnings.

Walker may or may not get his "nice people." Two books that may be helpful on these issues, although from recalcitrant church members rather than outsiders

²⁶⁹ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1964), 346.

²⁷⁰ Lukasse, 133 and Johann Lukasse, "The Experience of Church Planting in Continental Europe" in Monica Hill, ed., *How to Plant Churches* ([London]: MARC Europe, 1984), 103.

coming into the church, are Kenneth Swetland's *Facing Messy Stuff in the Church* and Marshall Shelley's *Well-Intentioned Dragons*. Shelley comments:

They are often sincere, well-meaning saints, but they leave ulcers, strained relationships, and hard feelings in their wake... They undermine the ministry of the church. They are not naturally rebellious or pathological... but they wind up doing more harm than good.²⁷¹

Mel may have had socially maladjusted persons in his “wrong motive member,” and “jealousy” woman. Both led to a delay in the growth of the church and Mel personally felt under much pressure.

Visitation: While visitation is disdained by some of the public in general but also by many preachers and parishioners alike, Mel continues to invest significant time in home visiting. Robert Scott-Cook identifies three types of visitation: pioneer, contact, and in-depth.²⁷² Pioneer visiting is often known as door-to-door visitation with the object to visit every house in a particular neighbourhood in order to gain more contacts for the church. Those doing it may use a community survey such as Mel used or offer Bible studies or invite householders to special events such as a concert or a children's program. Ron Smith's little book, *Home Evangelism*, remains particularly helpful.²⁷³ Contact visitation is the follow-up of those who have been in connection with the church with the aim to help them to become more involved with the church or to assist them through counseling or pastoral care. These contacts, or prospects as the Filipinos call them, include those who showed interest in a community survey, visited a church program, were referred by other members of the congregation, or are the parents of children or youth attending church programs. In-depth visiting can be either for evangelism, discipleship, or of a pastoral nature and so include a protracted series of Bible studies and pastoral visits to the sick, the shut-ins, the bereaved, and those in personal crisis. As time has progressed, Mel has

²⁷¹ Kenneth L. Swetland, *Facing Messy Stuff in the Church: Case Studies for Pastors and Congregations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005) and Marshall Shelley, *Well-Intentioned Dragons: Ministering to Problem People in the Church* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1985). The quote is taken from page 11.

²⁷² Robert Scott-Cook, “The Experience of Church planting on Large Housing Estates,” in Hill, 74–87. The three types are Scott-Cook's however I added in the description and objectives. Scott-Cook had considerable experience of visitation on large estates in Bristol in the south-west of England. Joseph mentioned five different types of visitation in the previous chapter but the differences are in perspective rather than substance.

²⁷³ Ron Smith, *Home Evangelism* (Bromley, Kent: STL Books, 1984).

found that more and more of his visitation time has been in-depth visitation, particularly with his leaders while they now do most of the pioneer and more of the contact visitation. As a result of his visitation, Mel is widely recognized both in town and out in the rural *barangays*. While disparaged by some, visitation continues to be a rich and rewarding effort for the churches and workers who still do it and a necessity for growth of the church. Whether one agrees with them or not, the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons still gain a considerable number of converts through their visitation programs. Certainly no one likes biting dogs and the slammed door. Door-to-door evangelism in the better neighbourhoods of the Philippines has always been difficult as the *katulong* is the one who answers the door. Planning, time, and common sense have always been needed but one wonders if much of the condescension by preachers comes from laziness or personal unwillingness. Jesus' command remains "go ye," not "come they."²⁷⁴

A perspective for the future

Tom Steffen suggests five distinct stages of what he labels as "a comprehensive, phase-out oriented church planting model:" pre-entry, pre-evangelism, evangelism, post-evangelism, and phase-out so that the church is self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. He recognizes that some church planters do injury by leaving prematurely although others harm by staying too long.²⁷⁵ According to the "measuring success" standards of Robinson and Spriggs, Mel can be judged as "good so far" for he is past the pre-entry and pre-evangelism stages and continues to work in the next two phases but at this juncture, he has probably done little for phase-out. It must be realized that nothing permanent in any ministry is achieved in under five years and much of the personal attainments such as Mel becoming well-known and accepted in the community are not transferrable for the moment he leaves Libmanan, they are of no more benefit. Good leaders in any field take ten or fifteen years to train but the older minister, presumably gaining

²⁷⁴ Matthew 28:18–20.

²⁷⁵ Tom A. Steffen, *Passing the Baton: Church Planting That Empowers* (La Habra, CA: Center for Organizational & Ministry Development, 1993), particularly 1, 7, and 12. Steffen himself used this model for fifteen years among the Antipolo/Amduntug Ifugao people in the mountains of central northern Luzon. This is not the same Antipolo location of ICCM.

in wisdom and human experience year by year, is often highly effective and desired. The common Filipino practice of retiring at age forty is a waste of human resources for ministry. Mel may see no necessity to leave Libmanan as he has made it his home yet the visionary leader will quietly train others so that he is not perceived as a “lame duck” and make at least some provisions for at least two exit strategies—one for planned retirement and another in case of emergency.

Martin Robinson would ask the Libmanan congregation to check its sustainable growth over the next five or ten years.²⁷⁶ Reference has been made a number of times to the overall poverty of the group and the tendency of many churches is to fixate on deficient finances. On the contrary, I would question whether the problem is really poverty or whether the old adage is correct: “It is not a money problem but a people problem.”²⁷⁷ Naturally it would behoove Mel to attempt to attract more middle class folk who possess the financial capacity and security to provide more funds and have a congregation who can afford a little beyond the bare necessities. However, to date the church has survived and thrived for ten years despite financial deprivation and there is no reason why it cannot continue, despite the poverty conundrum, for the next ten or twenty years.

Table 19: Gibbs’ ministry skill levels

Church size	Industrial skill level
1	Unskilled worker
2 – 65	Foreman
66 – 150	Supervisor
151 – 450	Middle management
451 – 1,000	Top management
1,000 +	Chairman of the Board!

A “people problem,” may be a more acute conundrum. Adapting from Eddie Gibbs, Table 19 parallels ministry needs in a church with skill levels required in industry. To date, Mel has been able to keep abreast of his growing congregation’s needs for Mel has progressed from being a largely inexperienced church planter to a “supervisor” or maybe a “middle manager.”²⁷⁸ To go a step further than Gibbs,

²⁷⁶ Robinson, *Training*, 167.

²⁷⁷ Source unknown.

²⁷⁸ Eddie Gibbs, *I Believe in Church Growth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), 379 and following.

Mel's church of 300 not only needs him as a middle manager but also it is essential to have those who are foremen and supervisors and it is here that the church is struggling because of two factors. Mel downgraded the Taban group from having worship services back to a small cell group as the leader "doesn't have the ability to lead a church. He is good at sharing but not at leading." Apparently he does not possess innate leadership abilities. On another occasion, Mel discouraged one of his young men from attending Bible college because he did not have the academic aptitude. I was not able to talk with the Punta Tarawal group on more than a few occasions before they ceased to meet completely although here I suspect that the reason for "no capable leader" among the group may be due to the extreme deprivation of the members. The shame of their status in society and the training and education they had received—or not received—did not enable them to take leadership responsibilities. These are the poor without a voice, or as Cannell would put it, the *kami mayong-mayo*, the "we who have nothing at all."²⁷⁹ Despite the paucity of potential people from which Mel can choose to become leaders, he has paid particular attention to training leaders both by himself and by sending them to a few training courses outside his congregation. However, as Mel has limited theological training and most of the current leaders are without professional skills, here again, is the return of the difficulty of "untrained soldiers." On a more positive note, one of Mel's young men recently started at ICCM in Manila but whether he finishes his education and whether he returns to minister in Libmanan are as yet unknown.

In this chapter, I have presented the conundrums faced by Mel in church planting. I have argued that the new Libmanan church has had some success despite Mel being the lone church planter, financial limitations, and few resources. Financial considerations are very real although not definitive. Problems that need further consideration include lack of resources, the people who are being attracted to this new church, professional training of leaders, and the eventual exit strategies for Mel. I will have occasion to refer again to Mel with regards to success, visitation, sourcing of ministerial finances, limited resources, and worship.

²⁷⁹ Cannell, 15.

Chapter 3

The Challenges of Ministering at Home, in Education, and with Success

A Case Study with Ruperto Isagani (Gani) G. Ibarrentos Jr.

Ruperto Isagani (Gani) G. Ibarrentos Jr. and his wife, Karen, offered three *mga problema*. First, in ministering in one's home congregation, I will argue that it is possible but integration of outsiders and long-term financial strains may be difficulties. Second, concerning educational accreditation, I will contend that offering unaccredited degrees lacks integrity and earning an accredited degree may be vital for the welfare of the preacher and his family. Finally, as Gani contemplates how to grow a church and be successful, I will maintain that his perception of success is sufficient for him and his congregation. The main research for this chapter was done in 2007 and 2008, however I was able to return in 2011 and update my study. Gani was chosen for this case study as he was the one who particularly articulated the first two challenges in the early days of my research. He was not involved in the innuendos with the divisions in the ranks of the ministers and he was reasonable in relation to the accreditation issue. Although he lives further south than most of the other preachers, he was always willing, available, and hospitable.

Academic sources are somewhat scarce for these three perceived problems. There is very little concerning the unique challenges of ministering to one's home congregation—to the church in which one grew up.²⁸⁰ Educational accreditation is a legal necessity in the Philippines and mention has already been made to Filipino values and educational philosophy. Popular books from America on how to grow a church are legion. Reference has already been made to a number of works in connection with church planting including those by Martin Robinson and the Fuller Theological Seminary men like McGavran, Arn, and Wagner. McGavran's *Bridges*

²⁸⁰ As will become clear below, this is not in reference to the House Church Movement as in Walker, *Restoring*, or to small groups or congregations that meet in a private residence or a hall. Rather, Gani was reflecting on the challenge of now ministering to the congregation he had attended since he was born and of which many of his relatives were members.

of God is the grandfather of church growth publications.²⁸¹ Wilbert Shenk and Loren Mead are among the authors who challenge the Californian church growth school of thought.²⁸² Every few years there is another trend that emanates from one or more of the megachurches with emerging churches, seeker services, and G12 being a few of the more recent ones. Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Church* is widely available in the Philippines.²⁸³ Carl George, Gary McIntosh, Brian McLaren, Bob Moorehead, Norman Noble, Bob and Rusty Russell, and Lyle Schaller are writers on diverse topics such as Biblical basis for church growth, advertising the church, assimilating new members, small groups, types of worship services, planning, management, adding extra staff, multiple services, breaking growth barriers, attracting members in a post-modern world, and building size and location that have been used for classes at ICCM.²⁸⁴ Eddie Gibbs has been perhaps the best known author in the church growth field in Britain although Martin Robinson is also English.

Gani and Karen live in a rural location known as Barangay Agos, Polangui, Albay. The town of Polangui, with its market and municipal government, is ten to fifteen minutes away along the main highway and across the rice fields. Agos, one of the *barangays* of Polangui, has its own *barangay* hall, a primary school, and a petrol station but few other commercial facilities. Most residents of Agos live in a

²⁸¹ McGavran, *Bridges of God* (New York: Seabury Press, 1968). Originally published in 1955.

²⁸² Wilbert R. Shenk, ed. *The Challenge of Church Growth* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1973) and Loren B. Mead, *More than Numbers: The Ways Churches Grow* (N.p.: The Alban Institute, 1993).

²⁸³ See Scot McKnight, "Five Streams of the Emerging Church" in *Christianity Today*, February 2007; <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/february/11.35.html>; "What is G12?"; and Warren, *Church*.

²⁸⁴ Carl F. George, *How to Break Growth Barriers: Capturing Overlooked Opportunities for Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1993); Gary L. McIntosh, *Church that Works* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2004); Brian D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 2000); Bob Moorehead, *The Growth Factor* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company, 1988); C. Norman Noble, *Advertising Your Church Services: Using the Media to Reach Your Community* (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Standard Publishing Company, 1988); Bob and Rusty Russell, *The Growing Church* (Joplin, Missouri: Heartspring Publishing, 2007); and Lyle E. Schaller, *Assimilating New Members* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978).

ribbon pattern alongside the Maharlika Highway or alongside the parallel defunct railway. The Agos Barangay has a population of 2,966.²⁸⁵

Gani is the full-time minister of the Agos Church of Christ. As the only employee of the church, Gani must perform numerous functions in the church including preaching, visitation, leading Bible studies, performing most administrative and pastoral tasks, representing the church at a *barangay* level and at schools, and providing most of the vision and direction that there is in the church. As Gani is known by most people in Agos, it is not unusual for local residents not connected to the church to come to Gani's house asking for finances, assistance with a problem, and prayer. Gani also regularly plays the keyboard for the worship services.

Finances are very meager for Gani and Karen. The Agos church average weekly offering is only P1,000.00 or P1,500.00 out of which Gani received P500.00 in 2007 increasing to P700.00 by 2011.²⁸⁶ Gani's family supplements his income for him and so he remains a full-time preacher.

Problem 1: Ministering with the home congregation

In the initial discussions, the preachers made many comments about ministering with their home congregations. Most of the preachers have been the preachers for the congregation in which they became Christians or in which they were raised. There were comments made about being "prophets without honor," a reference to Jesus' remarks in all four gospels that a prophet does not receive recognition or acceptance in his own home town or clan. John's reference is in indirect speech, inserted within brackets in the NIV version but all three Synoptics

²⁸⁵ "Agos, Polangui, Albay," www.world-gazetteer.com/kml.php?geo. Gani assured me that there were 1,600 names on the new 2007 Master List of voters for the *barangay*. The two figures are consistent with one another.

²⁸⁶ This is approximately £12.50 or £18.75. Gani is given £6.25. The Government-mandated Daily Minimum Wage Rates, effective 30th November 2007, for rural Bicol, vary between P174.00 and P214.00 (£2.18 and £2.68) per day, depending on the type and place of employment. Thus a minimum weekly wage is approximately £15. See Republic of the Philippines, Department of Labor and Employment. "National Wages and Productivity Commission," http://www.nwpc.dole.gov.ph/pages/region_5/cmwr_table_r5.html.

portray a direct quote of Jesus and is printed in red in many modern translations.²⁸⁷ Matthew records Jesus as saying, “Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor.”²⁸⁸ Mark, adding the dimension of family, cites Jesus pronouncing, “Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.”²⁸⁹ Acceptance and standing both within and without the congregation is an important factor in the success of any ministry, especially in the Churches of Christ where the local church is independent, ecclesiastically sovereign, and autonomous. Each individual church hires and dismisses preachers without any reference to a bishop, a board, or denominational headquarters. The difficulties with lack of tenure and the need of persuasion have already been highlighted in the case study of Joseph Sevilla. Thus Sam Stone devotes a whole section in his book to such minister’s relationships.²⁹⁰ In addition, relationships are of a special priority for Filipinos where *pakikisama* is a core value.²⁹¹ Karen particularly but also Gani specifically vocalized the issue that he was back working with his home congregation and she, Karen, was feeling some difficulty assimilating.

Gani estimates that 10% of his *barangay* are related to him. The family is unsure of details but they think some of the grandparents moved from the next *barangay* north of them which is in the next province, Camarines Sur. They are unable to list all their cousins and have difficulty in explaining their precise relationships with some they acknowledge as cousins.²⁹² Second and third cousins still are regarded as close relatives.²⁹³ Most of the relatives are through Gani’s mother, Alice, rather than his father. The situation is further complicated in that both of Alice’s parents had a second spouse, there have been a number of adoptions, and thus there are many step-cousins.

²⁸⁷ John 6:44.

²⁸⁸ Matthew 13:57.

²⁸⁹ Mark 6:4.

²⁹⁰ Stone, *Minister*, 109–142.

²⁹¹ Bautista in Miranda-Feliciano, 3.

²⁹² Kiefer, 29, records the same. Limit of usage seems to depend on how intimate the speaker is with his or her relative.

²⁹³ This is in harmony with explanations given by Jocano in *Filipino Social Organization: Traditional Kinship and Family Organization* (Metro Manila: PUNLAD Research House, 1998) in his chapter, “Kinship Structure,” 21–47. Peter Harper and Laurie Fullerton, *Philippines Handbook*, 2nd ed. (Chico, California: Moon Publications, Inc., 1993), 50, say that Filipinos count blood relatives down to fourth cousins. The relatives of the in-laws are also considered family.

All of Gani's childhood years were spent in the same house where he now lives located on the Maharlika Highway. He is the *bunso* of ten children, nine of which are boys, and as *bunso*, Gani inherited the family home. His mother died in 1992 but his father and his step-mother live in a small shanty to the side of Gani's house. Two of Gani's brothers, Nelson and Oscar, have built their homes also on the two-acre Ibarrentos clan compound at the back of Gani's house. Only the three of them, Gani, Karen, and Hariette, now live in Gani's home but numerous extended family members enter the house without knocking and proceed to help cook, watch television, eat meals, and sleep on the couch. Besides the four residences, the compound includes the local Irrigator's Association Cooperative office, the Agos Church of Christ chapel of which Gani is now minister, and a rice farm which occupies 80% of the land. Alongside the Ibarrentos compound, there are two further compounds of Gani's relatives, owned, at least while they were alive, by Gani's uncle, Nicholas Gonzales and aunt, Matelde Cortan. Numerous of the Gonzales and Cortan children and grandchildren's families live on these compounds.²⁹⁴

From the beginning, Gani's relatives have been at the centre of the Agos church.²⁹⁵ As early as 1964, Delfin and Maring Banaag, who were Church of Christ members in Manila, moved to Agos and stayed with Gani's parents, Ruperto and Alice. To begin, the Banaags went to a UCCP church but met resistance from other members there when Delfin was asked to preach on baptism. A revival crusade from Manila Churches of Christ was held in 1968 and resulted in ten baptisms, six of whom were Gani's relatives – his parents, the Cortans and the Gonzales. Two of the others, Crisostomo (Tomo) Manrique and his wife were still members until Tomo's

²⁹⁴ The declaration of land titles only was done in the 1990's but the families occupied the land at least from the early 1960's.

²⁹⁵ There are only two attempts at writing the history of the church. The first is on a one-page type-written sheet of paper. My copy is one of the carbons. The second is in *Centennial Book*. Its source seems to be the type-written history but on page 208, it gives no less than three dates when the church started—1964, 8th February 1970, and 8th February 1972. The article also confuses Agos with another church in Daet, Camarines Norte, which is three or four hours away. In addition, the article gives two lists of names of the first baptisms. The first mentions six persons but the second names nine people. Gani was of the opinion that his church began in 1977 but he is probably incorrect.

death in 2010.²⁹⁶ However, worship services and Sunday School did not start until 1970. The church met in the Gonzales house until a chapel was built on the Ibarrentos compound in 1975. Gani has attended this church since his birth and now he is the first full-time preacher the church has had.

The Agos church has grown but it is being dominated more and more by Gani's clan. When Gani began his ministry in 2006, only about twenty adults and twenty children and youth attended. By 2008, attendees had jumped to about 140, half of whom are adults but only about seventy or eighty were in attendance on any one Sunday. In 2008, Gani estimated that about 40% of the total were his relatives. By 2011, the figure he gave had increased to 70% to 80% with nearly all of the leadership being relatives. In 2008, there were four elders: Gani's brother, Nelson, his cousin, Joey Gonzales, and Dan Pomasin who is married to Gani's step-cousin. The fourth, Tomo Manrique, was one of the original members, and was the only one who was not related. Gani stated that most decisions in the church were made by him and the four elders. However, Tomo died in 2010 and Joey and Dan had become inactive, leaving just Gani and his brother Nelson as leaders. In 2008, all four deacons of the church were related to Gani. By 2011, none of the four were still deacons but they were replaced by four other men, three of whom were nephews of Gani.

When asked how he felt his family members have accepted him as their preacher, Gani answered "happy and excited" and his brother, Nelson, calls him pastor. The family keeps telling him personally that they appreciate him and give him gifts of money and food. "They follow what I am telling to them." He proceeded to name a number of changes he had made in the congregation: leading and attending cell groups, regular monthly rota for cleaning, new style of singing, being "more responsible to the other member" by assisting in times of need, aiding the community through visitation and medical missions, and helping in community events. These included the *barangay* sportsfests, peace and order initiatives, concreting of roads, and *bayanihan*.

²⁹⁶ Revivals and crusades, in essence, are the same thing. However, Churches of Christ usually try to avoid the emotionalism that other groups try to infuse. See, for example, Leggett, *Ideal*, 213–214.

Mixed reasons came to the fore on the issue of why the congregation wanted Gani and Karen to minister with them. In reality, Agos had little choice as there were no others who were willing. Gani was their first full-time preacher in nearly forty years. Gani had had some successful ministry experience in Makati and the church in Agos “wanted to learn more about me and what I had experienced in Manila. They wanted [me] to share that with them.” A few of the family members thought that Gani should seek outside employment that paid a good salary, “but [I] never encountered that they hinder me in my ministry. They always love to support me and my family.” Gani believes that growing up and living in Agos had helped his ministry. “I knew their culture and their needs. I had a relationship with them. They respect our family here, Christian or not Christian.”

Karen told the story from a different angle. She had spent her childhood in Manila, not the rural province, and she had not gone to a seminary. She had not, before her marriage to Gani, felt a call to ministry but she sensed it to be an honour to be a minister’s wife. She wrote, “I am overwhelmed. A good privilege to serve God also. An opportunity to serve/help much needy people in this kind of place.” Despite the transition from the city to the province and coming to live among people who are not her own, she had felt accepted by the people and particularly her husband’s family.²⁹⁷

Karen had a difficult time transitioning from Manila in her first year. She did not like some of the local beliefs and myths and some changes in the food such as having vegetables or fish with coconut milk as a sauce.²⁹⁸ It was difficult for her to get a job in Polangui. She felt lonely as after about 8pm, all lights were off, the neighbors were already sleeping, and it was so quiet. The particular issue she still has trouble with is the local people giving food to those who refuse to work. Her attitude is that if you do not work, you will not eat. By 2011, she seemed to have settled in more as she asserted, “I’m still enjoying it. I appreciate the things I have here now.”

²⁹⁷ Coming from Manila, Karen is Tagalog, not Bicolano. Karen now understands most Iriga dialect of Bicolano but usually does not speak it. When they are alone, she and Gani speak Tagalog.

²⁹⁸ There are many local superstitions. See Cannell for examples in the Calabanga area of Camarines Sur.

The interviews asked a number of questions seeking areas where Gani and Karen felt frustrated, unsuccessful, or disappointed or about things that had not worked. Of the members, 90% are in poverty and “They always cry for help,” recorded Gani. He was concerned that offerings were still very low. Both he and Karen regretted that various members continued to be involved in vices such as smoking, drinking, and gambling. Gani was concerned that Karen was still adjusting to the life in the province and not having shopping malls and facilities. Karen would appreciate a simple thank-you when they had assisted someone. She also wanted to have more prayer and fasting. Gani wanted to do more visitation and have more fliers and leaflets to hand out in the community.

There seems to be four issues still with tension. First, Gani and Filipinos in general may not be able to separate their perception of the needs of kinship with the problems arising from being kin. As much as he was probed about being a prophet without honour, Gani is not perplexed for he sees no predicament in working with the family. “The notion of kinship,” says Jocano, “lies deep in the heart of Filipino community social organization. It is its nucleus.”²⁹⁹ Kiefer notes of the Tausug that “the sanctions of kinship in their society are used to justify and judge a much greater range of everyday behavior which goes beyond the immediate nuclear family.”³⁰⁰ His observation seems to be correct across the Philippines. Violeta V. Bautista points out that the Filipino has always lived his or her life in a group. She likens a Filipino’s kinship attachment to a group to multiple eggs fried together in a skillet wherein the yokes are still clearly visible but the whites merge with others.³⁰¹

Roces states that the real social unit in Philippine society is the *barangay*. Although this may have been true in the past and is still true in small and isolated *barrios*, in these years of massive population increase, urbanization, and migration, this social unit has been extensively diluted. Cannell’s *barangay* where everyone has one of only two surnames is now an oddity, not the norm.³⁰² Filipinos still romanticize about the *barangay* and still assist as much as possible, as does Gani.

²⁹⁹ Jocano, *Filipino Worldview: Ethnology of Local Knowledge* (Metro Manila: PUNLAD Research House, 2001), 66.

³⁰⁰ Kiefer, 28.

³⁰¹ Bautista in Miranda-Feliciano, 3.

³⁰² Cannell, 57–58. See next chapter for more details about Filipino population growth.

But, the core of kinship, says Jocano, is the having of a child and the relationship by blood. The result is that the extended family, the clan, is all important. According to him, other relationships are less important as they can be terminated at any time, but blood relations cannot. Thus, as he points out, getting a job for one of your kinsmen at your place of employment, be it private or government, is not viewed as nepotism but as a moral obligation to assist a relative.³⁰³ Roces states that the family “permeates all facets of Philippine society and so it is the primary unit of corporate action about which social, economic, and religious activities revolve. Religion is family and home-centred to a notable degree.”³⁰⁴ It is correct that Karen has had struggles fitting in, that Gani is back ministering with his home congregation, and that most of the leadership of the congregation are his blood relatives, but that is customary for him. His family structure and its size are not abnormal for the Philippines. The Falla clan, of which my wife and I have been honorary members, numbered 164 as of last count and operates similarly. Filipinos expect to work with their extended families and most churches have a dominant family element in them. Gani has the advantage of being an insider rather than an outsider.

Second, for Karen, the challenge may be understood as a mild form of culture shock and simple adjustment to provincial living and being a preacher’s wife. For her, the problem is not being the unwelcome prophet but the standard adjustment to becoming a minister’s wife as well as an insider in a different family and location. Blackwood notes that being a preacher’s wife is far more exacting than

³⁰³ Jocano, *Worldview*, 67–69 and 74–75. Unfortunately, Jocano lists only fourteen books in his bibliography and three of those are his own. Excluding the introductory chapter of this work, almost all footnotes simply read “Field notes” with an occasional reference to Webster’s Dictionary. Others of his books completely lack footnotes and a bibliography. This may be in part because he is one of the few writers in this field. Nevertheless, as far as I can tell, he is relatively reliable from a Filipino point of view. Jocano makes the point that Filipinos generally understand semen and mother’s milk to be “refined blood,” as in a parallel to sugar being refined (page 68). While Jocano talks of self-effacement, there is little comment on the rugged individualism that I have observed on numerous occasions. Although deference to kinship structure, family organization, and *barkadas* are usually adhered to and always given lip-service, in reality, actual action does not completely overlap with theory. When there is a crisis or when the individual perceives that no-one is looking, he or she will often act and make decisions purely in self-interest. Less savory characters’ petty theft from friends and family and the excessive need for *barangay* mediation in minor quarrels illustrate this. Jocano’s emphasis on kinship and values would have a difficult time discussing this. This individualism was not an element that surfaced in my interviews with Gani and Karen.

³⁰⁴ Roces, 41–49.

being the spouse of a physician. In addition, it is hard for the wife to live next door to the church.³⁰⁵ Karen seems to have the same struggles as her American counterpart. Karen's native language is Tagalog and not one of the Bicolano dialects. However, as Clifford Geertz notes, language in the Philippines is not particularly divisive and Tagalog is required to be the *lingua franca* and so socially deprovincializing although psychologically forced.³⁰⁶ With the exception of the minority tribes such as Thomas Gibson's Mangyans or the Islamic *Moros* of Mindanao, Filipinos are "imbued with a strong sense of national unity."³⁰⁷ George Thomas Kurian states that "there is readiness to adapt to the prevailing local language and social patterns. Intermarriages among groups are frequent and unremarkable."³⁰⁸

Third, after five years of ministry, Gani's Agos congregation has become increasingly a family church. So far, he has been able to avoid major family relationship problems but his challenge will be to expand the church so that only about 10% of the congregation are his relatives. Probably even more challenging will be for a majority of the leadership to be non-clan members. This is the more difficult now that the one elder, Tomo, who was not a family member, has died. Although quarrelling between siblings is profoundly deplored in Filipino society, the test will come for Gani when he and his brothers disagree, as is normal in relationships, on a particularly sensitive or personal matter.³⁰⁹ Unfortunately, it may be concerning finances and more particularly the size of Gani's salary.

Finally, there is the issue of power. From a sociological point of view, Gani and his new family have been allowed to "grow up," at least in some sense. This is despite Nelson's being one of the *kuyas*. Seemingly, Gani has been permitted the power to lead but it is uncertain how much power he will be permitted to have. It is also uncertain if he can overcome the limitations of his social standing within his kinship group to lead the church and whether Gani can break the mold of the Agos

³⁰⁵ Blackwood, *Pastoral Work* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1945), 55 and 58.

³⁰⁶ Geertz, 242 and 262–263.

³⁰⁷ Gibson.

³⁰⁸ George Thomas Kurian, *Encyclopedia of the Third World* (New York, New York: Facts on File, 1986), 1613. I believe that Bautista's *sakop* mentality is not applicable in Karen's case and may be overstated in general. See Bautista in Miranda-Feliciano, *All Things*, 9–11.

³⁰⁹ Cannell, 55.

church being a family-dominated church. It is also undecided whether his ministry can weather a family problem and a disagreement between him and his brothers. Despite all the sociological and cultural factors, Gani appears to have done rather well. However, the other preachers who are also ministering to their home congregations and who may not be *kuyas* or *bunsos* may not be as successful. The prophet without or with honor, long-term financial strains, and the ability to transition the church beyond clan control remain factors that must be addressed by every preacher who returns to minister to his home congregation. Additionally, new preachers and their wives should be informed of the likes of culture shock, adjustment to provincial living, and being a preacher's wife.

Problem 2: Accreditation in ministerial training

The first challenge voiced by the preachers of Bicol, their unrecognized education, is seldom treated in academic circles but it has been a contentious issue in both USA and the Philippines and both within and without Churches of Christ. As I will discuss below, it continues to be an issue of both integrity and economics for the men on the ground. As noted in the introduction, of the nineteen preachers, only four have an accredited undergraduate degree but all of these are in education or engineering, not theology; eleven spent four years at an unaccredited Bible college; four have no education beyond high school; and six have no formal theological education.³¹⁰ The issue voiced by the preachers was not the academic standards, commonly acknowledged to be woeful, but the lack of accredited education.³¹¹ The challenge they perceive is the acceptance of their theological credentials in the wider community.

Gani was one of those who spent four years in Manila at an unaccredited Bible college. His dying mother wanted him to enter a Bible school and so he began in 1994. After finishing his four years, his desire was still to enter the army though

³¹⁰ Numbers do not add up due to overlapping.

³¹¹ The matter of quality of education is an interest to me but is not the issue raised by the preachers. I must do theology from below, not from above. This plus the matter of space precludes lengthy discussion of academic standards in this thesis.

the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio but he found that his education was unrecognized and he did not have any skills except to be a minister.

Education in the Philippines has American influence as its base and it permeates the whole of theological education in Protestant institutions. There was a Philippine alphabet prior to the arrival of Magellan but apparently very few knew of it and so it was left to the Spanish to introduce literacy as well as Christianity and theological education.³¹² As early as 1611, the University of Santo Thomas was established in Manila, largely for the training of priests. The Spanish managed to convert most Filipinos to Christianity so that today 94% of Filipinos claim to be Christian: unique in Asia. However, despite theology being highly valued in the Spanish Philippines, training for it was limited to foreigners and the small group of elite landed families and entrepreneurs. Thus, after nearly 400 years of Spanish rule, the Renaissance and the Reformation were foreign to the shores of the Philippines, all Christians were Roman Catholics, half of the priests in the Philippines were still non-Filipinos, and most of the *tao* were still illiterate.³¹³

With the arrival of the Americans in 1898, education and theological education were transformed. As they implemented a massive undertaking to educate the *tao*, initially some American troops were transformed into schoolmarms, a Department of Education was set up in 1901, and at least 1,000 civilian American teachers were brought in to teach the Filipinos. As a result, American core values, structure, curriculum, and assumptions are mimicked throughout society so that John Dewey is still a major influence in educational philosophy.³¹⁴ The medium of instruction was English and thus today, the Philippines is either the second or third largest English-speaking country in the world, English is one of the two national languages, and almost all tertiary level education is mandated by the government to be in English. Americans allowed the unfettered distribution of the Bible and the multiplicity of non-Catholic denominations, ideas, and cults. Every American Protestant denomination is represented, including Churches of Christ. Alongside the

³¹² William Henry Scott, *Prehispanic Source Materials: for the Study of Philippine History*, rev. ed. (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1984), 52–62.

³¹³ Wanak, *Context*, 21–30.

³¹⁴ See Gregorio, *Philosophy*, 42–68, for example.

state system and partly because of the American insistence of separation of church and state, a private sector has flourished in education with much of this being church-related. About 85% of the 1,200 tertiary institutions are privately run. There are at least 300 Bible and theological colleges in the Philippines.³¹⁵

Despite independence of the Philippines in 1946, the underlying American influence continues. Much of the curriculum still copies the American models of a century ago and English is still a major medium of communication. The overarching problem, now widely recognized, is quality.³¹⁶ The government response has been, following American patterns, setting up an accrediting association but unlike America, the regulations are enshrined in law so that all educational institutions must be accredited under Filipino law. For colleges and universities, this is with CHED. Not only are these institutions the only ones that are legally permitted to offer a degree but they are the only ones permitted to exist. CHED was constituted in its own right in 1994 but previously was a division of Dep. Ed.³¹⁷ The reality is, however, that many educational establishments flout the law and there is much corruption.³¹⁸

³¹⁵ Again, see Wanak, *Context*, for a concise summary, 30–32. Just how many Filipinos are counted as speaking English depends on the minimum level of competency one adopts.

³¹⁶ For example, the Philippines is the only country left that still has only ten years of primary and high school education, just as the Americans created the system 100 years ago. This will change in the next few years as the Philippines bows to EC pressure. See Edson C. Tandoc Jr., “2 more years of school a must, say educators.” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view/20100320-259925/2_more_years_of_school_a_must%2C_say_educators. See Wanak, *Context*, 33–34; Willie N. Ng, “The State of RP Education” (390–391); and Boo Chanco, “Grade 6 is a Wasted Year” in Nilo E. Colinares and Lydia P. E. de la Rosa, eds., *Philippine Education in the Third millennium: Trends, Issues and Challenges, Concerns* (Northern Samar: 6Ns Enterprises, 2005).

³¹⁷ A list of CHED policies and guidelines can be found on <http://www.ched.gov.ph/policies/index.html>. A list of all accredited universities and colleges is available on http://www.ched.gov.ph/hei_dir/index.html. See also “Philippines,” http://www.seameo-innotech.org/resources/seameo_country/educ_data/philippines/philippines_ibe.htm. CHED often uses the word recognized rather than accredited. Recognized is of a higher status than accredited.

³¹⁸ Colleges that do not comply with the law offer unaccredited degrees. Sometimes theological colleges will maintain that they are accredited with some other organization but the reality is that their graduates are, in local parlance, still considered as “just high school graduates.” There are nine Church of Christ Bible colleges in the Philippines, ranging in student population from about 100 to just ten or twelve. ICCM is recognized (i.e., fully accredited) by CHED. The others have not applied for or have not been granted permission to operate from CHED, or in one case, lost its accreditation. See articles like Pam Pastor and Jules Alcantara. “They don’t call it ‘Diploma Mill’ for nothing,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (Wednesday, 21st March 2001): D1–D2.

The issue of standards and accreditation has long been a grassroots discussion in Churches of Christ. The rugged isolation of the American frontier in the Appalachian Mountains and the Mid-West did not bode well for formal education in the founding days of the Restoration Movement. There were those in the Church of Christ who were like Peter Cartwright's Methodist circuit riders on the Western Frontier of America who could see no necessity for "fancy" learning.³¹⁹ But there has always been a strong segment who believed the preachers should have the best education attainable. Alexander Campbell began the first Bible college, Bethany College, in what is now West Virginia in 1840.

With the split between the independents and the Disciples from the 1920s in both America and the Philippines, the independents found themselves suspicious of the innovations of modernism or liberalism in their colleges. They wanted men who, in their view, were Bible-quoting, Bible-preaching pastors.³²⁰ In both countries, new educational colleges were soon formed.³²¹ Education is highly esteemed in the Philippines and families will suffer great hardship in order for their children to gain a college degree.³²² But accreditation has been a thorny problem for both sides of the Pacific Ocean from the 1940s to the 1990s. In America the Bible college was a "single-purpose school" and thus, regardless of the standards, the regional accrediting associations would not entertain their admission. The American Association of Bible Colleges, a nationally accepted crediting agency for church-vocation colleges, came into being in 1947 but as of 1967, only forty-five out of at least 200 such colleges were accredited with them and as of 1972, only seven were independent Church of Christ colleges. Probably, many of the Church of Christ colleges could not meet the standards required. However, there was an element in America that was decidedly hostile to seeking accreditation as some of the more

³¹⁹ Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography*, (N.p., n.d. supplied), 358, quoted in Niebuhr, *Historical*, 239.

³²⁰ Johnson, *Duly*, 101–122.

³²¹ For USA, see North, *Union*, 328–329, Murch, *Christians Only*, 295–298, and Johnson, *Duly*, 118. A current list of colleges is published each year in *Directory of the Ministry: A Yearbook of Christian Churches and Churches of Christ* (Springfield, Illinois: Directory of the Ministry). For the Philippines, see Wissmann, "Wolfe," 43. There are numerous mentions of this in Leslie Wolfe's unpublished documents.

³²² For example, see *Philippines Today*, http://www.philippinestoday.net/2003/May/interview1_503.htm.

conservative members in the churches vehemently opposed such accreditation, seeing it as a compromise and a dilution of the purpose of preacher-training or as unnecessary governmental interference in the running of the church.³²³ Both within and without Churches of Christ, such attitudes prevailed among the missionaries who came to start and staff the Bible colleges of the Philippines with some such feelings still existing. As recently as 2000, when ICCM began, there was controversy as the two things that were clamored for were integrity and accreditation with CHED.³²⁴

Although Gani talked about the problem on numerous occasions, he said that he was not really concerned that his degree was not accredited but that he thought that it was illegal for the college where he attended to operate. I also had conversations with some of the other ten other preachers who also graduated from an unaccredited seminary. For some of them, the ethical problematics as mentioned in the Introduction, particularly with regard to *hiya*, were a factor. After one particular discussion, I received this text on my cellphone from one of the preachers:

Bro Ros u told Pastor Alfred tht he graduated 2 unacridited seminary and he did nt get a proper college,d seminary wher Ptr Alfred is also my seminary wher I graduated,hw dare u 2 tel him tht he graduated in an un accredited seminary.³²⁵

It is unexplainable how a graduate of a college not recognized by CHED could believe that it was accredited, particularly when non-accreditation is the subject of numerous discussions and the complete list of accredited colleges is available on the Internet except to account for it as hurt pride and high emotionalism. Here, and in the following chapter with Charlie, it is important to note a little of the Filipino concepts of *hiya* and emotionalism. Kiefer's study on violence among the Tausug, an Islamic *Moro* group in the very south of the Philippines, points out that the very masculine or the very brave Tausug "is combative, always ready to respond with

³²³ Johnson, *Duly*, 122.

³²⁴ ICCM, "Student Handbook, 2007–2008" (Unpublished), 3.

³²⁵ I interpret the text to say "Brother Ross, you told Pastor Alfred that he graduated from an unaccredited seminary and that he did not get a proper college education. The seminary where Pastor Alfred graduated is also the seminary from where I graduated. How dare you tell him that he graduated in an unaccredited seminary." Names are changed. The text was sent at 11.32 am, Filipino time, 12th February 2008. "Alfred" is one of the other preachers but that is not his real name.

quick anger to every real or imagined insult or injury to himself or his close kin.” Kiefer goes on to say, “The brave man must see that his shame is erased, not necessarily because it is morally good to do so, but because it is necessary to sustain his self-image as a brave man.” The everyday use of physical force, violence, and retaliatory deaths is not seen among the Tagalogs or Bicolanos as with the Tausugs but the affront felt seems to be similar.³²⁶ Jocano’s comments are very apt here:

Generally, Filipino villagers are very emotional. They place a high premium on emotionalism rather than rationalism. This is not to say they are not rational. They are. Often, however, rationalism is blurred by the emotionalism that characterizes a reaction, particularly in areas when honor, dignity, and moral principles are at stake. Smooth or rough interpersonal relations are sought in a relationship, depending upon the degree of emotionalism involved in the situation within which interaction takes place. In some situations, emotionalism makes the interaction fatal.³²⁷

Peter Harper and Laurie Fullerton write “Filipinos are very sensitive to criticism, insults, and hurt feelings, whether real or imagined, and they can become implacable enemies for reasons that Westerners would deem trivial.”³²⁸

The continuing employment and economic struggles that ministerial families have had is of note. Karen is in her third year (2011) at the local Polangui Community College doing her bachelor’s degree in science and education. She is looking forward to teaching on a full-time basis once she graduates in March 2012. Gani has done no further education and remains in full-time ministry at Agos. The church of another couple closed and, without an accredited degree, the husband has mostly been unemployed. He tried, as a number of the preachers have done, to offer massages for those who cannot afford physical therapy but remuneration was erratic. The family relies on the wife who has gone on to complete her accredited degree in education and now teaches in a small private school.

The challenge of accreditation presents numerous issues. Compliance with the law should be a foregone conclusion for a Christian under normal circumstances for, at the end of the day, accreditation is required by the law of the Philippines. The

³²⁶ Kiefer, v and 52–53. The first quote is written by George and Louise Spindler in the Forward.

³²⁷ Jocano, *Worldview*, 87.

³²⁸ Harper, *Philippines*, 52.

New Testament states that one is to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.³²⁹ I doubt that there is a sound theological reason why accreditation is not sought by any theological training school. Non-compliance is probably due to other circumstances such as issues of power or inability to meet standards. Whether an issue for the preachers or not, there should be a genuine concern about the quality of the graduate as a product of the college. Like all dealings with government departments, accreditation in the Philippines requires much red tape and compliance with regulations which may or may not be beneficial but at the very least, it does aspire to raise standards. Despite the *hiya* seemingly felt, alarm must be taken at the raw emotionalism as a basis for decision making as expressed in the cellphone text sent to me.³³⁰ Such behavioural patterns are the basis for the ongoing unrest (perceived as rebellion by most Filipinos) among peoples such as the Tausug and so there needs to be examination and consideration at all levels of education. A college does have an obligation to its students to ensure that they are acceptable to and recognized by the wider community. Small or large, metropolitan or rural, the church should consider the image of its leader. The preacher needs to be perceived as a professional and a man with integrity but he cannot be so if he is merely regarded as "only a high-school graduate" of an illegal college by the society around him.³³¹ The tough economics of unemployment and underemployment should be considered in the ministerial vocation. As seen above, for Gani, not having an accredited degree is not, at least at this juncture, an issue as he is full-time in his ministry. However, for those who are not, or who, quite understandably, wish to supplement their meager income, the matter can become acute. Already noted in the first and second case studies was the critical role played by the two ministers' wives—Eva Sevilla and Moriel Pel—in providing income in order for their husbands to continue in the ministry. The reality is that, as a rough estimation, not more than about 10% of the 1,000 Church of Christ congregations in the Philippines can afford to pay

³²⁹ Matthew 22:21, Mark 12:17, and Luke 20:25.

³³⁰ Bautista in Miranda-Feliciano (6 and 15) is aware of this problem with her defensive "supposed lack of critical consciousness." The consensus with her is probably in her "values also exist in their idealized and corrupted form within a culture."

³³¹ This is terminology that is used by the graduates of the unaccredited Bible college.

remuneration in line with government salaries.³³² Without the accredited degree, one cannot get a professional position and without professional employment in a country like the Philippines, an individual is unlikely to receive a living wage.

Despite all the angst over the issue of accreditation, both past and present, basically, whether or not to have accreditation is a non-issue. An institution which seeks to instill spiritual formation cannot have any integrity or any standing in the community if it flagrantly disobeys the law and refuses to comply with a minimum educational standard. College administrators who do not want accreditation may have a hidden agenda. However, for the undergraduate who studied for four years without gaining a recognized degree, it remains acutely challenging. The student has a right to an accredited degree which will afford the individual the opportunity to obtain reasonably paying employment and thus feed the family.

Problem 3: Growth and success in the ministry

The third challenge which this case study addresses is how the minister can be a success and grow the church. Again, this has been an issue expressed often by the preachers, including Gani. They minister to small congregations who meet in unremarkable buildings and are financially unviable, but the men are dedicated to the cause. For them the challenge is how to make a difference and how to make their work significant.

The concept of success is problematic as it is a qualitative item so that what one lauds as success and how to attain it, another derides. The success-oriented church growth movement, for example, as seen in the principles developed by McGavran in India in the 1950s, Hopewell dismisses as mechanistic.³³³ This theme has already been touched on in considering the satisfaction as felt by Joseph in his ministry in Chapter 1 and Robinson and Spriggs' concept of success in the previous

³³² Note that while the lowest minimum wage is about P960.00 (£12.00) per week, the regulation for the lowest-paid teacher is more than P,2400.00 (£30.00) a week. See Rocamora, Rene, "Salary Schedule of Philippine Government Employees," <http://www.siquijor.com/Commentaries/Salary%20Schedule%20Philippine%20Govt%20Employees.htm>. There is no collation of any statistics on finances of any sort for Churches of Christ in the Philippines.

³³³ McGavran, *Bridges and Understanding* and Hopewell, 23–26. Hopewell lists many other church growth books in his endnotes, 35–36.

chapter but here, I will reflect with Guest. He and his co-writers, following more with Hopewell rather than McGavran, assert that that this is axiomatic for the evangelical worldview to have a preoccupation with the numerical growth of congregations and with the salvation of souls.³³⁴ Guest remarks “To be a ‘successful’ church in popular evangelical terms is to be numerous, active and to elicit practical commitment, and this is essential to the identity of the congregation as conceived by its members.”³³⁵ Without agreeing in full with them, this is a convenient place to begin to consider success, particularly as Gani may conceive it.

Historically, Churches of Christ, being in general evangelical, have had a propensity to seek and honour success. Regarding numerical success for example, in the earliest days of the movement Walter Scott rose to notoriety by baptizing 1,000 persons per year over a thirty-year time span.³³⁶ Other celebrated crusade evangelists were men like the Queenslander, E. C. Henricksen who also had 30,000 baptisms in both Australia and Britain in the 1920s and 1930s.³³⁷ In the current era, it is no longer the itinerant evangelist but the preacher of the mega-church who is held up to be successful and to be imitated.³³⁸

The Filipino Church of Christ congregations and preachers have had the same eager desire for success with many church growth and church health schemes being mimicked. The *Purpose-Driven Church* of Rick Warren and the G12 schemes of Castellanos have been popular in recent years.³³⁹ Every Church of Christ preacher wishes to emulate Bob Russell, the recently-retired senior preacher of the Southeast

³³⁴ Linda Woodhead, Matthew Guest, and Karin Tusting, “Congregational Studies: Taking Stock” in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 5.

³³⁵ Matthew Guest, “‘Friendship, Fellowship and Acceptance’: The Public Discourse of a Thriving Evangelical Congregation” in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 83.

³³⁶ John Watson Neth, *Walter Scott Speaks—A Handbook of Doctrine* (Milligan College, Tennessee: Emmanuel School of Religion, 1967).

³³⁷ Chapman, *Australia*, 112.

³³⁸ There are now at least fifty-three churches with a membership and attendance in excess of 5,000 in the USA. Not one of these had more than 5,000 members fifteen years ago. See “Megachurches: The 2006 List,” http://www.christianstandard.com/pdfs/2006_megachart.pdf.

³³⁹ See “PurposeDriven,” <http://www.purposedriven.com/en-US/Home.htm> and “Cesar y Claudia Castellanos,” http://www.myspace.com/cesarcastellanos_. For a critique of the G12 system, see Reachout Trust, “A Look at the G12,” <http://www.reachouttrust.org/articles/relatedsubjects/g12.htm>.

Christian Church in Louisville Kentucky, now having an attendance in excess of 20,000 per week.³⁴⁰

For Gani, the problem is the same as that of all the other preachers but in his ministry to date, he has achieved, at least in the minds of the Bicol preachers, a measure of success. My aims in reflecting on this issue are threefold. First, I wish to observe Gani's attempts to be successful and to initiate Ray Anderson's Christopraxis and thus consider which ministry in Gani's understanding to be God's ministry and worthy of value.³⁴¹ Here again, Woodward's and Pattison's concern to take people's experiences seriously is accepted and so Gani's narratives are important sources of knowledge.³⁴² Second, I want to delve a little into a denominational study as envisioned by Richter and reflect whether this successful—or at least attempts at being successful—church retain its historic identity as a Church of Christ. Third, adopting the suggestion of Davies to use comparative method, I refer to Guest's reflections on the Anglican church of St. Michael-le-Belfrey in York, England.³⁴³

With regard to success, I inquired of Gani about his main emphases in his ministry and how he believed they had aided the church. "We have a clear vision and purpose now, direction. We [have] develop[ed] leaders now. Before only the pastor is leading and now we have fourteen or fifteen leaders inside the church." He continued that there is now an "excitement of members and congregation in coming every Sunday." Karen added that the church had grown from thirty to more than 100, that thirty had been baptized since September 2006 and she also mentioned the establishment of cell groups and the praise team for the worship service, the expansion of the church building, and the offering of counseling. Gani wrote, "We helped the members/congregation to value their life, family & their simple living." There are three aspects that Gani believed prominent for the growth of his ministry: worship, small groups, and prayer.

³⁴⁰ "Southeast Christian," <http://www.southeastchristian.org/>.

³⁴¹ Anderson, *Shape*, see 318 – 326 and 61 – 63. Gani would not use Anderson's terminology.

³⁴² Woodward and Pattison, xiii and 1–19 principally.

³⁴³ Davies, in Cameron et al., 20 and Guest, in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 71–84.

Worship

The combined focus of the church for worship at Agos is the Sunday morning service. The account of the service on the first Sunday of 2008 is typical. I have already described the worship services in GRS and Libmanan. Here, I am aware of the apparent contradictions, as explained by Stringer, between the two strands of anthropological approaches: the participant observation ethnography of Bronislaw Malinowski and the focus on what was done, not the justifications that people gave for doing it as expounded by William Robertson Smith. Like Stringer, it is my assumption that the tensions of both are illuminating.³⁴⁴

The worship service was scheduled to begin at 9am but started at 9.30am and finished by 12 noon.³⁴⁵ Beginning with ten adults, eleven teenagers, eight children, and two dogs in attendance, by the middle of the service, seventy-nine people and three dogs were present.³⁴⁶ The service was a mixture of many things with English, Tagalog, and occasional Bicolano being used. It was also an assortment of tradition and trend, Bible and praxis, Word and sacrament, audience participation and directed education, head and heart, and snippets of liturgy and extemporary speech.

The Agos service is most definitely not what the proverbial British man or woman on a high street would expect but very much anchored in the experience of

³⁴⁴ Stringer, in Cameron et al., 89–98.

³⁴⁵ This is normal in the Philippines where churches often begin an hour late. The more important the dignitary—or the more important he or she thinks he or she is—the later the arrival. It is not unusual for such a person to arrive two hours late. Unusual was that the clock in the Agos chapel was twenty minutes slow. Most Filipinos clocks, watches, and cellphones are ten to twenty minutes fast. Few people are precise about time. When making appointments, it is usual to joke about whether it is American time or Filipino time. Buses and jeepneys do not run on a timetable as they simply begin their journey when they are full. Even enroute, if they have empty seats, they may simply wait until more passengers arrive. I have personally experienced airplanes and ferries to depart early when they are full or wait an extra thirty or sixty minutes until they are at capacity. Richard D. Lewis, *When cultures Collide: Managing successfully across cultures* (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1999), 371, suggests that it is part of the *mañana* tendency inherited from the Spanish. This is difficult to prove since the Filipinos had very little mechanism for telling time before the Spanish arrived in 1517. See also Roces, 12. The problem is so widespread and rampant that recently the House of Representatives passed a bill trying to standardize times. See KBK [Karl B. Kaufman], GMA News.TV “House passes bill vs ‘Filipino time’.” <http://www.gmanews.tv/story/179859/house-passes-bill-vs-filipino-time>. For a fuller Filipino point of view on time, see Jocano, *Working*, 44–47.

³⁴⁶ The dogs did not interrupt the service. They just wandered in and out through the open doors. Everybody ignored them. One of the matriarchs of any church will quickly give a dog a jab with the end of her walking stick if the dog is a nuisance. The dogs are all of “Filipino variety” (mixed breed) and are not the pampered house pet of a British home. They often just forage for their food. Contracting rabies is a problem in the Philippines.

this world. The communion and sermon times remain cerebral and wordy, but the singing and testimonial components are emotive. It is Ian Bradley's family service, but with modifications. The language is simple; the choruses are bright and cheerful; and there is a concentration on the communion but the sermon is not shortened. I sensed that those whom Bradley fears may feel even more isolated and unhappy in a family service—the single, the bereaved, and the like—find in the church the very family they strive for and have been denied.³⁴⁷ Here, they are part of the kinship attachment of Filipino living that I have spoken of above.

Like virtually every other Church of Christ worship service I have attended over forty years in at least seven different countries, there were no prayer books or liturgical booklets, little liturgy, no bells, robes, candles, or incense, no creed, *Gloria Patri*, doxology, or Lord's Prayer, and no genuflecting.³⁴⁸ The service centered on the singing, listening to preaching, partaking of communion, and extemporaneous prayers. Churches of Christ mostly agree with Thomas Jefferson's "if we are Protestants we reject all tradition."³⁴⁹ The service divided naturally into six

³⁴⁷ Ian Bradley, *Marching to the promised land: Has the church a future?* (London: John Murray, 1992), 94–95 and 102–103.

³⁴⁸ Most American churches have a weekly bulletin with a simple order of service in them. This is also the case in other countries for special occasions such as the church anniversary. In more traditional services in America, the choir have robes. In the larger churches in the Philippines, the women who take up the collection put a blouse over the top of their clothing during the offering time. Preachers or others taking part in the service never have vestments. The only Church of Christ that I can remember having bells was the Charters Towers Church of Christ who had the only carillon in the whole of the northern half of Australia (more than a million square miles). The church had bought the building from the Lutherans in about 1915. See Queensland Government Environmental Protection Agency, "Church of Christ," <http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/projects/heritage/index.cgi?place=601245&back=1>. The only time the bells are used are half an hour before the start of service and at the start of the service. They are not rung in connection with communion. ICCM, however, has a set of handchimes. Worship majors usually learn to play these and then there are performances in the local churches. An occasional American church will have electric candelabra but these are for lighting purposes only. Both American and Filipino weddings make use of unity candles, but again, this has no worship significance. The recitation of the Lord's Prayer is done on occasions in a few churches but mostly it is treated like any other passage of Scripture and preached upon occasionally. A Church of Christ would never recite a creed. See [Campbell], *Declaration*, Alexander Campbell, ed., *The Millennial Harbinger*, (August 1832), 344–347. See also Errett, *Position*, and Robinson, *What*, 65–71. There is a saying often repeated in Churches of Christ, "No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible, and no name but the Divine Name." I am unaware of its origins but the earliest I have seen at least part of this saying is in Barton Warren Stone, *The Christian Messenger*. <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/bstone/cm/CM0101.HTM>, 1:1(November 25, 1826).

³⁴⁹ Quoted in Niebuhr, *Historical*, 211. Alexander Campbell spent much of his time in his first periodical, *The Christian Baptist*, debunking what he saw was unnecessary tradition. I would

components: praise and worship, testimony time, preaching, communion, offering, and an ending segment including announcements and benediction.

The service began with the praise and worship. The worship team on the platform included four young people dressed in jeans and tee-shirts and Gani dressed in a *polo barong*. One of the young ladies acted as the emcee while the other four played instruments. The emcee led various extemporaneous prayers and the singing on the microphone. The initial song service of four choruses, all in English, were known by the congregation but still projected on a screen.³⁵⁰ While the congregation stood to sing and pray, one or two people used a tambourine and some clapped as they sang. Once the song service was completed, the worship team took their seats in the congregation. Gani took over leadership, beginning with a transition prayer, voicing that he and the congregation all had a multitude of problems but thanking the Lord that he is there for us *araw araw*.

The time of singing at Gani's church distinctly reflects the rock-music culture of the day as Cheryl Wissmann has already chronicled.³⁵¹ Those who love the old hymns would find some of the singing "shallow, trite, and repetitive."³⁵² Agos may know a Graham Kendrick and a handful of the long-time members would recognize an occasional hymn like "Holy, holy, holy" but every one of them would be at a complete loss if Frederick Levison requested a Crimond, Wiltshire, Kedron, or Lyngham.³⁵³ Most Filipinos in the province are like Gani who never saw a piano until he went to college and he probably has not seen an organ. These instruments deteriorate extremely quickly in the tropical heat and humidity. More to the point is the use of the English language for many of the more modern hymns are incomprehensible to the poorer folk in the pew and so the repetitive choruses are all they can understand. Although there are few if any Christian songs of any type

argue that the non-traditions have in themselves become traditions, albeit informal ones, but most loyal Church of Christ members would still reel in horror.

³⁵⁰ The choruses were "Lord Most High"; "Hear our praises"; "We come to bless your name"; and "Jesus, we enthrone you."

³⁵¹ Wissmann, "Worship."

³⁵² Bradley, *Marching*, 112.

³⁵³ Frederick Levison, *A God to Glory: Notes on being a Parish Minister* (Gifford, Scotland: St Bernard Press, 2000), 20. Interestingly, many of the popular Christmas carols such as "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" and "Silent Night" are still played in Filipino supermarkets from 1st September until *Tatlang Hari* on 6th January.

written in Bicolano, there are many English language hymns and a few choruses translated into Tagalog but as the rock-culture music is in English, the preference of music is often therefore English.³⁵⁴

The second segment in the service was the testimony time with four individuals in the congregation speaking. Nelson's wife, Helen, thanked God for the "channels of blessing" she had received: the bonus of the thirteenth month salary she had been given, the blessings given to many in the church for housing rebuilding after Typhoon Durian/Reming twelve months before and the spiritual blessings she had received from being a part of a cell group.³⁵⁵ Dan, then a new elder, thanked God that his health was restored. A few weeks earlier, he had been unable to leave his bed for an extended time. A doctor had diagnosed heart problems, kidney failure and complications including arthritis around the kidneys. Monica, Gani's aunt, now seventy-two years old, thanked God for her health being restored too. Also she was pleased that her family was in church. The congregation nodded approvingly, seemingly knowing more than was articulated. Finally, Nelson, thanked God, that, in his job as a fireman, he had been able to avoid corruption in the recent government elections. All four testimonies lasted no more than two to four minutes each.

The third segment in their regular worship is the sermon. Gani would normally deliver the message but it is expected in any provincial church that a visiting guest from Manila bring the message and so I was scheduled to preach. I had prepared a handout for each one in the congregation and I spoke mainly in English with Gani translating into Tagalog with occasional words in Bicolano. Others in the congregation including Nelson and Helen interjected at appropriate times supplying additional assistance in the translation.

Communion, the next sector, began with the song, *Jesus, lover of my soul* during which two of the young ladies exited the service with about a dozen of the children to the adjacent Cortan family house. The children sat on benches on the porch and listened to a Bible story and colored. In the chapel, in line with the now

³⁵⁴ Wissmann points out the eclectic nature of some of the Tagalog churches in her "Worship" thesis.

³⁵⁵ Unfortunately, it is not unusual for workers, including teachers and government employees, to not always be paid or not always be paid on time. See Republic of the Philippines, Department of Labor and Employment, "Employers urged to grant 13th month pay before Dec. 24 (Friday, November 25, 2005)," <http://www.dole.gov.ph/news/details.asp?id=N000001345>.

somber atmosphere, the communion table was carefully set. The rough wooden table was covered with a white tablecloth. The bowl for the bread contained the thin white wafers used by other denominations including the Catholics in the Philippines. The tray for the cup contained about fifty small individual glasses filled with the common grape juice drink available from supermarkets in powder form.³⁵⁶ Two elders, Nelson and Tomo, stood on the platform behind the communion table. Nelson read 1 Corinthians 11:24–26 in Tagalog and then, in a prayer, he thanked the Lord for this time of fellowship and that we could do this in remembrance of him. Reflecting on the sermon, he asked that each of us would recommit our lives to God for 2008. The elders passed the trays to deacons who went row to row in the congregation. Each individual partook as the bread and the cup were passed to him or her. Empty cups were returned to the trays immediately. On the platform, the worship team played background music while most in the congregation bowed their heads and spent time in silent prayer and meditation as the emblems were passed. When all the cups were emptied, the deacons simply took the trays to the back and refilled them, then continued distributing them.³⁵⁷

The subdued atmosphere of the communion was replaced by a much more upbeat but short fifth segment, the offering. The Scripture was read from Malachi 3. Nelson led in prayer and pronounced in a triumphant voice, “Church, it’s offering time!” Two of the older ladies of the church, including Monica, passed the wooden bowls from row to row while the congregation, seated this time, sang *Jesus, you are so good*.

The final closing segment was a *potpourri* of items that were felt necessary to end the service. Gani gave announcements which included an encouragement to attend the cell groups in the next week and the delay of the regular meeting of the elders and deacons. Visitors were welcomed by name. I was again called to the front and reiterated that I was doing my research for this thesis. A final chorus, “Shout to the Lord” was sung. Then Tomo, as the elder, raised his outstretched arms toward

³⁵⁶ As elsewhere, Catholic churches use wine in their mass. Churches of Christ never use wine for their Lord’s Supper. For an explanation, see De Welt, *The Church in the Bible* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press, 1958), 377–378.

³⁵⁷ In February 2008, the church added a second tray of cups so refilling is unnecessary.

the congregation and pronounced a benediction blessing. Despite their general uneasiness toward liturgy, there remains at Agos and in Churches of Christ in general, snippets of a liturgy. A consistent Filipino inclusion is this benediction given by the elder.³⁵⁸ The wording was similar to Jude 24–25. A closing prayer by Gani was the final finish. Everyone shook hands with each other, exited the building, exchanged small talk with each other for a few minutes and walked home.

The Agos church worship remains similar to other Churches of Christ, particularly in the Philippines. Tables 20a and 20b give the wording on the Service Programme Board at the GRS Church of Christ.³⁵⁹

Table 20a: Service programme board at GRS Church of Christ (Tagalog)

<i>Palatuntunin sa Pagsamba</i>	<i>Petsa</i>
<i>Urang Balagi</i>	<i>Kalawang Bahagi</i>
<i>Patnugot</i>	<i>Awit sa Pagsamba</i>
<i>Patnugot sa Pag-awit</i>	<i>Pagbasa at Panalangin</i>
<i>Doxolohiya</i>	<i>Taning bilang</i>
<i>Pambukas na Panalangin</i>	<i>Mensahe</i>
<i>Awit</i>	<i>Awit sa banal na hapunan</i>
<i>Batiannng piling Talata</i>	<i>Pagbasa at Panalangin</i>
<i>Pagbasa ng Talata ng Paksa</i>	<i>Pagtanggap ng Banal na hapunan</i>
<i>Awit</i>	<i>Malayang abuluyan</i>
<i>Pag-aaral</i>	<i>Panalangin</i>
<i>Pag uulit</i>	<i>Awit sa Pagpapala</i>
<i>Balitaan</i>	<i>Pagpapala</i>
<i>Panalangin</i>	<i>3 Fold Amen</i>

There seemed to be one omission from the service. For a group that claims to base itself on the Bible, there was very little reading of the Scriptures in the Agos service.³⁶⁰ There were no formal Bible readings. Australian Churches of Christ normally have an Old Testament and a New Testament reading. In addition, a Psalm is often read as a call to worship and the presider at the Lord’s Table reads one of the New Testament accounts of the Lord’s Supper. The traditional British Church of

³⁵⁸ Virtually all Filipino congregations do this but an exception is the Makati congregation where Gani used to be the Worship Minister. A number of traditional Australian and British churches also retain a benediction but varying from week to week, depending on the Biblical passage recited.

³⁵⁹ This board is affixed to the side wall near the stage inside the GRS chapel building. I have already made description of services at GRS (Case Study 1) and Libmanan (Case Study 2). The second part is actually the main worship service. The first part is the preceding Bible study hour but regarded as part of the worship by some.

³⁶⁰ Churches of Christ have often been called “The People of the Book.” Thomas Campbell coined the saying “Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent.” See [Campbell], *Declaration*.

Christ has tri-fold Bible readings: Old Testament, Gospel, and Epistle. Likewise, other Scriptures would be interspersed in the service such as a call to worship, during communion, and for a benediction. The American churches have tended to be more informal but still have Scripture readings for an introit, during communion, before the offering, and before the sermon.³⁶¹

Table 20b: Service programme board at GRS Church of Christ (English Translation)

Service Programme	Date
First Part	Second Part
Call to Worship	Songs of Praises
Call to Worship Song	Bible Reading
Doxology	Special Numbers
Opening Prayer	Message
Worship Song	Song for Communion
Greeting through Verses	Reading and Prayer
Reading the Scripture	Distribution of the Elements
Songs	Free-will Offering
Bible Study	Prayer
Repeating	Song for Benediction
Announcements	Benediction
Prayer	3 Fold Amen

On a number of evenings during January and February 2008, I held discussions with Gani and Karen about the worship, concentrating on the communion time and the testimony time. Reflecting 1 Corinthians 11:23–32, Gani said that anyone who had been baptized and was part of God’s family, the church, should be able to partake of communion. He felt that those who partake ought to do so in a worthy manner and that we should have communion every time we want to remember the death of Jesus Christ. It should be weekly, he believed, because of the teachings of Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 11. Karen added, “Every first day of the week and at other worship celebrations.” Gani deemed the reason for partaking was “because we want to follow what Jesus did before his crucifixion” and we want to remember him while Karen thought that it was in remembrance of what Christ did and a command from the Bible. I inquired of Gani about the meaning of the Lord’s Supper for him. He used the word remember and its derivatives constantly. His list included:

³⁶¹ Stone, *Minister*, 199, encourages the same.

1. Fellowship with God
2. Remembering his [Jesus] death on the cross
3. We proclaim the Lord's death until he comes—1 Corinthians 11:26
4. We remember God's love for us
5. We want to give him thanks of what he did for us. He paid for our sin.
6. To remember the forgiveness of sins—Matthew 26:28
7. To remember the bread as the body and [the] cup is the blood of Jesus.³⁶²

When I asked, why the minister does not lead in the communion, I received an emphatic “No!”³⁶³ Reflecting a belief in the priesthood of all believers, Gani maintained that every Christian could lead the communion as long as he has the right attitude. Qualifications that he listed included a worthy manner, a good example both inside and outside the church, belief in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, and a healthy fear of God.

Howard E. Short points out that there is probably a greater agreement as to the meaning and purpose of the Lord's Supper than there is for any other doctrine or practice in the Restoration Movement.³⁶⁴ The Agos communion service had at least nine points that are standard to Churches of Christ: snippets of liturgy; simple yet somber; an expectation of decency and order; appeal to the New Testament; centrality to worship; weekly observance; led by the elders; a primary theological understanding of remembrance; and a triple focus—past, present, and future. Despite the general aversion to liturgy, there are always some oddments of it, although relatively informal ones, particularly seen in the reading of at least one of the Biblical accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper. The Communion segment at Agos was simple but the “McDonaldization” that John Drane laments is not quite applicable.³⁶⁵ Twenty-five years earlier, Eugene Johnson bewailed that congregations “mar the symbolism of the body by offering the people pre-cut, commercial, unleavened bread” but there is very much a difference between Drane's

³⁶² Compilation is mine but the numbering and wording is Gani's—with a little help from Karen.

³⁶³ To say no directly is very unusual for a Filipino. See Roces, 30–32.

³⁶⁴ Howard E. Short, *Doctrine and Thought of the Disciples of Christ* (St. Louis, Mo: Christian Board of Publication, 1951), 33.

³⁶⁵ See Murch, *Manual*, 64–76, for orders of service which are a little more structured and Drane, *The McDonaldization of the Church: Spirituality, Creativity, and the Future of the Church* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2000), 96–97.

Britain and Gani's Bicol.³⁶⁶ Nelson cannot normally afford to take his family to Jollibee, the Filipino slightly down-market version of McDonalds. McDonalds is part of the Filipino dream of Americanization and an improvement, not a rationalization.³⁶⁷ The simplicity of the Agos communion service matches their lifestyle and their theology. The minimalism also avoids many of the problems raised by Lamin Sanneh.³⁶⁸ Speaking mostly about the Roman Catholic Church in Africa, Phillip Tovey notes that the missionaries exported "a total package of Christianity and culture" so that little was changed from the home country but there was a problem: the acceptance of the religion by Africans. He goes on to note attempts at contextualization by the Catholic Church particularly since the Second Vatican Council.³⁶⁹ The communion segment at Agos was noticeably more subdued than much of the rest of the service, aided by the seriousness with which Churches of Christ uphold the communion plus the highlight of the gruesome fact of the crucifixion. Despite the spontaneity of much of the service, there was a sense of decency and order at the communion time in the Agos church. Various members of the congregation walked in and out during the rest of the service but not during the Lord's Supper segment as everyone but the servers sat down. There also was far less talking and whispering during this time for the whole church was at prayer. Even though different elders preside each week and different servers serve, there is effort to ensure that all flows smoothly.

³⁶⁶ Johnson, *Plea*, 85.

³⁶⁷ The McDonalds Restaurant franchises have definite advantages over most other eating establishments in the Philippines, especially in rural areas. McDonalds has paved parking areas, spacious and well-lit buildings, always spotlessly clean, properly air-conditioned, clean, functional, and equipped toilets, and better hamburgers than those available in the small roadside eateries. There are only three McDonalds in Bicol, two of which are in malls. A point that Cannell does not make but could easily have done, is that her "those that have nothing" in Naga City where two of the McDonalds are located, who, while they may not think that McDonald's is not real food would gladly participate in all the American accoutrements if they were given the opportunity. See Cannell, 20.

³⁶⁸ Lamin Sanneh. *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989).

³⁶⁹ Phillip Tovey. *Inculturation of Christian Worship: Exploring the Eucharist* (Aldershot, Hants.: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 107–129.

The appeal is always back to a simple New Testament basis as the pattern set by Alexander Campbell and the Restoration Movement has continued to agree.³⁷⁰ It is standard to read a Bible passage such as 1 Corinthians 11:23–27, for the elder to make a few remarks about a particular facet of the Scripture passage that he read, and then, as he begins to distribute the bread and the cup to articulate, “Do this in remembrance of me.”³⁷¹ In general, Churches of Christ have not seen any reason to believe that the Lord’s Supper has any heredity other than being begun by Jesus himself, thus disagreeing with H. Lietzmann’s thought that the Lord’s Supper was deeply rooted in Hellenistic practice and with J. Jeremias and M. Thurian in seeing Old Testament roots. However, they thoroughly approve Joseph Ratzinger’s point that the Last Supper has past, present, and future aspects.³⁷² While Dunn’s interpretation of the New Testament background would be seen as unnecessarily complicated, there would be a resonance with William Barclay’s thought that the Lord’s Supper had begun in New Testament times from a bare simplicity but had been transformed by the church over the centuries into elaborate splendour.³⁷³ The communion table stands in the centre front of the platform as it is the focus of attention, reflecting the common Church of Christ understanding that the Lord’s Supper is the centre of the worship service.³⁷⁴ William Robinson asserts that Churches of Christ have, throughout their history, made the Lord’s Table central without denigrating the power of preaching. He continues, “With Churches of Christ, then, the chief service on every Lord’s Day is the Lord’s Supper; and in such services the Lord’s Table is centrally placed.”³⁷⁵ The communion table itself is in no

³⁷⁰ See Campbell, *Christian System*, 305, 311, 325, 327, 329–331 and for examples, De Welt, *Church*, 373–385, Leggett, *Ideal*, 9–15, James A. Garfield, “What We Stand For,” and Lynn Gardner, “Who Are We” in Sam E. Stone, *Simply Christians; New Testament Christianity in the 21st century* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company, 2004), 71–72. This is one of the hallmarks of the Restoration Movement.

³⁷¹ Again see Murch, *Manual*, 64–76.

³⁷² H. Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl* (Bonn, 1926), 223, J. Jeremias, *Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu* (Göttingen, 1960), 229–246, and M. Thurian, *Eucharistie, Einheit am Tisch des Herrn* (Mainz-Stuttgart, 1963, 15–26 and 125–167. These and his own points are quoted in Joseph Ratzinger, “Is the Eucharist a Sacrifice?” in Hans Küng, ed., *Why Priests?*, trans. by John Cumming (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co, 1972), 75–77.

³⁷³ Dunn, *Unity*, 161–173 and William Barclay, *The Lord’s Supper* (London: SCM Press, 1967), 100–103.

³⁷⁴ Murch, *Manual*, 63.

³⁷⁵ Robinson, *What*, 87.

way understood to be sacred and is moved if desired.³⁷⁶ The Lord's Supper is always celebrated weekly in Churches of Christ.³⁷⁷ Frederick Kershner, at both agreement and variance with Grollenberg, says:

This is important if we regard the Lord's Supper as the essential ordinance for keeping alive and maintaining the organization of the church. If observed, without exception, each week, the Eucharist will keep the church alive, even when there are only a few scattered disciples without a regular minister.³⁷⁸

In contradiction to Grollenberg from the beginning, Churches of Christ have never reserved an exclusive privilege for the preacher to lead in communion and so today it is normal that an elder and not the minister officiates.³⁷⁹ They wholeheartedly agree with Edward Schillebeeckx's assessment that in the New Testament, there is no special problem as to who should preside. He continues that it is only later in the course of history that "the link between community and ministry is narrowed down to an inner bond between priesthood and eucharist."³⁸⁰ Likewise, Churches of Christ concur with Barclay: "In the New Testament itself there is no indication that it was the special privilege or duty of anyone to lead the worshipping fellowship in the Lord's Supper." He also maintains that in the early period of the church after New Testament times, the same is true with the exception of Ignatius.³⁸¹ The words, "Do

³⁷⁶ For example, in the Charters Towers Church of Christ in North Queensland, the table is moved to the side even for a morning service, in order to view a baptism being performed.

³⁷⁷ The only exception I have ever known was when, after a flood disaster relief distribution, 300 people were in attendance for the Sunday morning service instead of the usual thirty or forty. The minister, from a Baptist background, omitted the Lord's Supper. He was relieved of his position not long after that. So central is this to Church of Christ thinking that elders often take communion each week to shut-ins. See R. Milligan, *Scheme of Redemption* (Nashville Tennessee: Gospel Advocate, 1975), 439–440, L. D. Anderson, *What we Believe* (Forth Worth, Texas: Marvin D. Evans Printing, 1957), 107–108, De Welt, *Church*, 384–385, and B. A. Abbott, *The Disciples: An Interpretation* (St. Louis, Missouri: Bethany Press, 1924), 141–142.

³⁷⁸ Frederick D. Kershner, *The Restoration Handbook* (Dallas, Texas: Bible Book Store, 1918), 58 and Grollenberg, 1. Kershner is unusual in that he refers to the Lord's Supper as the Eucharist. The preferred terms in Churches of Christ are the Lord's Supper, the Lord's Table, Communion, or the breaking of bread.

³⁷⁹ Grollenberg, 1; Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell Embracing a View of the Origin, Progress and Principles of the Religious Reformation which he Advocated*. (Indianapolis, Indiana: Religious Book Service, 1977), 2:384; and Johnson, *Duly*, 29.

³⁸⁰ Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry: A case for change* (London: SCM Press, 1981), 30.

³⁸¹ Barclay, *Lord's Supper*, 102. He quotes Ignatius from *To the Ephesians*, 6.1.

this in remembrance of me” are invariably spoken.³⁸² All in the Restoration Movement understand Communion as being a memorial as there is no sense of a real presence and it is not recognized to be a sacrament in Augustine’s sense of a visible sign of an invisible grace and so the definitions by the Fourth Lateran Council, Thomas Aquinas, and the Council of Trent are not accepted in Churches of Christ.³⁸³ There is no belief in a sacrifice upon an altar or in the idea of *ex opera operato* and there is no the acceptance of the Westminster Confession or the World Council of Churches attempts to find an ecumenical consensus by combining everyone’s thoughts and ideas.³⁸⁴ Churches of Christ are uncomfortable with Zwingli’s phrases such as “feed our hungry souls” and “eat the flesh and drink the blood” yet, most Church of Christ would shrink back from an exclusive bare memorialism of Anabaptists like Balthasar Hübmaier.³⁸⁵ LeRoy Lawson would speak for most in the Restoration Movement when he states that the Lord’s Supper is a memorial, plus a thanksgiving, plus a fellowship, plus a celebration of hope.³⁸⁶ For a Church of Christ communion service, there is a triple focus—remembering of the past, an application for the present, and a looking to the future. On the occasion that Nelson gave the communion meditation in January at Agos, he concentrated mainly on the first two but Gani’s summation of the meaning of all the Lord’s Supper reflected all three—the

³⁸² The more traditional services in Britain and occasionally a congregation like Hopwood Memorial Christian Church in Milligan College, Tennessee, will use “the words of institution,” reflecting the understanding of theologians like William Robinson and Dean E. Walker. See, for example, Robinson’s *Essays on Christian Unity*, <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/wrobinson/eocu/EOCU00A.HTM>; Walker, *adventuring; De Welt, Church*, 373–385 and J. Vernon Jacobs, *What We Believe* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing, 1963), 30–32. Alexander Campbell gives a similar understanding in *Christian System*, 265–292. *The Christian System* was originally published in 1836. The most theological treatise from a Church of Christ point of view is probably in Cottrell, *Faith*, 447–457.

³⁸³ Augustine (Bishop of Hippo), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf104.txt>, XIX:11. For a quick summation of various views on the sacraments and the Lord’s Supper, see James F. White, *Documents of Christian Worship: Descriptive and Interpretative Sources* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), 180–213.

³⁸⁴ See, for examples: Knight, Kevin. “Sacraments,” *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13295a.htm>; Questions 91–97, *Shorter Catechism*, [The Westminster Confession of Faith.], *The Confession of Faith: the Larger and Shorter Catechisms with the Scripture Proofs at Large Together with the Sum of Saving Knowledge* (Inverness: Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 1958), 313–315; and H. R. McAdoo, *Modern Eucharistic Agreement* (London: S. P. C. K., 1973).

³⁸⁵ R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, trans. and eds., *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed* (London: Collins, 1975), 117–118 and White, *Documents*, 201–202.

³⁸⁶ LeRoy Lawson, *The New Testament Church: then and now* (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Standard Publishing Company, 1981), 77–85.

death and resurrection of Christ in the past, the love and forgiveness that the Christian experiences now, and the expectation that this will continue “until he comes” again. The natural focus is on remembering the crucifixion and its benefits for the believer in the present but the resurrection and the second coming are also included.

I was interested to follow-up on the Testimony Time segment in the worship service as I have not seen this as a regular part of any Church of Christ service. Gani could not remember from where he had received the idea to introduce this item into the service. Past Church of Christ thinkers such as William Robinson would have disapproved in their day but its inclusion is in line with the common Church of Christ thought to be progressive in method but conservative in doctrine.³⁸⁷ Gani believed the testimony time did give confidence to others who were in the same situation and it did encourage the members to share about their Christian life and about what God was doing in for them. “They see there is a God who help[s] in time of need.” It helped people feel that they belonged, he added. As a Biblical basis, he quoted Hebrews 10:25 and Karen added Matthew 10:32. The segment reminded me of Salvation Army testimonials but Agos was devoid of lavish assertions of the Holy Spirit’s direct working and had no sense of the necessity of such testimonials to prove God’s approval or salvation. Although a few repeat some of the same things, Gani did not think that the members ever abused their time speaking for they had given everyone a time limit of three to five minutes. Karen interjected that the congregation were not conscious of time anyway. If one of the testimony speakers was lengthy, they simply reduced the number who spoke.

Small groups

The second aspect that Gani said was important for his ministry to be successful was his small groups. Guest reports that St Michael’s in York has an “attenuation of commitment” because many of the congregation is unable or unwilling to engage in church activities that make demands on time outside of

³⁸⁷ Robinson, *What*, 88–90.

Sunday morning worship.³⁸⁸ In contrast to St Michael's, Gani's emphasis on small groups requires commitment beyond Sundays. The groups meet at various times and places throughout the week. There are at least thirteen groups operating at the time of writing. Gani leads at least two—one for the elders and another for the youth, Karen is involved in one for women, and the other groups are led by the elders.

On 13th December 2007, I attended one of the cell groups of the Agos church. I deliberately chose this one as Gani was leading it and I declared my intention to be present only a little in advance so that no extra preparation could or would be done. I requested permission of Gani to do research and take notes in the meeting. When I was welcomed at the beginning of the meeting, I once more reiterated my purpose of research and those present indicated that they were more than pleased to assist and be a part. All nine present were men, including myself, Gani as leader, and his two brothers. The group met on the Gonzales compound in the *sala* of Monica, although she herself was not present. There was one small electric light, a bamboo *sala* set, and a number of plastic monoblock chairs. The men dressed very casually in shorts, tee-shirts, and *tsinelas*.

The 7.30 pm meeting began with the “good news/bad news” as each man recounted some of the good and bad things that had happened to him that week. Nelson, expressively delighted that he had received his thirteenth month bonus from the fire department, was looking forward to taking his children to Jollibee restaurant as a special treat for Christmas.³⁸⁹ Dan, uncertain how much longer he would live due to his kidney problems, was grateful that he had been able to sleep more in the past week. The group digressed into a discussion about the advantages of dying as a Christian. Gani then led a devotional, beginning by asking each man his initial reaction if his child or sibling wanted to bring someone who had no legs or arms or was blind to the house to live. Most admitted that they would initially be very apprehensive, but on further reflection would accept the person as someone who was

³⁸⁸ Guest in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 75.

³⁸⁹ While many Filipinos buy Christmas presents, most are small and simple. It is not unknown for students at ICCM to have never received a Christmas present.

not disabled.³⁹⁰ Reflecting on John 3:16, Gani reminded his hearers that God's love for us was unconditional and therefore we should not just love those who love us. Finally, each man prayed around the circle, echoing the previous items of the meeting. Each was requested to particularly pray for the one sitting on his right while a special time of prayer was had for Dan and his health.

In the various interviews, Gani gave me a catalogue of reasons, some of which overlapped, as to why the small groups were important and what he felt that they achieved:

1. Very effective in soul winning.
2. Some don't come to the chapel building yet but through the small groups, the church has contact with these people and a good opportunity to share the good news through and into their houses.
3. We build bridges instead of walls to the community.
4. Cells makes you spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially strong.
5. We build strong relationships with them [those who attend]. They build strong relationships with God.
6. [The groups are] touching the heart of people.
7. For those who come who are not Christian, we introduce Christ to them, to win their soul—Acts 2:46–47.
8. Deepen the relationship of [i.e. with] each other.
9. Train them into Christ—Matthew 28:18–20. Disciple them.
10. They pray for each other.
11. Strengthen the members and the leaders.
12. We follow [the example of] the early church in 1 Corinthians 16:19.
13. [The cell groups were a source of] new visitors weekly in the church.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ The addition of a disabled person to a household brings huge financial and time-consuming responsibilities to that family. There are few or no government-funded services or financial aid programs. There are virtually no sheltered workshops, occupational therapists, or the like. Usually, one of the children has to cease their education to stay at home to care for a disabled or elderly relative. The disabled person is often condemned to stay at home as mobility is very limited due to no wheelchair accessibility.

³⁹¹ Again the compilation and the final numbering are mine but Gani and Karen gave their answers in bullet-point fashion, often numbering them off. Wording is theirs and order is according to when it was first mentioned. Repetitions are omitted.

Prayer

The third emphasis that Gani is doing in order to have success in his ministry is prayer. Simon Coleman notes that it is “all too easy to concentrate on the obvious, visible activities such as Sunday morning services, and forget the more personal forms of piety that might be practiced in smaller and more intimate circles.”³⁹² Gani emphasizes prayer both in church corporate meetings and by his own personal example. He has his own personal devotions at 5am most mornings and a family devotional time in the evenings. His morning devotions last fifteen to thirty minutes and include prayer, Bible reading, and reflection, or, as he put it, “Thinking what the application is all about for the church and for my personal life.” For his Bible reading, he systematically reads through the Bible, choosing one book at a time and reading it from beginning to end. He usually reads at least one chapter per day but he does not use any additional helps. The other two members of his nuclear family also have their family devotion time. One cannot but be a little moved when, through the bedroom wall, one hears Harriette, his daughter, in her high-pitched small girl voice a little impatiently, encouraging them, “Daddy, Mommy, let’s pray!” Their time is usually in the evening in their bed just before they retire.

Some time ago, Gani had suggested to all the other EARM members that they likewise emphasize prayer. A special sub-committee with Mel Pel as chairman was set up. Gani thought that most of the fourteen preachers or so in EARM were doing personal daily devotions. Their prayer concerns included special prayer times before the government elections, problems between a few of the preachers, and what they called the Eight Pillars of Society—media, education, business, poverty, economy, family, community, and country. They concentrate on one of these eight each week in rotation.

When I enquired from them why they believed that prayer is important, Gani and Karen again gave me a list:

1. We hear God’s direction receive his protection and support daily.
2. As children of God, we need to communicate with him.
3. It’s a way of asking for something that we want from him—Matthew 7:7 and 1 John 5:14.

³⁹² Simon Coleman, in Cameron et al., 52.

4. It strengthen our relationship with him.
5. God enjoys listening to us.
6. He [God] expresses his desire to help us—Matthew 11:28.
7. My family follow my example. We pray together every day.

When they missed praying, Gani said he felt upset and ashamed while Karen added guilty and “I’m out of patience when I missed praying.”³⁹³ Gani thought that prayer works because “God wants to tell us what things we do not know” and because “He answers us when we pray—Jeremiah 33:3.”

I asked Gani if he had a particular personal example of prayer working for him. Karen interjected, “I prayed for the healing of Harriette because her platelet is not normal at that time and it works.”³⁹⁴ They further explained that was a reference to an occasion when Harriette was ill and they took her to the doctor. After a blood test, it was discovered that she had a low platelet count. It was suspected that she might have dengue, so, Gani and Karen prayed and returned for a second blood test after a number of hours. The platelet count was normal.

Karen stated that her daily prayer times started when she was about nineteen years old and she saw the regular prayer habits of some members at church. She said that she envied their devotion in prayer and tried to copy their prayer diary. The hardest thing about prayer for Gani was waking up early in the morning. Karen confessed that she still struggles with being consistent in her prayer habits.

Reflection

Gani’s mechanisms for church growth are centered in worship, small groups, and prayer. To paraphrase Ray Anderson, Gani has a ministry that walks as well as talks.³⁹⁵ Gani understands them to be creators of success and his congregation thinks likewise. These successes may or may not be successes for Hopewell, this writer, or McGavran, but that may not be important. His worship, small groups, and emphasis

³⁹³ I understand Karen to mean that she was short-tempered and did not have patience as she ought when she had not prayed.

³⁹⁴ Dengue hemorrhagic fever is a life-threatening disease transmitted by mosquito bites. There have been a number of recent epidemics in the Philippines. If the platelet count continues to drop, the treatment is a blood transfusion. The cost for this is about P40,000.00 or £500. Gani and Karen could not afford that. See: “WHO: Dengue,” <http://www.who.int/topics/dengue/en/>.

³⁹⁵ Anderson, *Shape*, 7 and 12.

on prayer are meeting at least some of the needs of that congregation as it works for them. Unlike Lyall's young man doing his chaplaincy work for the first time, Gani, despite his limitations, has something to say to his parishioners that makes Christianity relevant and meaningful for them.³⁹⁶

Gani's church, with its innovations aimed at success seems to have retained its historical denominational identity. This brief study has not examined every aspect of perceived Church of Christ life, beliefs, or practices, but, as seen, Gani could add the segment of testimony time while retaining an essentially Church of Christ communion service. Cheryl Wissmann showed in her thesis how the Tagalog Churches of Christ had transitioned from hymns to choruses and yet remained Church of Christ.³⁹⁷ The Church of Christ adage that they are "progressive in method but conservative in doctrine" seems to hold true.

Guest, in his reflections on the Anglican church of St. Michael-le-Belfrey in York, England, delineates three things he learned from his study.³⁹⁸ The first is that beliefs and values are often heterogeneous even within evangelical congregations. I did not set out to study the beliefs and values of the Agos congregation itself but from the discussion and beliefs of Gani and Karen, Guest's assertion here is certainly true, although maybe for different reasons than what he intimated. I expect that beliefs and values at Agos are heterogeneous because a majority in the congregation are new Christians. Guest alludes to St Michael's historic passion for evangelism plus their many new members but in my opinion, he does not give enough consideration to maturation in the faith. Those who stay within the church change their thinking and lifestyles over time. One of Gani's main goals in small groups is to train the newcomers into Christ or to disciple them. Gani operates on the assumption that his new members need to grow in their lifestyles and values.

Guest's second finding is that the "teaching imparted and learned within congregations may be understood in part as a response to specific circumstances of that community."³⁹⁹ Here I prefer Peter Collins' explanation in his ethnographic

³⁹⁶ Lyall, 22.

³⁹⁷ Wissmann, "Worship."

³⁹⁸ Guest in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 71–84.

³⁹⁹ Guest in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 82.

research into a Quaker congregation also in northern England where he argues that their narratives contextualize on three levels: prototypical or individual, vernacular or locally defined, and canonic or as ascribed by the denomination.⁴⁰⁰ I see Gani using all three, but at times he will particularly fuse the individual and the local as he is ministering with his own home congregation. He, as a Filipino whose existence is defined in terms of the clan rather than the individual—the eggs fried in a skillet—would have trouble differentiating between the two at times. But the point is that he and his congregation still have contextualized in all three. His drive for success is determined by his requirement for justification to continue in his ministry. The vernacular was at the forefront in dealing with the devastation of the typhoon. The exercise of the communion reflects the canonic. All three must be recognized as contributing factors in what is done and all three should be able to be harmonized for progress, change, and success.

In addition, I suggest, that two levels of narrative be added. The fourth I would call the national or the societal for I think that Collin's individual level needs to be divided into two and distinct recognition be given not just to the individual factors but also the society ones. Gani, his people, and their narratives, cannot be understood unless he is contexted as a Filipino from Bicol. I would think that there could be identified an element of quintessential Englishness—or in the case of the relationship between Collins and the person whom he calls Michael—a Welshness in his Quaker congregation. The fifth level I propose distinguishes the metanarratives that transcend geography and probably to some extent time. Universals such as a conception of God, his relationship to man, who we are, sin, salvation, where we have come from, and where we are going seem not to fit within Collin's construction. What a group does and how they may make sense of these will be tempered by the other four levels but I believe there is a need for delineating at a universal level for there is an all-human component in the stories we tell. For further consideration, I propose that the multifarious nature of all five levels be recognized

⁴⁰⁰ Peter Collins, "Congregations, Narratives and Identity: A Quaker Case Study," in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 99–112.

and that to varying degrees all five be integrated to achieve harmony, progress, and commitment.

Finally, I return to Guest's myth of evangelical success that says the members perceive success in numbers, activity, and practical commitment. Over and above Hopewell's understanding of the church growth movement confining itself to program effectiveness, reliable formulas, and internal operation of the church, Gani conforms to Guest's understanding of the goals of evangelical churches to be numerous, expect active participation, and elicit practical commitment.⁴⁰¹ Gani wants souls saved and he wants bigger numbers. He delights in activity around the church and he despairs when his members are still involved in the vices.⁴⁰² Gani carries out a ministry beyond the building and the congregation in the *barangay*. Thus, Guest's definition of a "successful" evangelical church is not a myth for Gani.

In this chapter, I have considered the three questions that Gani specifically raised but they may be surface issues rather than the real challenges that need deeper research. As Swinton suggests, often the story is a progressive unfolding for there is a constant process of interpretation and finding deeper understanding. The presenting *mga problema* may be just a fog that hides the reality.⁴⁰³ Gani may still have challenges in the future with ministering in his home congregation because of finances and the issue of integrating non-family members. Despite the history, accreditation is only a contentious issue if one wants to make it so there may be a hidden agenda for those who do. The reality is that an unaccredited college is an illegal school and thus lacks integrity and credibility. For the preachers who were denied the benefit of accreditation, it remains acutely problematic because they and their families are sometimes destitute. In the past, accredited colleges accepted some credits from an unaccredited college, but this is seldom the case now. Finally, we have seen that Gani has grown his church and has found success centreing on worship, small groups, and prayer. Hopewell and others may disagree with the pursuit for success but what they think may not be relevant. As Ray Anderson says,

⁴⁰¹ Hopewell, 23–25.

⁴⁰² I will give more discussion on the Filipino concept of vices in the next chapter.

⁴⁰³ Swinton and Mowat, 28ff.

theology needs to walk as well as talk. Here it may be a case of academic theology suffering from the ultimate irrelevance—it has nothing to do with the outcome of the game.⁴⁰⁴ Gani knows what he wants and that need not be restricted by others' opinions. His church is a world apart from Europe but it does not matter for it works for Gani and his parishioners in rural Bicol. The real challenge may not be whether outsiders think Gani and his Agos church a success as much as how can it continue to be a success for them.

⁴⁰⁴ As quoted above, Hopewell, 23–26 and Anderson, *Shape*, 7 and 12.

Chapter 4

The Complexities of Poverty in Ministry

A Case Study with Juan (Jun) A. Bataller Jr.

Introduction

The persistent problem of poverty

While the issue of poverty is well discussed in academia, *walang pera* is a constant phrase on the lips of all the ministers and so could not be ignored in this thesis. As I attempted to research for this chapter, I found myself needing to reevaluate and change directions on a few occasions. I began the case study with a preacher whom I shall call Charlie who shall remain anonymous for reasons that will become obvious below. Then I added the second man, Juan A. Bataller Jr., who is always known as Jun and who, by coincidence, lives and works in the same town of Libmanan as Mel and Moriel Pel. My interest was deprivation of a variety of basic needs and powerlessness as expected by a number of authors but other than experiencing material deficiency, Jun did not particularly feel particularly deprived. I needed to do theology from below and let the pastoral preacher's perspective be heard. I needed to consider the anger of Charlie, Mylyn's family circumstances, and a number of Jun's Filipino and spiritual perceptions. Although some of the macro standpoints cannot be avoided, the concentration will be on personal poverty. As I write this, within minutes yesterday my wife and I saw a deranged young lady walking naked and a man who, less than an hour before, had been gunned down on his tricycle—both on one of the national highways and both in broad daylight. Poverty and corruption must remain shocking and repulsive to each one of us.

In this chapter, I argue that one's perceptions of poverty needs to be complexified and that some negative spiritual aspects that poverty may bolster should be guarded against. I specify several personal and Filipino attributes that I believe need to be factored into any consideration of alleviation of poverty and finally, I highlight a number of issues for ministry in light of poverty.

As in the other case studies, information comes from two sources: completed questionnaires and personal interviews. Charlie filled out three questionnaires, attached as Appendices 2, 3 and 6.⁴⁰⁵ His wife, whom I shall call Bertha, also filled out Appendices 3 and 6 but they had no other written materials. More than with the other case studies, an interpreter was usually required. Sometimes Bertha acted as the translator and oftentimes, it was a consortium of other preachers, ICCM staff and students, and Bertha. When my interviewing with Charlie could not continue, Jun and his wife, Mylyn, were added. Jun answered the questionnaires attached as Appendices 6, 7, and 8.⁴⁰⁶ I found that Jun wrote extensively so two additional interviews were created for him but Mylyn did not complete any separate questionnaires. However, Jun and she talked as he filled in his questionnaire and she did add her comments in individual questions. Further, interviews were conducted mainly with Jun, usually at the Mabini Church of Christ meeting place with one major discussion at their house in May 2010 at which Mylyn was present.

The concept of poverty

Seebohm Rowntree's work was groundbreaking and Peter Townsend's various contributions cannot be overlooked.⁴⁰⁷ Of course no study of poverty would be complete without the contributions of the various Liberation theologians. Jayakumar Christian's overview of various perspectives on poverty is helpful but because of space constraints, I limit myself to just a few considerations.⁴⁰⁸ Bosch says that the poor "are probably at one and the same time victims of circumstances, practitioners of despised trades, *and* shady characters." He continues that "the wretched life of the poor is contrary to God's purposes, and Jesus has come to put an end to their misery." Later, in reference to the Gospel of Luke, Bosch comments that

⁴⁰⁵ Appendix 5 is the basis of much material in this chapter. Both Bertha and particularly Charlie wrote many of their answers in Tagalog. These have been mostly translated in this chapter.

⁴⁰⁶ In writing, Jun often either uses commas or no punctuation at all where a full stop is needed. I have taken the liberty to correct this. Otherwise, his English, including simple mistakes, is left uncorrected as in the rest of this thesis.

⁴⁰⁷ B. Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1910). See the bibliography for a number of Townsend's books.

⁴⁰⁸ Jayakumar Christian, *God of the Empty-Handed: Poverty, Power and the Kingdom of God* (Monrovia, California: MARC, 1999). See also Bosch, *Transforming*, 435–438.

Luke does not have just one sin, wealth, but that “each person has his or her specific sinfulness and enslavement.” Finally, he remarks that the non-poor are not excluded from God’s love.⁴⁰⁹

Joe Remenyi says,

Most agree that poverty means having insufficient money when money is needed, it means vulnerability arising from the inability to plan for the future with any degree of certainty, and it means standards of consumption that are below those that the community at large judges to be acceptable or adequate to sustain a full and meaningful life.

But Remenyi’s concept has a large drawback: poverty is allowed to be relative. The standard is whatever you want to make of it for the standard is set by “the community at large.” The community at large for this chapter is Filipinos and their common perception is that nearly all Filipinos are all poor.⁴¹⁰ The majority is in poverty but not all and some are not as poor as others; gradations in poverty are vital. Later, however, Remenyi does advocate that the poverty line should be set at a level that is equally applicable in rich first-world economies as it is in developing economies.⁴¹¹

The World Bank is widely known for its use of the baseline figure of \$2.00 a day per person as the criterion for measuring poverty. Originally, it advocated \$1.00 a day. This is relatively simple, easy to be grasped and understood, and relatively easy to measure. Therein lays its genius and therein is a very good reason to use it. But it too has considerable drawbacks: no social aspects are included; exchange rates change daily and significantly; and purchasing power varies not only from country to country but region to region and is subject also to seasonal and weather instabilities. Agricultural produce is cheapest where it is grown but generally processed goods are more expensive in the province. Costs usually escalate over time while the price of basic commodities like rice and oil has fluctuated wildly in recent years. There was absolutely no fresh produce other than a few *kamote* for sale in the Sipocot market for months after Typhoon Milenyo/Xangsane and then

⁴⁰⁹ Bosch, *Transforming*, 27, 28, 103, and 437.

⁴¹⁰ Cannell, 15.

⁴¹¹ Joe Remenyi, “Poverty and Development: The Struggle to Empower the Poor,” in Damien Kingsbury, et al, *Key Issues in Development* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 190 and 193.

Typhoon Durian/Reming. In the meantime, the \$2.00 a day remains static until someone decides to increase it to \$3.00 a day—or \$4.00 per day.⁴¹²

Ruth Lister thinks it is important to see both the non-material as well as the material manifestations of poverty. To her, the participatory subjective aspects should be complimentary to the “conventional, objective, technocratic” approaches to poverty that reduce it to measurable income and consumption. She suggests a “poverty wheel,” where, at the hub, is a “material core of unacceptable hardship” while the rim is represented by “relational/symbolic” aspects of poverty as experienced by those living in unacceptable material hardship. These relational/symbolic aspects include lack of voice, disrespect, humiliation, assault on dignity, low self-esteem, shame, stigma, powerlessness, denial of rights, and diminished citizenship.⁴¹³

From a global perspective, a number of recent books question the efficacy of giving aid. For example, with reference to Africa in particular and in contradiction to Bono, Bob Geldof, and Tony Blair, Dambisa Moyo argues that aid is “the disease of which it pretends to be the cure.” Those who receive aid, she maintains, are much worse off than before. Aid has made the poor poorer and economic growth slower. For her aid is a curse as it kills growth, encourages corruption, funds conflict, and discourages free enterprise. Rather, she would encourage following the Chinese example of large-scale direct investment in infrastructure and rapidly growing exports.⁴¹⁴

The reliability of statistics is the bane of everyone who cares to prepare or read them and so the *2011 Book of the Year Britannica*, for example, lists employment figures but there is no mention of underemployment or the black market. The Filipino population with access to safe drinking water is listed as 85% in 2002 but what do access and safe mean? Any Filipino who can avoid it will not drink city water because of amoeba and well water is seldom if ever tested.

⁴¹² See The World Bank, “Poverty headcount ratio at \$2 a day (PPP) (% of population),” <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.2DAY>.

⁴¹³ Ruth Lister, *Poverty* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004).

⁴¹⁴ Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid* (London: Penguin Books, 2009). See also Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). See also R. Glenn Hubbard and William Duggan, *The Aid Trap* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

Everyone will purchase bottled water if he or she is able but scandals abound of shoddy bottling practices. Literacy is listed for the Philippines as 92.6% but it is not infrequent for high school graduates to have a comprehension level of a third or fourth grade. It is a pleasure to deal with folk like Jun who are more articulate than that. The point is not to denigrate *Britannica* but to highlight that while official figures may be correct, they may conceal a vastly different reality.⁴¹⁵

Four books with a Filipino setting provided useful insights into the poverty of Jun. Guy Standing and Richard Szal prefer to talk about “basic needs.” Their categories include total income, expenditure by basic need category, demographic characteristics, occupational characteristics, employment status, nutritional intake, history of illness with work lost, educational characteristics, sources of water, sanitation facilities, housing characteristics and conditions, access to public transport and markets, and the amount and type of assets owned. Viv Grigg and Michael Duncan, both New Zealanders, made it their ministry to live among the poor in the same slums of Manila and recount their struggles in understanding poverty, offering various motifs and vignettes of individuals and circumstances. Grigg’s evaluation of the interrelationships of poverty and sin are disquieting while Duncan, as he emphasized, wrestled “to work *with* the poor rather than do things *for* the poor.” In what in one sense may be trite but in another fundamental, he reminds us that “how we perceive the poor will often determine how we treat them” and goes on to encourage understanding the poor beyond the popular conceptions such as happy, lazy, or unfortunate to include theological, psychological, and sociological categories.⁴¹⁶

Reference has already been made to Cannell, the fourth Filipino book, and her powerless poor who use their submission and poverty to moderate against powerlessness. Her research in Calabanga, Camarines Sur was in the same province as three of my case studies, including this one, albeit hers was twenty year earlier. In

⁴¹⁵ Thad King, ed., “World Data” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica 2011 Book of the Year*. Bautista, in Miranda-Feliciano, 14, states that 46% of primary school graduates are unable to read and write.

⁴¹⁶ Guy Standing and Richard Szal, *Poverty and Basic Needs: Evidence from Guyana and the Philippines* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1979), Viv Grigg, *Companions to the Poor*, rev. ed. (Monrovia, Calif.: MARC, 1990), and Michael Duncan, *Costly Mission: Following Christ into the slums* (Monrovia, California: MARC, 1996), particularly 21–22 and 50.

Cannell's opinion, economic conditions generally worsened over the twenty years prior to her research in 1989. However, some families seemed to fare significantly better in 1997, when she revisited, than in 1989 but the poorest still were very poor and there was still chronic incidence of diseases such as tuberculosis. In my experience, this continues to hold true but for two exceptions for the poorest. Now, virtually everyone has electricity—and thus television sets—and most have cellphones. Cannell concludes that being poor is to experience not being valued as a human being, enduring humiliation, disapproval and rejection, and being shamed. Almost all those among whom she lived classed themselves as the poor or “we who have nothing at all” and made a contrast to the rich or “those who have something.” In order to make ends meet, Filipinos will set up a small business like a *sari sari* store, give manicures, sell *merienda*, fruit or fish from house to house or by the roadside, do laundry, or offer themselves or their children as domestic workers in Manila. Even though superimposed on each other, there is different space for rich and poor in the *poblacion* of Naga City. The poor do not enter Naga's “glossy restaurants” but buy from the small vendors outside selling items such as *kamotes* and rice. The American restaurant food is not real food anyway as it is either served with no rice or only a small quantity and so it can only be counted as a snack as rice is the staple for the poor. Jokes and euphemisms play on the gap between aspiration and reality so that typhoon damage to houses, for example, is referred to as air-conditioning. Mediums are explicitly there to help the poor who cannot afford doctors and to be able to cure when hospital medicine will kill. Photographs, referred to by Cannell as a “fetish of transformation,” are prized consumer objects, and so the individual, in his or her best clothes and maybe with the most delicious food, has then become the temporary possessor of these things and so escapes being shamed. The way people who have a little more money decorate their houses also expresses their aspirations to distance themselves from poverty. In contrast to the traditional brown and light of bamboo and *nipa* constructions, folks choose bright (I would say gaudy) colors and solid cement floors. All are inclined to display items considered Western—picture calendars, plastic dolls, and anything electrical.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁷ The most noticeable of the glossy restaurants of Naga City probably are MacDonald's and Pizza

In an otherwise sterling research, Cannell's work raises two concerns. First, beyond all the problems of language barriers and different customs, one of the challenges of field research is endeavouring to get a clear perspective. In the Filipino context, it is imperative to ensure that the interviewee is telling the interviewer precisely what he or she actually believes rather than what the candidate thinks the interviewer wants to hear. Additionally, the interviewer must be mindful that the one being interviewed may be trying to manipulate the researcher to act. Commenting on the increased wealth of some in 1997 over 1989, Cannell reports that the new wealthy were expected to share part of their wealth via hospitality, loans, provision of work or move into being a good patron. To refuse such social obligations was to invite stringent criticism. It is unclear how much Cannell is aware that she was expected to be a part of this for her subjects would assume that in some way, she would be a patron. I am unsure how much was she being presumed upon and whether or not her Bicolanos were using Bautista's indirect form of communication. Cannell does recognize that individuals may exaggerate slightly their extent of poverty and also the existence of the patron-client relationships but, as with *hiya*, *supog*, or shame commented on earlier, relationship is not a strong word for her. Whereas Bautista calls *pakikisama* a core value, Cannell does not have relationship in either her glossary or index. Given that one of Cannell's themes is power, or lack thereof, a concern is raised when she states that practically every conversation "deals with the problem of powerlessness, especially through the jokes and laughter which are a constant part of daily talk."⁴¹⁸

Second, it is unfortunate that although Cannell deals extensively with aspects of religion and with a very devout Catholic population, she is reticent to consider strong motifs—such as morals, values, and sin—which would undoubtedly be in the

Hut both of which serve some rice. Anywhere in the Philippines, to go from a vehicle parked outside the establishment into or out of the restaurant one must encounter numerous individuals who will appreciate any left-over food but who never enter the business. As the poor cannot afford the latest technology and the high-cost drugs, consulting regular medical advice is a last resort. If they do go to a doctor, they will receive only sub-standard or incomplete health care and so not surprisingly, the poor equate hospital medicine as killing. Of course, since the time of Cannell's research the photographic industry has metamorphosed so that now anyone can take snapshots and short videos on a cellphone.

⁴¹⁸ Bautista, in Miranda-Feliciano, 3 and Cannell, 24 etc.

vocabulary and thought-process of her poor farmers. For example, she tells the incident about Mon who sold his *carabao* which was given to him as a wedding present from his in-laws, to pay for his mistress. In her seeking to understand what happened and talking to a number of women, it is highly unusual that Cannell does not report any moral disapproval of or personal judgement against Mon. Likewise is the stark contrast between the spiritual phenomena that Wilfredis Jacob found attributed to the Black Nazarene processions and Cannell's recount of "The funeral of the 'dead Christ'." Cannell's description is largely devoid of any personal religious experience or popular devotion. She thinks the main emotional experience is pity but in my experience, this is far too simplified. Given the theocentricity of Filipino life and the "natural involve[ment of] his whole person in any kind of activity," it is hard to understand why strong moral motifs are not reflected in Cannell's narrative.⁴¹⁹

Filipino poverty

To set the poverty of Jun and the other preachers of Bicol in perspective, various of the fairly unique or noteworthy elements of Filipino poverty are noted here. The Philippines has the world's twelfth largest population. The United Kingdom, and the Philippines had the same number of people, a little less than sixty million in the early 1980s, but while the British figure has increased only slightly, the Philippines continues to grow rapidly, increasing to nearly 100 million now. Nearly two-thirds (64.6%) of the Filipino population are under age twenty-nine.⁴²⁰

In any of the social and poverty indicators, the Philippines is about in the middle so that as many countries report better statistics as those who give poorer. The nominal per capita income in 2009 was \$1,790 with \$3,540 being the Purchasing Power Parity. The Philippines has a little social protection for some old age, sickness and maternity, and work injury but no unemployment or family

⁴¹⁹ See Cannell, 21 and 165–172 particularly. Again, there is no reference to morals, values, or sin in either Cannell's glossary or index. See also Wilfredis B. Jacob, "Religious Experience in the Quiapo Black Nazarene Devotion," in Leonardo N., Mercado, ed., *Filipino Religious Psychology* (Tacloban City, Philippines: Divine Word University Publications, 1977), 82–105; Gregorio, *Philosophy*, 120; Jocano, *Working with Filipinos: A Cross-Cultural Encounter* (Metro Manila: PUNLAD Research House, 1999), 61–71; and Bautista, in Miranda-Feliciano, 5.

⁴²⁰ *Encyclopaedia Britannica 2011*, 775.

allowances. The one indicator where the Philippines may fare more favourably is the number of cellphones per head of population. As to be expected, figures deviate widely on what percentages of Filipinos live in poverty. Purdy states that 46.4% exist on less than \$2.00 a day while Mosley asserts that 60% were below poverty and that this figure was relatively consistent across the decades.⁴²¹ Regardless, there are more people in poverty in the Philippines than the entire population of every country of Europe except Germany and Russia; that number is growing rapidly, and the majority of them are young.

Filipino poverty is very much shaped by its past for, as Karnow points out, the Philippines is “still a feudal society dominated by an oligarchy of rich dynasties which has evolved from one of the world’s longest continuous spans of Western imperial rule.”⁴²² William Henry Scott gives a good picture of Filipino society before the colonial period but important for us is that society was divided into social ranks of the *datus*, freemen, and commoners with the *datu*’s power in relationships and how much *utang-na-loob* he had. A strong *datu* was bonded to no-one but he had numerous dependents to whom he distributed patronage, providing them protection and in return, they provided him with labour. Egalitarianism was not and still is not expected. A change in economics and power meant that *datus* did rise to and fall from power.⁴²³ The 300 years of Spanish rule converted the entire populace of lowlanders to Catholicism, making the Philippines 94% Christian, an anomaly in Asia, but economically, the common people experienced heavy taxes on farming, extraction of tribute, forced labour, and forced purchase of produce all of which stunted productivity and population growth.⁴²⁴

Compared to other conquests, the Americans, even though patronizing, were benevolent, feeling the white man’s burden to their little brown brother.⁴²⁵ The

⁴²¹ *Encyclopedia of World Poverty* and Mosley, 40.

⁴²² Karnow, 25.

⁴²³ Scott, *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain and Other Essays in Philippine History* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1982) and *Prehispanic*.

⁴²⁴ Cannell, 5.

⁴²⁵ This is a reference to Rudyard Kipling’s poem, “The White Man’s Burden” and remarks made by William Howard Taft (Governor General of the Philippines 1901–1904 and later twenty-seventh President of USA). See “Little Brown Brother.”
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Brown_Brother.

Americans left six enduring footprints on the Filipino society and its economics: a universal education, the English language, the American legal and political system, an American-style health system, a pro-American worldview, and a continuing economic and defense dependence.⁴²⁶ The Filipino perception of Americans is just as important as their actual legacy so that, despite the elite's dislike of the former American bases at Clark and Subic Bay, General Douglas MacArthur (and his "I shall return!") remains one of the three Filipino heroes and defining historical events.⁴²⁷ America is imagined as the place of power, wealth, cleanliness, beauty, glamour, and enjoyment so that anything that is considered to be luxury is thought to be American, even if made in the Orient. The desire of every Filipino is to possess these luxury goods, imitate Americans, gain the supposed power, and emigrate there if possible.⁴²⁸

Corruption is no novelty in the Philippines. Local feeling was that President Estrada should be removed not because he was corrupt but because he was too corrupt. Cannell describes payments made to the family of a poor person by the murderer so that the murderer is never taken to court. Francisco Zulueta and Elda Maglaya assert that "Corruption gives emphasis to existing inequalities by providing more power and opportunities to those who are already powerful."⁴²⁹ Another problem is that no-one has ever been sent to jail for not paying taxes.⁴³⁰ As the Philippines is recognized as being one of the worst countries in the world in which to conduct business, foreign investors are wary of corruption, an unstable legal system, violence, and bureaucracy.⁴³¹

⁴²⁶ Karnow, 14–15.

⁴²⁷ The other two are Ferdinand Magellan (and the coming of the Spanish) and Jose Rizal (who resisted Spanish power just before the change from Spanish to American rule).

⁴²⁸ Cannell, 203.

⁴²⁹ Cannell, 140–141 and Francisco M. Zulueta and Elda M. Maglaya, *Foundations of Education* (Mandaluyong City: National Bookstore, 2004), 373.

⁴³⁰ Pauline Eadie, *Poverty and the Critical Agenda* (Aldershot, Hants.: Ashgate Publishing, 2005).

⁴³¹ Shiolo Mendoza, "PH is 4th worst country in the world for business."

http://ph.news.yahoo.com/ph-is-4th-worst-country-in-the-world-for-business.html;_ylt=Ape8oCtoXh3Sd9p6UOrzZ8D1V8d;_ylu=X3oDMTRzYXZkdTBrBGNjb2RIA2N0LmMEbWl0A01vc3QgUG9wdWxhciBTdG9yaWVzBHBBrZwMyMTAzNzg4My04ODM4LTMwMjQtOWE3OC0yYjhkNTE2ZmY4YmYEcG9zAzMEc2VjA01lZGlhQkxpc3RNaXhlZE1vc3RQb3B1bGFyQ0EEdmVyAzY4MWQxN2E2LTA5ZTQtMTFIMS1hODFlLThiNGQ3MjYzNmRkOQ--

Despite current economic gains, the Filipino economy retains serious weaknesses. A little more than one-third of the labor force is employed in agriculture. Besides some garments and electronics, the only significant exports of the Philippines are agricultural products such as sugar, coconut, pineapples, and bananas grown on huge plantations.⁴³² The only reason the Philippines maintains a positive balance of payments is the remittances from the eleven million Filipinos who work overseas at any one time.⁴³³ These *balikbayans* sent back to the Philippines at least \$17,300,000,000.00 in 2009 which represents no less than 13.5% of the country's gross domestic product. The pilgrimage to the ATM machine or the Western Union is frequently more important than the weekly pay day.⁴³⁴ Officially, underemployment is listed at around 20% but in reality, it is probably significantly higher.⁴³⁵

Despite economic growth, the poor in the Philippines are making little headway. Duncan describes how the poor in his Manila slum remain in poverty because of a succession of political decisions designed to keep the elite in power.⁴³⁶ In the years 1956 to 1971, Azizur Khan noted an absolute decline in living standards of the poor and despite land reform legislation in 1972, little has changed.⁴³⁷ The Philippine economy was one of most dynamic in the Third World in the 1950s but has become "the sick man of Asia."⁴³⁸ Two presidents—Ferdinand Marcos (1986) and Joseph Estrada (2001)—have been ousted by "people power," locally known as EDSA 1 and EDSA 2 but no lives were lost in either revolution. Natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes are regular occurrences while about nineteen *bagyo* (and the resulting floods) affect the northern half of the Philippines each year. Typhoon Durian/Reming resulted in 1,399 deaths while just two months

⁴³² Paul Mosley, Jane Harrison, and John Toye, *Aid and Power: The World Bank and Policy-based Lending*, Vol. 2, *Case Studies*. (London: Routledge, 1991), 39–40.

⁴³³ See Eadie.

⁴³⁴ See "Overseas Filipino," *Wikipedia* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balikbayan>. Moyo, 133, suggests that official remittances may be only a third or a half of total incoming funds.

⁴³⁵ National Statistics Coordination Board, http://www.nscb.gov.ph/secstat/d_labor.asp.

⁴³⁶ Duncan, 8–21.

⁴³⁷ Azizur Rahman Khan, "Growth and Inequality in the Rural Philippines," International Labour Organization, *Poverty and landlessness in rural Asia* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1977), 233–249. See also Duncan, 30.

⁴³⁸ Mosley, 39.

earlier, the estimated cost of Typhoon Milenyo/Xangsane was 6.61 billion pesos or \$1.47 billion (£832,625,000); both of these devastating Bicol.⁴³⁹ Rabies, tuberculosis, dengue fever, hepatitis, and malaria remain common diseases and despite a high consumption of fish, many die of heart and stroke diseases because of high use of products like salt and palm oil. On the brighter side, infant mortality has fallen from 60 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1970 to 21.9 in 2007 but the poorest 20% of the Filipino population hold only 5.4% of the resources but richest 20% control 52.5%.⁴⁴⁰

The Philippines provides only ten years of basic education (primary and secondary levels) and of every 100 students who begin school in Grade 1, only 43% finish high school and only 14% finish college. After Typhoon Durian/Reming swept through Bicol, more than half the males of the rural high schools dropped out in their final semester. By their own reckoning, of the 1,726 tertiary institutions in the Philippines that are accredited by CHED, only 19% have achieved above minimum standards and only 42% of faculty in these institutions have a graduate (master's) degree or better. A key factor in the thinking of CHED is to have a "direct input to poverty reduction." A major planning document states that "the basic vision of the MTPDP is to reduce poverty incidence by building prosperity for the greatest number of Filipinos over the next six years."⁴⁴¹ Every year, more than 147,000 graduates cannot find employment within three years of graduation. One reason "is the mismatch between what the industries need and the skills/competencies acquired by the graduates." Particularly lacking are communication skills. Graduate proficiency in English, Math, and the use and application in the latest technologies is "quite inadequate, if not totally lacking."⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ See "Typhoons in the Philippines," *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typhoons_in_the_Philippines. The exchange rates are theirs, not mine. Milenyo/Xangsane is rated the tenth most costly typhoon to hit the Philippines.

⁴⁴⁰ *Encyclopaedia Britannica 2011*, 778 and Elizabeth Purdy, "Philippines," in M. Odekon, "Introduction," *The Encyclopedia of World Poverty*.

⁴⁴¹ [Puno, Carlito S.] *Medium-Term Development Plan for Higher Education 2005–2010*. [Manila]: CHED, 2007? Plans are underway to increase high school education by two years but it is uncertain yet how this will be achieved.

⁴⁴² Angeles, Emmanuel Y. *A Roadmap to Quality Higher Education: A New Philippine Education Highway*. Quezon City: Commission on Higher Education, 2009, 33–44.

The Background

An aborted interview

Charlie had been chosen as the subject of the case study on poverty as initially he had a natural camaraderie with me and the desire was to interview one of the poorer ministers and yet one who was available and working in full-time ministry. Despite the fact that his mastery of English is limited, he is not afraid to communicate. He was open about his financial affairs and his energetic demeanor shows that he is not wary of work. He frequently inquired how he could assist and on a number of occasions, he, and one or two of the others, would be sitting on their motorbikes waiting for me and my team to shepherd us for typhoon distribution, ICCM college promotion, or interviewing for this thesis. He usually asked us to visit him and his family in his home and was always willing to go out of his way to assist us. And yes, he was given P50.00 (£0.63) occasionally to pay for his petrol.

Charlie grew up in Bicol, finished his high schooling, spent two years at a technical college for an automotive mechanic course, and then enrolled in another college where he met Bertha who had grown up in another part of the country. Just weeks from when she was expecting to graduate, she was abruptly told that she would not and as she now had *hiya* and could not return to her home, Charlie left the college and took her to his home in Bicol where they soon married and had children.⁴⁴³

The church where Charlie is the preacher is a new congregation with just ten adults in 2006 but eighteen adults, ten youth, and fifteen children, making a total of forty-three in December 2007. In May 2009, attendances at the regular Sunday worship, Charlie said, were about twenty to twenty-five adults, excluding children. The occupations of the regular attendees at the church included a fisherman, five farmers who owned their own property, six farmers who leased property, one who worked in a shop, two carpenters, and eleven housewives. The farmers who owned their own property owned only about a half hectare (one acre) and with poor soil, the only crops that they grew were coconuts and a little citrus, mainly calamansi. The

⁴⁴³ Her non-Christian family would not understand and would be expected to take action in revenge.

richest person in the church, working in a shop, was the only one who had a paying full-time job and whose husband worked overseas.

Charlie and Bertha seem happy with their ministry. They enjoy the fellowship and the friendship approach that they are taking and they have had more than thirty baptisms. A few of these had transferred to other locations, particularly Manila while ten of these, Charlie believed, had changed from being “bad boys” and were now regular in attendance at the church. They had stopped smoking and drinking and he intimated that more vices had also ceased. The hardest thing, he maintained, was that one cannot force them to do anything. Both said that they intended to stay in this church and stay in this ministry “if it is God’s will *habang buhay na.*”

The church, however, gives them no income other than transport reimbursement. Bertha and Charlie gave the income for the church as in Table 21 in December 2007. Their main family income, at that time, came from Bertha who worked with children, earning P1,400.00 (£17.50) each month. Sometimes a family friend gave them P500.00 (£6.25). Living in the country, they supplemented their food with coconuts and various fruit and leaves growing in the forest. Occasionally, Charlie was given a little cash when he helped repair a motorbike. They both agreed that they were a little poorer than most of the other people in their church and neither of them thought that they had enough income each month. Charlie commented that this was because he had *walang permanenting trabaho.*

Table 21: Charlie’s church’s income

	Bertha		Charlie	
	Monthly Php	Monthly £	Monthly Php	Monthly £
High	Php525.00	£6.56	Php300.00	£3.75
Low	Php60.00	£0.75	Php50.00	£0.63
Average	Php350.00	£4.38	Php200.00	£2.50

The personal monthly expenses that they listed included P65.00 (£0.81) for electricity; P200.00 (£2.50) for cellphone load; P2,500.00 (£31.25) for food; P500.00 (£6.25) for transport, mainly petrol for the motorbike; P100.00 (£1.25) for miscellaneous items for the children at school; P100.00 (£1.25) for medical or dental needs; and P50.00 (£0.63) for helping their extended family. Neither of them spends

any money on any of the vices and while borrowing is a common Filipino trait, Charlie and Bertha admitted that they had resorted to borrowing P500.00 (£6.25) or P100.00 (£1.25) only three times.

Charlie built the house they live in as their original home, of native construction, was completely destroyed in a typhoon. For a time, the family lived in his father's house and then rented another house. Gradually, Charlie built a new house on his property, mostly again of native materials with some *yero* and plywood supplied in a relief operation. Later, the relief agency granted him P20,000.00 (£250.00) to build a new bathroom and toilet. Charlie bought a commode but last I knew it was still sitting out the back of his house unconnected. He used most of the money to make other improvements to the house and was waiting for me to return to give him yet more money.

Unfortunately, interviewing with Charlie could not be completed for although he began with a seemingly genuine desire to co-operate, he degenerated into untenable demands for more money and open hostility. The last time I saw Charlie, he was demanding cash from me to pay the "mountain men," as he called them, to log illegal timber to build him church pews. The team from ICCM and I tried to explain to him that we did not have the money for this and we could not be a part of this. Charlie tried to bargain and insist that we just had to give him a down-payment for the wood. He became extremely emotional and indignant to the point of being hostile. The Filipinos with me were embarrassed as all the tricycle drivers standing in the background overheard and they were concerned that Charlie might become violent. As is custom for men in rural areas, he carried a *bolo* knife with him. Charlie may be able to deal with the mountain men but it would be extremely unwise for me to be involved in any manner.

The last contact with them came when I saw Bertha visiting friends in January 2011 and we talked for a short time. After the initial pleasantries, she stated that she was in Manila to get her visa so that she could work abroad for two years. I asked her about the care of her children and she replied that they were with Charlie. "Oh, they are so young and they will not see their mother for two years," was my comment. The retort was, "The family have to make sacrifices when the husband is

in the ministry.” In April 2011 it was reported that “there was a problem” with her visa and so she did not go. It is unlikely that she recouped her financial outlays.

The preacher’s work, home, and life

Like Charlie, Jun Bataller is a Church of Christ preacher, I knew that he was poor, and he was readily available but in contrast to Charlie, he is rather articulate in English and did not seem pre-disposed to a welfare mentality for he never requested anything from me. As of 2011, Jun was forty years old and is married to Mylyn, aged twenty-eight with three children, Oline (age nine), Nonoy (seven), and Josh (three). Jun is 5’ 2” (157.5cm) tall and weighs barely 100lb (45.4kg). The youngest of ten children, his mother died of hypertension at age sixty-three and his father died at seventy-three due to anemia. One brother died of a heart attack at age twenty-five. Mylyn, the second child of eight, has her mother still living but her father was killed in a shooting accident at age thirty-nine.⁴⁴⁴ Jun studied at Asian Institute of Applied Electronics in Bulacan, gaining a two-year vocational diploma from there. Mylyn left school after grade six when she and her oldest sister alternated staying at home to care for her father while her mother became the bread-winner for the family.

Jun has changed employment frequently but has always been able to secure work. After he left school in 1987, he worked sixteen hours per day as a hospital janitor, earning P800.00 (£10.00) per month. He worked as a sales boy and a gardener before becoming an electrical technician in Bulacan and Quezon City for eight years from 1990. By then, he was working ten hours per day and earning P3,000.00 (£37.50) per month. In 1997, he returned to Libmanan and secured similar employments in Naga City, Libmanan, and Sipocot. Now, he works freelance in the same work—electronics serviceman—from his home, earning about P2,000.00 (£25.00) per month. When interviewed in late May 2010, he said that that week, he had had no repairs and therefore no income from this but the previous week, he had received more than P1,000.00 (£12.50).

⁴⁴⁴ Mylyn’s father was shot in 1993 but did not die until 1999. He was the chief *barangay tanod* who, as his job required, tried to intervene in a drunken fight during a fiesta. The bullet, lodged in the neck, was not taken out but paralyzed him. He eventually died from a tetanus infection.

Jun's other job is as a minister at the Mabini Church of Christ for which he says that he spends about fifteen hours per week. He grew up as a Roman Catholic, converted to the JIL church in Pasig, Metro Manila in 1996, and from 1997 to 2001, he attended Jesus Christ to God be the Glory Fellowship in Libmanan. In 2003, he was invited by then Counselor Teng Besa of Libmanan to attend the Impig Church of Christ in Sipocot and helped in the beginning of the small rural congregation of Lubigan Church of Christ. When Counselor Besa opened the Mabini Church of Christ in 2006, Jun assisted the preacher, Larry Royales, and led the music until Larry left and Jun assumed his position as the minister.⁴⁴⁵ Jun has taken a few classes at a Presbyterian college but has had no other formal training for the ministry. He is given P2,000.00 (£25.00) a month for this position at Mabini but is expected to pay for any of his travelling expenses from this money. Sometimes, Teng gives him an additional P100.00 (£1.25).

As of May 2010, the church in Mabini had a regular attendance of twenty adults, fifteen youth, and twelve children, totaling forty-seven and in February 2011, it had hardly changed with Jun listing an average of forty-five attending. The monthly offerings vary from a low of P800.00 (£10.00) to a high of P2,800.00 (£35.00). Of the twenty-five attendees who are not students, only three have a paying full-time job. One of the elders is a high school teacher, one lady is a salesperson, and the third, Teng, obviously has the largest income. He was a counselor for Libmanan Town Council until he lost the election in 2010, owns an electronics store in Sipocot where he first employed Jun, but his main income has come from his construction company in Manila. Only two of the adults in the church were unemployed—an eighteen year old and a twenty-nine year old, both males—while seven are housewives. According to Jun, the other fourteen are under-employed. Four, including him, are skilled workers such as a carpenter and an electrician. One farmer owns his own small property, three lease a property, and five men are day laborers working on farms. The rice that the farmers grow is sold to

⁴⁴⁵ The Mabini church meets in the garage and rest house of Teng's house in Mabini, one of the seventy-five *barangays* of Libmanan. The garage is open but has a toilet and a driver's room at one end. The rest house was made of *nipa* and bamboo. The location is close to the Maharlika Highway rather than in the *poblacion* like Mel's church. A third Church of Christ exists in Urdoc barangay but its location is inaccessible by road.

national buyers but the vegetables and coconut they produce is sold in the local market.

Mylyn grew up in Libmanan and began work as a canteen attendant in Libmanan in 1997 or 1998. She worked eighty-four hours per week and earned P800.00 (£10.00) a month. For six months in 1998, she worked as a *yaya* in Naga City and also earned about P800.00 (£10.00) a month. In 1999, she held a job as a store attendant in Cavite where she worked ninety-eight hours per week for a salary of P1,000.00 (£12.50) a month. Since she and Jun were married, she lists herself as a plain housewife. She grew up as a nominal Roman Catholic but was “converted” at Jesus Christ to God be the Glory Fellowship where she met Jun.

None of the Jun’s nuclear family has had any serious illnesses other than Jun having chicken pox and the usual common cold, fever and flu. If they get sick, they borrow money to pay for a visit to the doctor and go to the Rural Health Unit, a health centre located in Libmanan town proper. A mid-wife came and assisted in the delivery of all three children in their home.

The home of the Batallers is in a semi-rural location four kilometers outside the Libmanan town proper down a very steep but paved single-lane track just off a public paved road. It costs P10.00 (£0.12) for the regular fare and P20.00 (£0.25) for a special fare on a tricycle or a motorbike from the town market where they buy supplies. The only exception is the load for their cellphone which they purchase at their neighbours. Although the house is one of a number in Mylyn’s family compound, it sits as a single dwelling on its own property with a perimeter fence made of typical provincial bamboo and wire and grounds with neatly kept ornamental plants in the front. Jun owns the actual house but the land is a “*barangay* lot site.”

The house, measuring only 16’ by 14’ (4.9m x 4.3m), has a roof made of *yero* and outside walls built with *nipa* while plastic polypropylene bags have been used for the inside partitions. There is no ceiling and, according to Jun, the building was erected without any foundations being dug. On top of the dirt floor, they have placed some bamboo slats, a piece of plywood, and a rug wall hanging. Water comes in during heavy rains. There is a lock on the only door but there is no inside

running water, bathroom, or toilet so their water supply, including drinking water, is from a deep well close by and they “jingle” outside or “use a potty” if they wish to urinate. Otherwise, they use the CR inside her mother’s house next door. Her mother works as a *katulong* in Manila but her sister, aged twenty, and her husband, aged twenty-four, live in the house. The only electricity for the house is two florescent bulbs, one inside and the other outside. There was one electric outlet but no television, computer, or refrigerator. There was little evidence of Jun’s trade: just a few extension cords and an electric fan cover.

In the *sala* area, taking up one-third of the house, were two white plastic chairs, a single bamboo *sala* piece and a small table with a few odd items like a guitar, his motorbike helmet, an umbrella, the children’s school satchels, shoes, a few cheap plastic toys, and some plastic flowers. The walls were decorated with a clock, a poster and a calendar or two, and the diplomas of one of the children’s graduation from kindergarten and Jun’s electronic course. Also in abundance were photographs, without frames and just stuck in the wall, mainly snapshots of their wedding, graduation pictures, and a few general pictures of family members on a special occasion.

I asked the Batallers to list all their possessions and their perceived value. They do have a savings account in which is a minimum balance of P500.00 (£6.25). The materials for their house they considered worth P10,000.00 (£125.00) and they are buying their P30,000.00 (£375.00) motorcycle on time payment. Any clothing they have is bought at a *ukay-ukay* store and valued at about P5,000.00 (£62.50). No jewelry or furniture was listed in their assets and the plastic chairs on which they were sitting, purchased new for P200.00 (£2.50) each, they borrowed for the occasion from their neighbours. Their estimated total value of all their possessions for their family of four was thus P45,500.00 (£586.75).

The questionnaires that Jun and Mylyn filled out in May 2010 (Table 22) and February 2011 (Table 23) requested them to list what they had eaten in the last twenty-four hours. Water was heated for the coffee which was the instant three-in-one (coffee, powdered milk, and sugar) variety. Rice, the staple food eaten at all meals, was cooked in a pot on a small fire fueled by *uling*. The *calabasa* was boiled

but the bananas and papaya were eaten fresh. The dried fish, usually just a few inches long, are purchased cheaply in the market but the pork is either from a can or sold as fresh meat by vendors on the street in the market.

Table 22: Jun's nutritional intake–May 2010

	Breakfast	Merienda	Lunch	Afternoon Merienda	Supper	Evening Snack
Drink	Coffee Milk	None	Water	Coffee	Water	None
Carbohydrates	None	None	Rice	None	Rice	None
Viand/Meat	None	None	None	None	None	None
Vegetables	None	None	Papaya	None	<i>Calabasa</i>	None
Fruit	Banana	None	None	None	None	None
Sweets/Dessert	None	None	None	None	None	None

Table 23: Jun's nutritional intake–February 2011

	Breakfast	Merienda	Lunch	Afternoon Merienda	Supper	Evening Snack
Drink	Water	Water	Water	Water	Water	None
Carbohydrates	Rice	None	Rice	Bread	Rice	None
Viand/Meat	Dried Fish	None	Pork Meat	None	None	None
Vegetables	None	None	None	None	Gabi	None
Fruit	Banana	Banana	None	None	None	None
Sweets/Dessert	None	None	None	None	None	None

Table 24: Jun's household expenditure

	May 2010	February 2011
Housing	0	0
Electricity	P100.00	P150.00
Water, including drinking water	0	0
Telephone	P300.00	P300.00
Food	P2,000.00	P2,350.00
Transport	P2,800.00	P2,800.00
School fees	P300.00	P100.00
Medical and dental	P100.00	P300.00
Helping your extended family	0	0
TOTAL	Php5,600.00 (£70.00)	Php5,600.00 (£70.00)

Jun listed in Table 24 the main items that they spent their P4,000.00 (£50.00) income each month. The main expenses were obviously food and transport of which P2,100.00 (£26.25) was the monthly repayments for the motorbike. The P300.00 (£3.75) telephone was for the cellphone load. Neither Jun nor Mylyn smoke or chew

tobacco, take illegal drugs, or gamble, play Lotto, or go to the cockpit. Jun used to drink alcohol but has discontinued. Remenyi asserts that debt is the poor person's constant companion and Cannell talks of her rice farmers mortgaging out their land for cash and buying rice on credit.⁴⁴⁶ Jun said that, on two occasions, he had borrowed money from the family but had not paid it back. They used the money to buy seeds to plant on a farm but a typhoon and a drought had destroyed the crop.

Explanation

The type of poverty

A little explanation is needed about the poverty encountered here. Regardless of which definitions are used, both Charlie and Jun and their families live in poverty. Using the exchange rates given in the Introduction, Jun's family members live on \$0.58 per day if the P4,000.00 income is believed or if the P5,600.00 expenditure is used, \$0.82—well below the \$2.00 per person per day threshold. However, this poverty is not the dingy depressing slum dwelling of the urban poor but the rural poverty hidden in picturesque green settings. The poverty is somewhat hidden until closer examination. Further, Charlie and Jun are still working men, attempting to provide for themselves and their families. Their poverty (and their neighbours and fellow ministers) is more akin to Rowntree's poor in York in 1899–1901, Edrington's everyday men in Birmingham, and Cannell's rice farmers rather than the homeless on the streets of New York, London, or Manila. They are not on the fringe of society because of a vice like drug-taking nor are they among the *mag-standbys* but they are making a concerted continual effort to contribute to the welfare of themselves and those around them. Charlie and Jun and their families still participate fully in society. They are working men, who, despite their best efforts and as much as any man can be reasonably expected, are still poor. Moreover, the underemployment and low productivity of these men are debilitating both in terms of income generation and psychological impairment.

⁴⁴⁶ Remenyi in Kingsbury, 200, and Cannell, 16.

Anger

There were more questions that I wanted to pose to Charlie but was unable. There were the anomalies of his income and spending figures and how he could spend more than he receives. I would have liked to ask why did he not get another job, why was he staying in the ministry, if he was really full-time, and what work was he actually doing. It would have been worthwhile to explore why he was in poverty and what were his explanations. Also, it would have been beneficial to see the ramifications if Bertha had gone to work overseas while he continued in his ministry and also the details of Charlie's relative dying of rabies.

I was concerned about Charlie's anger and feared that I had missed a social cue. I debriefed at length with my companions as we made the long drive back to Manila. They were dismissive of Charlie and their consensus was that under no circumstances should we be involved as illegal logging is illegal. The mountain men are probably connected with the NPA and thus hostile to people they presume are rich which, in the Filipino mind, includes all foreigners like me. Such men are known to flout the law with impunity and commit murders because they are offended. As a foreigner, one is easily noticeable and easily traced and so if I was caught in any way in breaking the law, I would face arrest, imprisonment, a huge fine, and many additional "payments"—i.e. bribes. Paying any bribe is an unending cycle that can grow ever more vicious for those that take the bribe will expect more and blackmail if necessary. If I was involved, my Filipino companions would be at risk. Additionally three or four friends of Charlie were asked to explain his hostility. "That's just his way" and "that's just him" and "we don't know why" were the initial answers. I pressed more and was told, "That's the provincial way. They expect you to give."

Personal poverty

When I first questioned Jun if he believed he was in poverty, he said "maybe yes" but this I knew was a self-effacing modesty meaning that he very much assumed that he was poor. Later he admitted that he was in "heavy" poverty. Jun thought, compared to the other people in his church, that he was a little poorer than

most. He alleged that he was in poverty for three reasons: low educational attainment, lack of opportunity, and “poor economic situation.” He did not get another job that had a better income as, he revealed, “I’ve tried many times and failed many times.” He said that he stayed in the ministry “because I love God and people. I know that God called me for this cause. It is not my will, but it is the perfect will of God for me. Even I experiencing hardships in ministry, nothing I can do [but] to obey.” In their vegetable garden they grow tomatoes, okra, pumpkin, bell peppers (capsicum), *kamote*, *patola* but not during the long dry season of summer. I probed what they did when their income was *kulang*. “Well, the following day or week, I try to make up. But God provides. Maybe I delay the bike payment—up to one month. We eat less *parin*.” A carpenter helped build the house with materials that they either purchased little by little or were given as relief after Typhoon Reming. Concerning the motorbike, he asserted:

It is very difficult for us to mobilize if we don’t have motorcycle. Our place is difficult to transportation and is costly, when I go to other place especially in the church; example, when we go to church every Sunday with my family, it will cost P80.00 for public transportation. With my motorcycle, it may only cost P40.00 in doing my ministries and works it is impractical for me to use public transportation.

He could afford the motor bike which cost him P78,000.00 through paying installments from January 2009 to December 2011 for P2,106.00 per month.

Following the list provided by Lister, I asked Jun if he experienced any of the restrictions in Table 25.⁴⁴⁷ In his answers in May 2010 and February 2011 which were not significantly different, Jun said that he felt as though he was a part of society, could function as a regular citizen, and that there was nothing he could not really do.

In one interview, he gave his dreams for his children:

1. To Odine, I want her to be a Christian recording artist and effective worship leader, in secular, I want her to be an architect or fashion designer.
2. To Nonoy, I want him to be an anointed musician and at the same time a registered civil engineer.
3. To my third son, Jeush, I want him to be a great preacher and pastor, and a successful car dealer.

⁴⁴⁷ Lister, 8.

Table 25: Perceived experiences of Jun

	Do you ever feel any of these?	Yes	No	When or how? May 2010	When or how? February 2011
a.	Lack of voice	X	X	You are only poor, so they not listen to you.	
b.	Disrespected		X		
c.	Humiliation		X		
d.	Assault on dignity		X		
e.	Low self-esteem	X		yes, feel personally	When I fail to get rid out of poverty
f.	Shame		X		
g.	Stigma		X		
h.	Powerlessness	X	X	No power or authority—e.g. if someone doing wrong, [you have] no power to stop them	
i.	Denial of rights		X		
j.	Diminished citizenship		X		

I asked who was poorer than their family in the community. Jun responded, “Our neighbor who abandoned by their mother with seven (7) children and a lazy father. [He has] no job, poor education. [He] doesn’t do anything to feed his childrens. [He is] irresponsible to find a job. He misuse or mishandling of their finances and vices.” Jun also added, “Sis. Wilmina in our church, because she is a widow and no job because of age.”

I wanted to know which things Jun thought had been factors in his poverty and so he replied as in Table 26. In answer to which actions or decisions of someone else had caused him poverty, Jun named typhoons, the net-working business and the fact that he was born into a poor family who were only farmers. He continued: “Typhoons, droughts and other natural disasters contributes much poverty in our region because we are an agricultural region, when calamities struck our place, other sources of income also heavily suffer.” In Typhoon Milenyo/Xangsane, the water came up to the roof of his sister’s house where he was staying and the house was completely destroyed. In the floods that accompanied Typhoon Durian/Reming, the family lost their house, all clothing, the kitchen utensils and all the vegetables in their farm. They were evacuated to higher ground but they were wet all night. For personal decisions that he felt were unwise that caused him poverty, he wrote in

May 2010, “when I decide to not continue my studies to go to work to sustain my parents, maybe if so, I may have a better job and better salary.” He named borrowing the P8,000 (£100.00) for the registration of a net-working in 2009, in February 2011. “Corruption in gov’t is also a great factor of poverty because the opportunity to develop our place is hinder by corruption that also affect not to deliver the basic services,” he thought. “We buy medicines instead free from the health centers. The medicines from the Rural Health Centers were previously free. The medicines [were] bought to the house of the mayor who mismanaged distribution. Other [medicines] reach expiration date.” I questioned how he knew this. “Not first-hand evidence. You just know,” was the reply.

Table 26: Potential problems for Jun

	Problem		His answer
1	Hunger	Yes	Seldom, but we often do not have <i>merienda</i> . Also when our place struck by typhoons like Reming.
2	No primary education	No	No, children are in school
3	Gender inequality	No	
4	Child mortality	No	
5	Maternal health	No	
6	Diseases (which ones?)	Yes	Some hypertension
7	Environmental destruction	Yes	Dump site near the house

I inquired if he ever gave help to others. In May 2010, Jun responded, “Yes according to my capacity and resources to give, because God commanded, and generosity releases blessings” but he is not committed to anything on a regular basis. Then in February 2011, he replied, “Yes, my sister in law with her child, now three, lived with us in our house. We pay their needs. She was separate from her partner (not married). Still there now.” He added that this was an example of dependency.

When asked how he had attempted to try to alleviate his poverty, Jun wrote the following on separate sheets of paper and he is quoted in full:

I’ve try to do the following:

1st) I’ve try to put up my own repair shop in Libmanan town, so I rent a stall and apply for a loan at a financing company (more about financing company), unfortunately the approval of loan delayed but we need to pay for the rental and power consumption of the stall, so my wife Mylyn suggest that our wedding ring be apraise at a pawnshop in

Sipocot town and it valued for P3,000.00. It was given to us by my cousin who work in Saudi Arabia. We used the money to sustain the rental of the stall and power consumption, but the loan I applied still not materialized. More months later we have no money to sustain so I decide to close the shop and the wedding ring that we pawn were not redeemed again.

2nd) We try to plant *monggo* at the farmland of my mother in law, I borrowed P5,000.00 to my eldest sister for the prepatation of almost ½ hectare of land and for the seeds, when the field is ready, we wait for the rain to fall, three (3) day before New Year of 2003 the rain fall so we plant all the 5 kilograms of mongo seeds, not knowing that it is the first and the last rain of the next dry season. The mongo grow but it grow short and bring small amount of fruits, so we can't manage to pay the full of the money borrowed from my sister. feeling

3rd) I encourage by my previous companion to engage in networking business to market the food supplement product manufactured in Springvale, Utah, U.S.A. with its counterpart company here in the Philippines. The products are good, the marketing plan is great, I think that this is the time for me and my family to get out of poverty, but the registration is costly, P7,980.00 [£100.00]. So I borrowed again P5,000.00 to my eldest sister to complete my registration, few weeks later after I registered, the person who encouraged me apparently disappear, I heard a news that he transfer from one place to the other place, leaving to me some products, brochure and CD's not knowing what to do because of my lack of experience in that kind of business.

I worked hard, I've try to do business, I joined many times in multi-level marketing (Networking) business but I still in poverty.

The preacher's concept of poverty

Jun first wrote that for him “poverty means some of basic needs of the family will not meet, like food, shelter, clothing and education.” Later, he gave a list of six items:

1. Lack of something like food, shelter, and clothing.
2. Can't get what you want.
3. Can't send children to school.
4. May not have your own house.
5. Not eat regularly or on time. For example, eat lunch at 2pm or 3pm instead of 12 as not have money.
6. You obligations arrive. You don't have money to pay it. E.g. electric and water bill. Amortization.

Somehow in the course of our conversations, entitlement or dependency was mentioned. Jun seemed to know exactly what was meant and so I asked him to

define it. He responded, “If one or more person depend on others for their needs, shelter, education, problems, emotional problems, weaknesses. For example, young man or woman who marriage early and then husband not finish studies/no job—so they will live with parents. The parents provides their needs then when the time comes the wife give birth to their child—another burden to their parents.” In response to a query about how he felt about a dependency or entitlement attitude, he answered in May 2010, “That’s not good. They can’t exercise ability to get what they want. [It is a] bad attitude—a sign of laziness and irresponsibility. But I feel that I am independent together with my family, in relation to my brother and sisters and to my in laws.” In February 2011 he said, “It is wrong. Why? It will result in more poverty because they will depend to others and no one will work to meet their needs.”

Impressions and reflection

In response to the perceptions of Jun and Charlie and to those authors quoted above, my reflections are concentrated on five topics: the perceptions of poverty; sin and poverty; factors to be considered in alleviation of poverty; education in the Bible college in the light of scarce resources and poverty; and finally, poverty as it particularly pertains to ministry.

The perception of poverty

The findings of this case study did not necessarily coincide with the expectations of Lister, Standing and Szal, Cannell, and Bautista. As Bautista rightly states, there is often a negative and a positive side to Filipino traits but Jun portrayed none of the negative traits in his relationship with me. There was no joking about poverty, he never requested a thing of me, and there was no sense that he wished to use his powerlessness—to use Cannell’s terminology—to try to presume upon me.⁴⁴⁸ I did not sense in any way that he was trying to manipulate me for there seemed no agenda other than genuinely helping me. His demeanor is naturally self-defacing but he always replied in a relatively straightforward manner. In the multiple

⁴⁴⁸ Cannell, 15.

questionnaires and interviews I did not feel that he was just telling me what I wanted to know. Rather, he was frankly honest, even to the point of embarrassing himself.

On the other hand, it may have been that Charlie did try to use his powerlessness. To use Cannell's terminology again, Charlie's attitude was that he was one of the poor "who have nothing at all." In comparison, in his view, I was the rich who "those who have something." I was the *datu* and the patron and he expected me to give what he wanted. I am sure that he did not realize the ramifications but his actions would entangle me in the web of corruption with the illegal logging. Here is a conundrum of traditional Filipino relationships colliding with the requirements of the law and Christian values. For me, there was no option but to obey the law and keep distant from bribery and corruption. To Charlie, I committed a near unpardonable sin of breaking relationships for as the patron, I should give.⁴⁴⁹

While no one in Churches of Christ would participate in pilgrimages or processions such as with the Black Nazarene or Calabanga's washing of the dead Christ, there is no doubt about Jun, Charlie, and the others having a sense of personal religious experience or expressing values and judgements.⁴⁵⁰ All the people in these case studies expressed an aversion to the vices and sin. Personal devotion was seen in Gani's and Mel's importance ascribed to prayer. Jun's response to why he stayed in the ministry exhibited a little *bahala na* as well as his reaction to his understanding of the call of God.

My expectation would be that Charlie would be affirmative on denial of rights and powerlessness but unconcerned about environmental issues. However, Jun is not "radicalized."⁴⁵¹ Clearly, Jun does not think that his basic material necessities are sufficient, but, other than the material deprivations, Jun was not particularly concerned about Standing's and Szal's basic needs, Lister's non-material manifestations, or Cannell's powerlessness. After Jun completed the questionnaires (Tables 25 and 26) which included the same enquiries twice, I

⁴⁴⁹ Bautista, in Miranda-Feliciano, 3.

⁴⁵⁰ Cannell, 165–182 and Jacob in Mercado, 82–105.

⁴⁵¹ Incidentally, Teng Besa was endorsed by one of the centre/right parties but I deliberately distanced myself as much as possible from the politics.

specifically questioned Jun and on both occasions the same nonchalant answers were received. On the contrary, though as poor as many of Cannell's farmers, Jun does have power, for, because of his personal religious devotion, he requires integrity in and of himself. There is no scandal as with Mon and his cows and so, he is respected in his family and community. Further, because of the job that Jun performs as the preacher, others listen to him and take his advice. Both Gani and Mel, who have the same poverty, integrity, and pulpit that Jun has, have additional power and respect. Gani's is due to his high involvement in barangay and community affairs and playing the role of *bunso* in his large extended family. Mel's is due to his winning personality, his accredited education, his high profile around Libmanan, and his successful church planting.

One's perception of poverty needs to be complexified. Every individual does not conform to a norm of traditional Filipino thinking and there is no over-riding "culture" which pertains to all. The interviewer must pay attention to ensure that issues are not politicized and that his viewpoint is not projected onto the findings. An individual is not powerless or feel powerless just because he or she is poor. Though I affirm that a human being may endure or feel humiliation, disapproval, or rejection because of poverty, the attitude and values of an individual may mitigate circumstances in significant ways. Duncan is correct in needing the multiple categories in understanding the poor.

Poverty does not mean that a person has no money but rather that the individual possesses less than desired or needed. Remenyi is correct in defining poverty as having insufficient money. Cannell's farmers are the poor but they are not ultimately "we who have nothing at all" for although they are certainly not rich, they still have material possessions and most of them still participate in society. They still have some money and they still purchase at the street vendor even if they do not enter the air-conditioned restaurants. Charlie lives well below the \$2.00 a day World Bank minimum but he does own land. The basic economic reality of scarce resources, pressing needs, and unlimited wants habitually applies for the tragedy is in what is deferred or not obtained. For the poor, it is even more imperative to spend his or her money wisely.

The extent to which an individual or a family is in poverty can change dramatically very quickly. A typhoon or a medical condition can and does obliterate any painstaking gains made in a very short time. Both Charlie and Jun lost their homes and many of their personal possessions in Typhoon Dorian/Reming.

All self-claims of poverty should be evaluated and so in the case of both Jun and Charlie, it is important to notice the disparity between what they say that their income is and how much they spend. It is common for an individual not to be quite as destitute as he or she would want the hearer to believe for, as Cannell admits, we all exaggerate slightly. However, I am a little reluctant to accept the full extent of Cannell's deduction of powerlessness. Jun did not particularly feel powerless. It may be that powerlessness was a euphemism of Cannell's poor in order to joke in a perceived acceptable way to the researcher, hinting for her to act. Cannell does say that a specifically Filipino aspect is that the estimation of one's poverty is always relative. It is doubtful that it is "specifically Filipino" but the relative estimation is frequently used.⁴⁵²

On the contrary, Jun maybe poorer than he admits. He says that his income from his freelance work as an electronics serviceman is about P2,000.00 (£25.00) per month but he keeps no records and money is not typically sourced through a bank account so this is but a guess. Income is generally spent that same day. If he has only a little, he spends only a little so there is less rice for lunch and no *merienda*. If the electric bill is due, he works a little harder and frets a little more until he gets the money. The P2,000.00 that Jun says that he earns from his business may be rather a fantasy or a memory of one good month rather than a true average. In addition, based on past experience talking with the likes of tricycle drivers, the P2,000.00 is probably a gross amount rather than net; an income rather than a profit. The P2,000.00 may be the actual cash received but there is no consideration for expenses such as transportation costs and purchase of materials used.

⁴⁵² Cannell, 15, 18, and 20.

The sins of poverty

I have mentioned already the theocentricity of Filipino thought and life; the problem being that theology and morals do not necessarily coincide. Even the most casual observer cannot but be impressed by the way in which the men interviewed in this thesis attempt to be good examples to their communities. From the pastoral perspective each of them, dismayed at the sin and vices in their community, talked with me on multiple occasions and so I have made more than 100 references to this topic. As already seen, Bosch comments that each individual has his or her specific sinfulness and enslavement but his statement that the poor “are probably at one and the same time victims of circumstances, practitioners of despised trades, *and* shady characters” jarred me.⁴⁵³ How could the oppressed be shady characters? How could good men be bad? How could the sinned against be sinners? Yet, of course, all are sinners.⁴⁵⁴ There was nothing in or about Jun that was particularly sinful or wrong but as I reflected on his circumstances and that of Charlie and the others in the case studies, it seemed that there were at least five avenues where the blight of poverty may engulf the poor man or woman in sin or at least have negative consequences on the individual’s life. Grigg puts it bluntly: “Some poverty is caused by sin. But poverty also causes sin.”⁴⁵⁵ The below should not be interpreted to say that the poor are more sinful or susceptible to sin than anyone else and likewise, I do not suggest that Filipinos are more sinful than other peoples. However, in any attempt to assist the poor, the curse of the following warrant further consideration.

Catholic Philippines retains a clear list of vices that all admit are not good and for the majority are regarded as a sin. These include smoking, drinking or getting drunk, gambling, taking illegal drugs, and sex outside marriage.⁴⁵⁶ The

⁴⁵³ Bosch, *Transforming*, 27. Actually, he quotes from L. Schottroff and W. Stegemann, trans. by Matthew J. O’Connell, *Jesus and the Hope of the Poor* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986), 14ff.

⁴⁵⁴ Romans 3:23. There is no attempt here to theologize on sin but most could accept that it is whatever is bad or wrong and understood to be against God. Mel gave his explanation of sin in the previous chapter. Please see my book, *More Precious than Pearls*, for a typical understanding of this in Filipino Churches of Christ.

⁴⁵⁵ Grigg, 29.

⁴⁵⁶ As to be expected, the attitude as to how much participation in the vice is tolerable before it becomes a sin, varies as widely as can be found in western societies albeit with some distinctive Filipino traits. For example, many Filipinos would believe that drinking alcohol is perfectly

government “Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers” specifically mandates “Every teacher shall merit reasonable social recognition for which purpose he shall behave with honor and dignity at all times and refrain from such activities as gambling, smoking, drunkenness, and other excesses, much less illicit relations.”⁴⁵⁷ In all four of my case studies, the men or their wives made reference to and at least in part listed the vices.⁴⁵⁸ All the means to participate in the vices are easily accessible and cheaply available in the community at large so that taxes and government restrictions are non-existent or widely flouted while children sell cigarettes by the stick at the traffic lights, and beer, at P20.00 (£0.25) a bottle, is as commonly purchasable as Coke. Grigg’s vignettes about stealing dogs to consume with alcohol, serial drunkenness with 90% proof rice wine, pregnant teenagers, and only 16% legally married sound all too believable.⁴⁵⁹ Regardless of one’s personal views on the participation in one these vices or sins, the intent here is not to pronounce judgement but to note a few consequences of the poor’s participation in such vices. Even though they are available cheaply, they all still cost money. They are an inferior use of meager resources, especially if lack of nutritional intake is considered. Further flow-on costs such as loss of productivity, health risks and diseases, and the detrimental effects both economically and psychologically to the individual, the family, and the nation are widely acknowledged. Cannell’s Mon, who pawned his in-laws’ wedding gift to pay for his mistress—and thus curtailed his ability to earn income—is an example. Besides the tobacco, alcohol, and multiple-wives scandals, Estrada’s corruption centred on illegal takings from legal *jueteng* and so corruption and bribery exponentially multiply around the vices.

permissible but getting drunk is the sin. On the other hand, although many of the population may have at one time or another had sex outside of marriage, almost all Filipinos believe it to be sin and definitely describe it as a sin. As noted already, the defining of sex may or may not include *coitus interruptus*. While at times it is of the utmost importance not to get caught, even loyal church-goers will exhibit de Mesa’s split-level Christianity by openly admitting to regular or current participation of one of the vices or sins. It is interesting to note that all of the vices are activity based and none are attitudinal.

⁴⁵⁷ “Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers.” <http://eduphil.org/forum/code-of-ethics-for-teachers-in-the-philippines-t-449.html>.

⁴⁵⁸ No specific question was asked of them about their participation in vices although Jun admitted that he drank alcohol in the past. While I am sure that some of them regret some past actions, it needs to be clearly stated that there was no evidence for any of them being involved in any of these vices during the entirety of this research.

⁴⁵⁹ Grigg, 29–32.

The element of corruption is always in evidence somewhere in relation to poverty. Unfortunately, Jun's comments that there is no first-hand evidence but that you just know are precise for there is no paper trail and there are no official receipts. As everyone suspects there is a problem but as no one can prove anything, all parties involved with the project remain suspect, rumors run riot, and all hold a general feeling of disgust and a little sensation of being tainted. Society is poisoned. Corruption and bribery hurt one's own people or the people one is supposed to protect and aid; not the enemy and not an unrelated community. I have already quoted Zulueta and Maglaya who assert that corruption acerbates existing inequalities by giving more power and opportunities to those who already have power.⁴⁶⁰ The common perception is that the rich take what is not rightfully theirs and so we all vilify the Sheriff of Nottingham of Robin Hood fame. Undoubtedly, voluminous research has already been done to identify and curtail bribery and corruption but here the point is more modest. From a different perspective, it was painful to realize that the poor can be implicated as much as the rich in corruption. Charlie's deal with the mountain men is a case in point. I am unaware why he decided to enter into an arrangement with them except to surmise that he already knew them personally and they could supply the required timber cheaply. To be fair to him, I presume that either he did not consider the implications for me for such transactions or he believed the laws to be unfair or inconsequential for him. Certainly the powerful made the rules about land ownership, illegal logging, economic maintenance, and ecological sustainability but such rules frequently disadvantage the poor and are usually of little magnitude to those in remote rural areas. Regardless, it is difficult to live in a corrupt society and not be drawn into the same sin. Isaiah's proclamation, "Woe to me!...I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips" is pertinent.⁴⁶¹

I always assumed that the New Testament references to the love of money as being a sin of the rich. Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler is an illustration

⁴⁶⁰ Zulueta, *Foundations*, 373.

⁴⁶¹ Isaiah 6:5. I particularly note that most of the Filipinos with whom I associated are absolutely ashamed of and horrified at the sins and vices mentioned in this section. Again I wish to make it quite clear that I do not think that Filipinos or the poor are any more sinful than anyone else.

which would support such.⁴⁶² However, Cannell's American dream with the desire to possess luxury goods, imitate Americans, gain the supposed power, and emigrate there if possible, even though largely unattainable by her farmers, speaks otherwise.⁴⁶³ Regardless, love of money can become a transgression of the poor if only through the back door. While the rich man is possessed by the desire to retain his wealth, the poor can become obsessed with getting money. The poor man or woman has to earn money so that he or she can eat the next meal as in the case of Jun who may delay eating lunch. I do not imply in any way that Jun is a lover of money but the temptation is not difficult to see.

Perhaps a truly debilitating sin for an otherwise good, moral, upstanding citizen in society is what is known as entitlement or dependency. Jun knew the concept and Charlie may be engulfed by it. He had received the most assistance of any of the Church of Christ preachers but for an unknown reason, for him, it was not enough. Dependency as such is not usually viewed as a sin but each of the traditional seven deadly sins of the Catholic Church—lust, greed, gluttony, envy, anger or wrath, pride, and sloth—can flow from welfare mentality.⁴⁶⁴ It shackles a man or woman into an ever downward spiral of negative self-image and it murders pro-activity and responsibility so that the end product is even greater poverty. Regardless of the amount of the financial investment, welfare mentality is a bind with no escape. Its insipient nature allows it to hurt those who can least afford to be hurt—the poor.

A final insidiousness is the “crab mentality” as the Filipinos describe it. The façade in society is friendliness, smiles, and concern for family but behind it lurks an individualism that, despite all protestations otherwise, is as strong as anywhere in the West. Couple it with love of money, self-centeredness, and Filipino concepts such as *utang*, and it is debilitating. The individual finds that he or she is pulled back down by the very ones who should assist him or her—one's family and friends. It is

⁴⁶² Matthew 19:16–29, Mark 10:17–30 and Luke 18:18–30.

⁴⁶³ Cannell, 203–222.

⁴⁶⁴ Catholic Bible 101 Website. <http://www.catholicbible101.com/7deadlysins.htm>.

justification for gouging, presumption, and even extortion.⁴⁶⁵ For those in poverty, sometimes it is not even an option as Mylyn had absolutely no choice but to stay home and cease her education. Jun's benefactor, Teng, constantly has people calling at his house wanting money.

Towards the remediation of poverty

Whatever the reasons are for poverty, solutions are needed. Jesus words are that the poor you will always have with you but Bosch is still correct in stating that Jesus came to end poverty. From this case study, eight elements are suggested that need consideration in any attempt to aid the individual to escape the conundrum of poverty.

First is simply a reiteration of Bosch's implications. For individuals like Charlie and Jun, circumstances beyond their control oppress them as they were born in a poor country, their families were poor, and they have lacked opportunities, but in contrast, each individual must be held accountable for one's own shadiness to use Bosch's terminology. Each of us, poor or not so poor, is responsible for his or her own sins and shortcomings. However a tension should persist between one as a victim of circumstances and one's own failings.

Second, as noted above, the dependency mentality is to be avoided. This is a problem for those attempting to alleviate poverty as much as for the poor themselves. I have had the privilege of spearheading benevolence projects that gave aid to thousands of families. The short-term benefit is obvious—filled bellies—but the long-term implications should be considered. There are an average of nineteen typhoons per year in the Philippines. Both Charlie and Jun rebuilt their houses in the same location and of the same materials after the typhoon destruction. It is the same people who are flooded out repeatedly who ask for more assistance. In giving them aid my concern is whether I am really assisting or whether I am merely adding to the welfare mentality and in reality actually degrading a little more. The macro theories about the detrimental effects of aid as suggested by Moyo and R. Glenn Hubbard

⁴⁶⁵ See for example "What is Crab Mentality?" <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-the-crab-mentality.htm>.

and William Duggan need consideration on the personal level. The possibility that aid fosters an entitlement mentality deserves serious consideration.⁴⁶⁶

In tandem is the relationship of the welfare mentality and what Moyo calls remittances and labeled *balikbayan* money by the Filipinos. Moyo's contention is that remittances are part of the alternative sources of funding to aid and make an important and growing contribution to relieving poverty but she may be at variance with herself as she says that "remittances encourage reckless consumption and laziness." Her quote of Omar Davies that "remittances to Jamaicans were instilling a culture of dependency over achievement" reveals a major concern and needs further study.⁴⁶⁷

Third, the resourcefulness and entrepreneurialship of the individual must be encouraged and so attempts by both Charlie and Jun to provide for themselves should be applauded. Lax building codes still allow them to build their own homes. These means of getting a little extra income or doing the little extra for the family are a self-preservation that makes the difference between staying in society or dropping out, surviving or giving up, and even life or death. But, for the poor, there is inevitably a peril at every corner. With underemployment, there are the problems of "make work" and poor productivity, the temptation of "get rich" schemes and pyramid selling, and the pitfall of borrowing, paying interest, and being unable to repay the debt.

One of the popular programs that attempt to harness this resourcefulness is micro-lending. Moyo, for example, cites its huge success in Bangladesh but here caution is advised.⁴⁶⁸ Remenyi's warning that debt is the poor's constant companion remains valid and debt is not limited to financial complications.⁴⁶⁹ Duncan, who lived in a slum in Manila, discovered that the loan program he was operating caused a difficult social debt. When he obtained the confidence of the leaders in the community they told him that the scheme was generating *utang na loob*. Duncan continues:

⁴⁶⁶ Moyo and Hubbard and Duggan.

⁴⁶⁷ Moyo, 133–136.

⁴⁶⁸ Moyo, 126–132.

⁴⁶⁹ Remenyi in Kingsley, 200.

They proceeded to share with us that the loan program was creating more harm than good. Not only was it creating a mass of rice Christians but it was also bringing about communal breakdown. The very fact that we had to choose one person over another when giving loans was leading to misunderstanding, jealousy and strained relationships in the community. In other words, the social cost of all our giving was too high. Even though they were poor, these people preferred relational harmony over material gain.⁴⁷⁰

Filipinos borrow money to start “a little business” but generally the schemes result in financial failure so neither the financial debt nor the *utang* is repaid. The individual then feels *hiya* and avoids social contact with the person or persons from whom the finances were borrowed. Jun realized that his failures in each of his three different businesses—operating his own shop, farming, and direct selling—were because of his inexperience in business. I was unable to gauge the full ramifications of Jun’s damaged relationships, particularly with his *ate*, because of the unpaid debts but Jun’s modest demeanor spoke volumes. Good preachers are not necessarily good entrepreneurs. Beyond the situation of Jun, there is another incipient problem with micro-lending for the flawed premise is that all people can operate in a business mode. However, Filipinos often do not distinguish between income and profit—or as Viv Grigg puts it, between capital, business finances, and personal needs. In another twist of the crab mentality, the individual frequently feels obliged to use the capital for social obligations like a fiesta or a marriage, an immediate financial need such as a school bill, or a catastrophe like a medical emergency.⁴⁷¹

A fourth problem is time management, problematic for all the underemployed but particularly critical for preachers who must regulate their own time and are not accountable to anyone. It would have been insightful to verify how much time Charlie really spent on ministry. He had worked hard digging trenches and he built his small house, so he is not lazy as others can be. It is perplexing why churches continue to be so small and why a church cannot afford to pay anything as the poor still have some money. Unfortunately many preachers do not seem to know

⁴⁷⁰ Duncan, 32–42.

⁴⁷¹ Jun’s three different types of enterprises are typical of most micro-lending schemes. Grigg states that only 25% of projects are successful and recounts some of his attempts to encourage projects in Manila.

how to use their time wisely and well, as the jokes about not getting out of bed before lunch attest. On one occasion a good preacher vowed that he worked hard every day for the ministry but when we counted the hours, the average of twenty-eight per week was only about half the forty-eight or fifty-four expected in the Philippines. As already noted with Stone, inefficiency is a distinct possibility.⁴⁷²

Fifth is the necessity for retaining as much self-determination as possible. Most of the preachers in Bicol own motorbikes but, like Joseph and Jun, they all have sizable repayments. Jun's is more than a third of his income. Having seen many accidents, I have a dislike for motorbikes but that is my point of view and one not shared by the Bicol preachers. To them, the motorbike provides an independence that they highly value and an opportunity to travel to different places to fulfill ministry tasks such as visitation. The reverse is seen in G. Van der Bijl's vignette of Dutch organizations who tried to provide windmills to help poor farmers in northern India, but in the end, not one of the poor farmers bought a windmill. Their farms were too small to warrant the use on just one property and the farmers were unable to get or risk taking a loan to buy the windmills. In short, attempts at benevolence and what seemed to be a sensible development technology, failed. Van der Bijl summarized: "Like any innovation, adapted technology must be attuned to the 'total' (social, economic, cultural, political and physical) environment in which it is to be used in order to be successful and make a lasting contribution to the well-being of the people involved."⁴⁷³

Sixth, in attempts to ameliorate poverty, grassroots perspectives and local and national peculiarities should be taken into account. For the Philippines many of the things listed earlier—crab mentality, *utang*, *balikbayan* remittances, saving face, and the idiosyncrasies of Filipino poverty—will hold the key to explaining why the Philippines is not a "tiger of Asia."

Seventh, particular solutions—or at least mitigation—should be found for the calamities that eradicate the hard work and resourcefulness of men like Jun and Charlie: typhoons and medical needs.

⁴⁷² Stone, *Minister*, 27–29, already quoted in Chapter 1.

⁴⁷³ G. Van der Bijl in H. A. Reitsma and J. M. G. Kleinpenning, *The Third World in Perspective* (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1985), 330–331.

While major planning is required on a macro level to relocate localities persistently beset by flooding as stories like Ngan Thuy Nguyen's driving past her grandmother's flooded house built by international aid workers demonstrate, some things can be done on a personal level.⁴⁷⁴ For both Charlie and Jun, simple improvements might diminish the prospect of the next typhoon demolishing their houses again. Simple suggestions of local builders include building a trench and drains around the house to keep water out and wire or extra nails to keep the roof in place.

Medical emergencies are more difficult, exacerbated when high cost, incompetency, and corruption are factored in. While there are some public hospitals in the Philippines, there is nothing on the scale of Aneurin Bevan's National Health Service in Britain. As in Britain and elsewhere, the problem is intensified by rising expectations. For examples, great gains have been made in lowering infant mortality and there is now a wide availability of pharmaceutical products for minor ailments. The Philippines does have a government insurance scheme—PhilHealth—but it is contributory for both the employer and the employee and payouts are low.⁴⁷⁵ As a result, those without stable middle-class employment—the poor—are not covered. As payments for private health coverage in the Philippines are high and payouts are small, most consider them not worthwhile. Thus, Mylyn's father died of a tetanus infection because a bullet was not removed after six years, Charlie's relative died of rabies, and Harriette, the daughter of Gani, could have succumbed to dengue. Jun alluded to corruption in the distribution of medicines. Pirated drugs are even sold the pharmacies (chemists) and drugs costs are recognized to be expensive for a third-world country. Competency is another horrendous issue in the third world and so it is not unknown for a patient, for example, to be diagnosed by the local barangay doctor with a stomach ulcer without tests. Fortunately, in one case I saw, the patient

⁴⁷⁴ Ngan Thuy Nguyen, "Grandmother: Vietnam," in Carol Bergman, ed. *Another Day in Paradise: Front Line Stories From International Aid Workers* (London: Earthscan Publications, 2003), 43.

⁴⁷⁵ For example, a couple earning P19,000.00 (£237.50) a month and both contributing to PhilHealth for more than three years were reimbursed only P32,000.00 (£400.00) out of a total bill of P302,000.00 (£3,775.00) for their son's hospitalization for meningitis. The couple borrowed half the money (P151,000.00) (£1,887.50). It will take them twelve years to repay their loans. The couple were fortunate to receive about P90,000.00 (£1,125.00) as gifts from church folk and other benevolent organizations.

did not have any finances for his prescribed painkillers and underwent an emergency appendectomy within forty-eight hours. The reality is that, even with loans and gifts, Charlie and Bertha could not afford a health bill of P20,000.00 (£250.00). Because of whom Jun and his family know, they may be able to incur a bill of P40,000.00 (£500.00) but this would hardly cover a routine appendix operation. In the meantime, poor Filipinos will continue to try various herbal, home, and traditional remedies and consult mediums and other spiritists.

Education in the Bible college in the light of scarce resources

Education is actually an eighth possible consideration in the alleviation of poverty. I confine my comments mainly in light of the CHED findings and as how they might affect the nine Church of Christ Bible colleges.⁴⁷⁶ CHED certainly claims that part of its role is to help relieve poverty.⁴⁷⁷

We have already seen that, of the nineteen preachers in Bicol, eleven spent four years at an unaccredited Bible college, four have little or no formal education beyond high school, and six have no formal theological education, leaving only four with accredited undergraduate degrees. Joseph is one of those with no formal tertiary education and he has needed to compensate accordingly. The case study of Mel introduced four concerns: Lukasse's untrained soldiers, a lack of resources, the necessity for equipping for specific tasks such as church planting, and insufficient competent people to lead the congregation. The problem of accreditation in ministerial training including the clamour for integrity, the struggle to provide for the family, the quality of the graduate, and the need to be recognized as a professional was considered in the case study with Gani. Unfortunately, only one of the nine Church of Christ Bible colleges is accredited. But educational attainment is not an automatic escape from poverty as many are like Mel who has a professional accredited degree but is still in material poverty. However, neither he nor the other three of the preachers are part of the powerlessness of their fellow Bicolanos as reported by Cannell.

⁴⁷⁶ Angeles, 33–44.

⁴⁷⁷ See the numerous references in Puno.

Colleges must examine how they can play their part in providing education for underprivileged students. Most already provide some scholarships or work programs but these may need examination in the light of welfare mentality. The educational attainment of the faculty requires scrutiny for many faculty have not attained a recognized bachelor's degree so that raising finances to obtain a master's degree is probably the biggest obstacle. Analysis of the quality of education offered is an urgent task. As CHED has particularly identified communication skills as to be lacking, the Bible college must encourage critical thinking skills. ICCM's attempts to ameliorate in this area have included remedial classes in English and hermeneutics, use of visiting professors from overseas, essay-form assignments rather than multiple choice exams, practical as well as academic classes, giving repeat assignments when the original submission was deficient, and one-on-one pastoral care.⁴⁷⁸ The Bible college should prepare for the marketplace. What Joseph, Mel, Gani, and Jun consider important is not necessarily a priority for those in the pew, but, beyond the usual theology and preaching classes, the preachers of Bicol tell us that the philosophy of ministry, church planting, managerial leadership, and church growth require attention. Employment of the graduates remains a concern but in contradiction to the general CHED findings, the ICCM administration found that virtually all of their recent graduates acquired a full-time position. An investigation revealed that the schools that hired education majors wanted teachers with integrity. Employers were impressed with the general competence of graduates who had had practical skills such as public speaking, planning sermons and curriculum, and preaching, evangelism, and discipleship experience as part of their training. As Filipinos are highly relational, the pastoral care and personal attention given by professors for such mundane matters as writing resumes and critiquing sermons were appreciated by the students and their families.

Ministry and poverty

Thus far in this case study, I have dealt with the broad topic of poverty as it was the initial *problema* that every minister voiced. I argued that one's perceptions

⁴⁷⁸ Puno.

on poverty should be complexified and that the sins that may be ingratiated by poverty need to be guarded against. I specified a number of personal and Filipino attributes that I believe must be factored in any consideration in alleviation of poverty and so I argued that it is imperative for the poor to spend their limited resources wisely and avoid welfare and crab mentalities. For those that desire to alleviate poverty, I suggested that further evaluation or attention is needed for mitigating against calamities like typhoons and health crises, giving aid, receiving *balikbayan* remittances, and providing micro-lending programmes.

But as this thesis is contexted from the perspective of the pastoral ministry, I finish this chapter with a few simple considerations of poverty as it pertains to ministry. Chapter 1 suggests that ministry is the most difficult job in the world but it is not hard to see that poverty complexifies the pastoral role and identity even further. The man who senses a call to minister to a poor congregation, would be wise to plan well in advance.

While Jun and the other preachers interviewed do not conform to all the incapacitating aspects expected by Lister, Standing and Szal, and Cannell, their warnings need to be heeded. The crisis as experienced by Joseph and his stress is at least partially exacerbated by poverty. Time management as a challenge for the underemployed minister was treated above but additionally, the demoralization of underemployment must be accounted for. While Gani and Mel may feel some power and respect due to their positions, the mental health of the minister needs particular consideration. How this can be attended to in the independent Church of Christ congregations remains problematic.

Far be it from me to judge Charlie and his dealings with the mountain men, as it is difficult to dwell, as Isaiah expressed it, among a people of unclean lips but the man of God must strive at all times to be above and beyond reproach and always be a man of integrity so that he minimizes the possibility of the snare of bribery and corruption.

While those who grow up in poverty and have ministered to the poor probably intuitively know the spiritual realities and peculiar temptations of poverty, the man in the pulpit will be prudent to articulate them to his congregation. As

already argued, the traits such as the love of money, welfare mentality, *utang na loob*, *bahala na* attitudes, and crab mentality are debilitating.

Intuitively also, each of the preachers automatically spends—and should spend—valuable time and resources in the remediation of poverty. These men live in a landscape where typhoons and floods are common. Gani is but a few miles from the active Mayon Volcano. Even though Jun’s house was destroyed and many of the ministers lost personal possessions, they all actively led in relief efforts after the calamity of Typhoon Durian/Reming. One of the preachers, Tom Pel, who is Mel’s brother, visited nearly every one of the Churches of Christ in Bicol to co-ordinate the work. Other than transport reimbursement and a little additional for food, he received no remuneration. On a regular basis, each of the men in these case studies attempts to help less fortunate neighbours. Most would be impressed with Mel’s efforts at his church to help out the less fortunate but it is heartbreaking for him to have to discontinue his outreach for the very poor at Punta Tarawal for lack of finances for fares and to no longer visit the jail because he does not have any second-hand clothing to give the prisoners. The reality is that poor people must rely on men who face the possibility of becoming destitute in order to receive spiritual leadership.

But the basic *problema* for every preacher is still the *walang pera*. The fifth of the initial *mga problema* voiced by the preachers—“How can I minister when the church offerings are so small and they cannot pay me but the barest minimum?”—remains a pressing personal concern. All the men of this thesis struggle on a daily basis with income well below the poverty line. As seen already, they have attempted some solutions, albeit with limited success. As Apostle Paul supplemented his income with tent-making, Jun does his electrical work, Charlie has his occasional automotive repair, and Joseph has sought part-time work. Preachers are notoriously not good businessmen. Gani and other preachers have suffered some *hiya* as their tertiary education is unaccredited and they have few other skills. Charlie augments his family’s diet with some agricultural produce but Jun’s concerted attempts at farming were thwarted by drought and floods. A couple of the Bicol preachers not included in the case studies do some teaching in small private schools and Mel could

revert to this even though he has not passed his LET exam. Some of the nineteen preachers have received finances from other churches. Mel's initial hopes for some continuing funding from other Bicolanos proved illusionary. Others have been given money from places like Manila and California but this again raises the old problem of welfare mentality. The meagre offerings of a number of churches are supplemented by *balikbayan* money but this financing is often intermittent and typically spent on improving the physical facilities. While many of the preachers have considered further education outside ministry, financial concerns usually have been prohibitive. One attempted law, another engineering, and Mel still dreams of doing his LET. As noted from the initial survey in the Introduction, many are deficient in their theological education and, aware of the challenge of untrained soldiers, desire to rectify that. Mel has taken some classes but those who attended the unaccredited colleges find that none of their credits can be transferred to a recognized college. Regardless, on a very pragmatic level, unless the theological education enables the preacher to expand the size of his congregation and thus the funds on the offering plate, the minister will receive no additional financial help. Finally, nearly half of the nineteen Bicol ministers can remain in the ministry because their wives are in one occupation—education. Eva and Moriel both teach in government schools while Karen is completing her education degree.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁹ My observations of nearly all the Churches of Christ in Bicol is that the highest income-winners of the congregation are usually school teachers. Teng Besa is an exception. Presumably, health sector workers could also be good contributors but professionals in this field have a high propensity to migrate overseas or at least stay in Manila. The one accredited Church of Christ Bible college, ICCM, has an education major in its BTh degree that allows the graduate to sit for the LET exam.

Conclusions

For further reflection

Thus, the men of the ministry in Bicol have found some solutions to their *mga problema*. The tragedy is that the solutions are only partial. While there is no substitute for hard work and long hours if the pastoral minister desires to achieve success—such as Mel’s visitation of every house in Libmanan—a number of themes may be worthy of further reflection in my three contexts of the Philippines, Churches of Christ, and the pastoral ministry.

Although the brand name of Churches of Christ in the Philippines remains strong, the general Christian feeling is that denominational labels are increasingly irrelevant. Actually, the founding fathers of the Restoration Movement are completely in accord with this for the Churches of Christ have always loathed being a denomination and sought rather to be a unity movement to restore the principles and practices of the New Testament. Over the two hundred years since Alexander Campbell advocated the restoration of the ancient order of things, the movement has found increasing acceptance of some of its principles.⁴⁸⁰ Thus, Bosch’s *Transforming Mission* and Hans Küng’s, *The Church*, read like Church of Christ textbooks.⁴⁸¹ The mainstream of the Restoration Movement has always desired to be Christians only but not the only Christians and therefore respected those with differing theological opinions but it could be helpful to wider Christendom to examine in more detail the Church of Christ position on concepts such as the Day of Pentecost and baptism.

I believe that, on a practical level, Churches of Christ in the Philippines require continual self-examination to ensure that they persist in practicing the positive aspects of their tradition, being progressive in method and avoiding sectarianism. Repeating the same old shibboleths is insufficient and soon irrelevant. Divisions as occurred with EARM are self-defeating—as even those involved would concur—and heated debates on the necessity for accreditation are petty issues and

⁴⁸⁰ Campbell, “Restoration.”

⁴⁸¹ Bosch, *Transforming* and Küng, *Church*.

should be discarded. New ideas are always desirable for preparing sermons, improving the quality of worship, promoting integrity, and planting churches. Much valuable work could be done gathering precise data and setting a positive progressive agenda that meets the needs of the constituents and communities for the next generation. I have already shown how Gani contextualizes his theological heritage for his church today and it would benefit others to learn from the planning, methodology, and progress of Mel.

Having personally taught and ministered in the Philippines and then writing this thesis, I have found it challenging to explicate Filipino perceptions to outsiders and to help Filipinos to understand themselves. Even more difficult is to explain Filipino reactions in certain events. They speak English, idolize America (in the main), and migrate in the millions but at critical junctures, they do not conform to expected Western patterns and so few achieve their potential overseas. Jocano's painstaking attempts are a good beginning and Kiefer's, Mark Johnson's and Cannell's niche studies are helpful but still it is left, for example, to figure out the difference in Filipino thinking between *baklas* and *silahis* and understand the ramifications of Filipino emotionalism, crab-mentality, relationships, *bayanihan*, *utang*, and *hiya*.⁴⁸² Further attention to such studies, I believe, may have significant benefit for a wide variety of business and economic interests whether it is the Filipino attempting to assist a customer in a call centre or a Western entrepreneur doing business in the Philippines.

Returning to a Christian context, de Mesa highlights the disjuncture between Filipino theology and practice and I have implied similar dissonance between Church of Christ (and general Christian) ethics and some Filipino values.⁴⁸³ Further study into the Filipino mindset would help the pastoral minister to come within closer understanding distance and so lead his people beyond the crippling aspects of crab-mentality or *utang*, for example. Additional examination of the relatively modest Lockean philosophy of Churches of Christ and how it has been a success or an anomaly in grassroots Filipino society may also prove fruitful. Corruption and

⁴⁸² See various books authored by Jocano, Johnson, *Beauty*, and Cannell.

⁴⁸³ de Mesa, 3–10.

bribery remain universal blight on every society and although punitive legislation has been enacted globally, still no one goes to jail in the Philippines for tax evasion. Research on how to instill a desire for integrity and diminish de Mesa's disjuncture could be valuable not only in moral terms but also for financial and social benefits.

In the consideration of poverty, I have mostly confined myself to personal, spiritual, and ministerial aspects but I did suggest that peculiar Filipino society perceptions may be the key to unlocking the metanarrative as to why the Philippines economically is not a tiger of Asia. Until some answers are found, sixty million individuals—equivalent to the total population of the United Kingdom—remain in misery. Most who suffer the economic deprivation do not have the identity and success as do our four ministers in Bicol. They exist in their mindset as Cannell's those who have nothing at all.⁴⁸⁴

While I have appreciated the objections to the obsession of numerical success, in the wider business world, every manager is assigned quantitative targets and goals. Even the pleasure fisherman cannot help but do a little boasting of the length of his catch. In this era of declining Christianity in the West and booming populations in the East, I believe it would be of benefit for ministry and ministry formation to have further comparisons between the expectations of achievement in the wider employment world and ministry.

In the last fifty years, there have been significant declines in employment as coalminers, railway men, postal workers, bank-tellers, milkmen, typists, clerks, and stenographers as these professions are simply no longer needed as before. Ministry continually must evolve to meet fresh challenges thus avoiding Ballard's crisis of ministry role and identity and Ray Anderson's ultimate irrelevance.⁴⁸⁵ I have argued above that further examination of success, Filipino values, and ethics would be helpful. Let me add a few extra possibilities to illustrate the scope of the on-going need. I pointed out that half the ministers of Churches of Christ in Bicol are dependent on their school teacher wives to continue their vocation. The social and family implications—as well as spiritual, ministerial, and congregational

⁴⁸⁴ Cannell, 15.

⁴⁸⁵ Anderson, *Shape*, 7 and 12.

perspectives—need investigation. Much attention for the preachers is required in the area of mental health as has been seen in the short treatment of stress in Chapter 1, the irrationalities encountered in Chapter 3, and the predictable strains of poverty. The parish priest of yesteryear knew everyone in his village and Mel has been able to go house to house for visitation in Libmanan. The assumption is that all belong to the parish but the preacher in Manila (and New York and London) cannot access the gated subdivisions and high-rise condominiums. Fresh strategies for the pastoral minister to remain in contact with his community are in order. While the preachers of Bicol still scramble for ministerial resources, that does alter with Internet availability and the recent availability of cellphones has revolutionized communication in the provinces. The new question then is how to use the internet and the social networks for ministry—and the accompanying responsibility of technological ethics.

The crises, the conundrums, the challenges, and the complexities

As I have examined the ministry through the pastoral perspectives of the Churches of Christ in the Bicol, my goal has been to prioritize hearing, observing, and documenting the challenges that are perplexing on the ground level for the ministers of Bicol and which appear to be under-researched especially in an Asian context. Thus I have used four cases studies with Joseph Sevilla, Mel Pel, Gani Ibarrentos, and Jun Bataller and began with the contextual questions—their *mga problema*—to take cognizance of their perceived needs.

In Chapter 1, I argued that ministerial crisis is due to factors such as poor remuneration, forced exits, insecure tenure and casual employment arrangements, imprecise job descriptions, and unevaluated personal abilities. On the other hand, I have shown various facets throughout this thesis that allow the pastoral minister to find a satisfying role and identity. With Joseph, I set forth baptism and preaching. With Mel, I presented his statistical charts, his concept of the Day of Pentecost, his successes despite lack of finance, and his satisfaction with achieving at least some of his five-year plan. Gani maintained that his role and identity comes with conducting worship services, facilitating small groups, and relying on prayer. With Jun, I

centred on the crisis of poverty but he continues his ministry because he avoids personal and spiritual negativity.

With the conundrums that Mel experienced in planting a new church in Chapter 2, I argued that despite being a lone church planter with limited finances, insufficient resources, and untrained soldiers, he is able to build his new church.

In considering the three challenges in Chapter 3 that Gani presented, I argued that first, it is possible to minister with one's home congregation but integration of outsiders may be difficult along with possible family conflicts, perhaps in the financial area; second, offering unaccredited degrees lacks integrity and accruing an accredited degree may be vital for the welfare of the preacher's family; and third, Gani's perception of success is sufficient for him and his congregation.

Finally, in Chapter 4 I considered the complexities of poverty. I argued that various spiritual, personal, and Filipino attributes should be considered in any alleviation of poverty and highlighted a number of issues for ministry in the light of poverty.

Recurring themes

As summarized above, primarily in this thesis, I have concentrated on six of the perceived pastoral problems of the Bicolano Church of Christ preachers as presented in Table 4. However, because I have taken into account the experience of and the challenges raised by the men in the ministry, as Swinton and Mowat expect, many additional fragments and motifs have arisen.⁴⁸⁶ Above, I presented several possibilities for further research. Now I simply bring together a few of these other fragments as recurring themes.

The question of what resources the preachers could use was mentioned with Mel but otherwise not directly considered but it is interesting to note how they have endeavoured to find solutions. For mobility I noted that all the men had purchased motorbikes. To address Lukasse's concern for untrained soldiers, Mel—and all the

⁴⁸⁶ Swinton and Mowat, vii and 3–14. See also Anderson, *Shape*.

others—were keen to take advantage of any seminars and written material they could gather. Internet accessibility will significantly facilitate in this area in the future.⁴⁸⁷

Guest in part is correct, at least when it comes to Churches of Christ in Bicol, that evangelicals expect to be quantitatively successful.⁴⁸⁸ I have argued that the preacher must evaluate himself and the work that he does for, as with every other occupation, he must set out to achieve. However success is defined, the preachers find identity and satisfaction in their role in the ministry. For Joseph, I have argued that there is the heartbreak of forced exits, among other things, but he—and the other preachers—can point to the baptisms they perform. Mel can compile statistics that show the growth of this church from twelve attendees to 327 in eight years while Gani finds identity in his worship services, his small groups, and his prayer.

I did not set out to theologize systematically on Restoration Movement beliefs but as this thesis is contexted in the faith basis of Churches of Christ, extensive description has been given of a few quintessential practices such as worship services at GRS, Libmanan, and Agos and baptisms at Banga. I have described, explained, and reflected on precepts such as baptism through Joseph, the Lord's Supper and worship through Gani, the Day of Pentecost with Mel, and of course ministry with all. While Churches of Christ are autonomous independent congregations, they stand firmly within evangelical Protestantism and so they have little that is unique in a diversity of theological topics such as preaching, prayer, evangelism, Biblical authority, Christology, and the trinity. However, as reflected by both Joseph and Mel, they do disagree with faith-only theology as they include baptism as part of salvation.

Likewise, I have not attempted to present a full picture of Filipino society or sections of it. However, in seeking to understand ministry in Bicol, it has been natural to include a few basic perceptions including *hiya*, *utang na loob*, relationships, *pakikisama*, crab-mentality, and *bahala na*.

As one of the by-products of this research, I hope to stimulate reflection in ministerial formation institutions that will facilitate them to prepare the graduate for

⁴⁸⁷ Lukasse, 139.

⁴⁸⁸ Guest, in Guest, Tusting and Woodhead, 83.

ministry. Lyall's young man who had nothing to say is a debacle and so a wide variety of themes that may be useful for further reflection in spiritual training from the cutting edge of ministry are introduced.⁴⁸⁹ Thus, for example, in the first chapter, the suggestion is that a congregation gives clear work expectations and a written contract for the minister and that the minister gives consideration to his integrity and his natural strengths in ministry. I proposed that expository sermons be preached and attention be given to applications and presentation. On a theological level, I raised practical concerns for baptism such as whom to baptize and the assimilation of baptismal candidates into the regular life of the congregation.

The final theme has a dual perspective but is best if we consider it as one. First there is the man himself and then there is his passionate mission. The Schoolmen taught us to be theocentric but at the foundation of the pastoral ministry there must be the man, the person, and he must, as Lyall's young man discovered, have something significant to share. It is necessary for the minister first to be a person and second to be one who can bring the people to God and God to the people. He must attempt to enrich or improve the life of those with whom he (or she) has contact. He must be a real person with whom others can identify and follow. Thus there is the endeavour to live honest lives, the emphasis on integrity, and the similar lists that Joseph and Gani gave for the man to be a church leader. These Bicolano men, all short in stature and some weighing less than 50kg, are no different than any other humans and are just like Edrington's everyday men but unlike Edrington's men, they—despite paucity of advanced education, personal limitations, *mga problema*, and grinding poverty—remain men who embody passions and foster ambitions.⁴⁹⁰ The significance is that, in the main, they are ordinary men but they are men who are not weighed down with welfare mentality, and they are men who go beyond simply performing a job. They would not use the terminology of Bosch's *Transforming Mission* but they have contextualized the essence of that vision, however imperfectly, in their ministry. In passing, I have noted their sense of call from God to their ministry but in their work, like all men, they find a role and

⁴⁸⁹ Lyall, 22.

⁴⁹⁰ Edrington, 1.

identity and it is a proactive one that enables them to lead in their community. Like Joseph, they preach practical considerations such as how to love one's neighbor. Like Mel, they discourage vices, visit from house to house, seek out those who need help, and encourage their congregation to have better attitudes and outlook on life. Like Gani, they are leaders in their clans, their *barangays*, their public worship, their private small groups, and their prayer. Like Jun, they persevere against poverty and financial failure and do not hesitate, even in times of loss after a typhoon, to facilitate relief work in their towns and *barrios*. All of them, imperfect men, who have let us see their strengths and their weaknesses, are men who still have the courage to work for the betterment of their communities. *Araw araw*, they have Aguilar's experience of meeting people and their faith, their person, and their ministry is neither an academic, nor a theological, nor a sacerdotal irrelevance for they have something to say.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹¹ Aguilar, *Ministry*, x and xi.

Appendices

Appendix 1

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Initial survey

1. Your Name

2. Contact Information

- 2a. Full mailing address
- 2b. Telephone
- 2c. Cellphone
- 2d. Email

3. You & Your Family

- 3a. What is your age?
- 3b. Name of your wife
- 3c. What is your home church? (Church where you grew up or where you became a Christian)
- 3d. Your education? 3d1. What education?
 High School only attended college graduated college master's degree
work
- 3d2. Which college(s) did you attend?
- 3d3. What year did you graduate & what degree?
- 3d4. Are you doing any further education now? Where?
- 3e. Your children: Name Age Male/female

4. Your Home

- 4a. How many rooms?
 bedrooms sala/dining rooms kitchen, CR's etc
TOTAL
- 4b. Who owns the house?
- 4c. What materials is it made out of?
- 4d. Which of these does your house have? Yes / No Inside CR Yes / No TV Yes / No Computer Yes /
No Electricity Yes / No Refrigerator Yes / No Inside Running Water
- 4e. Do you own a car or a motorbike?

5. Your Church

- 5a. Church address
- 5b. In what year was the church started?
- 5c. How many people does your church seat?
- 5d. How long have you been a minister there?
- 5e. How many hours do you work for the church each week?
- 5f. What is your monthly salary?
- 5g. What is your church's monthly income?
- 5h. Names of any other church workers:
- 5i. Elders names
- 5j. Attendance each week
 adults youth children
- 5k. What other churches have you served?
- 5l. How do you spend your time each week? (no. of hours)
 in meetings evangelism
 preparation for sermons, Bible studies etc, practice times
 general church administration discipleship/pasturing/nurturing
 travel activities for other churches
- 5m. Do you have any other jobs/ sources of income? Yes / No If yes, what?
- 5n. What have you been able to achieve since you have been minister at your church? What
growth or advancements have you had?

6. Your Motivation

- 6a. Why did you become a preacher?
- 6b. Why did you become a member of Churches of Christ?
- 6c. What encourages you the most in your ministry?
- 6d. What discourages you the most?
- 6e. What are your plans for the church?

Appendix 2

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First questionnaire for Chapter 1

1. At which church do you minister?
2. In what year did you begin preaching there?
3. Why did you decide to become a minister?
4. Why do you stay in the ministry?
5. What do you achieve by doing your ministry?
6. Write down the main things that you do in your ministry. Pls. list at least 10 or 12.
7. In Question 6. above, pls. number them in order of what you think is the most important. No. "1" is the most important.
8. Do you think your ministry is worthwhile? Why/why not?
9. What do you do to meet people's needs?
10. Give an example of how you think you really helped someone. Describe in detail.
11. Why do you think your job is important?
12. How does your work help the community?

Appendix 3

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First questionnaire for Chapter 2

A. Preparing

- A1. What is the name of your new church?
- A2. Whose idea was it to start this church?
- A3. When did you or whoever started the church begin to plan this new church?
- A4. Who actually began to do the work to start the church?
- A5. When and how did you become involved?
- A6. Why did you decide to plant a new church?
- A7. Why was this new church needed?

B. Beginning

- B1. What did you do to prepare for the starting of the church?
- B2. When did the new church actually start?
- B3. How did you do it? Pls. describe the steps that you took.
- B4. How many people did you begin with?
- B5. In as much detail as you can, describe the beginnings of the church.
- B6. Why did you start the church in this location?
- B7. Who provided initial finances?
- B8. How much money did you have to begin the church?
- B9. How did you get your building?

C. Continuing

- C1. What obstacles have you had to overcome?
- C2. What particularly was helpful?
- C3. What has been the hardest thing for you to do?
- C4. What failures and disappointments have you faced?
- C5. What has not worked for you?
- C6. What has been your greatest success?
- C7. What other successes have you had?

D. Now

- D1. What would you do different if you were starting the church again?
- D2. What is special or different about this new church?
- D3. Describe your typical day of work.
- D4. Describe your new congregation now.
- D5. How many people attend worship services in you new church now?
- D6. What other ministries and services does the church offer?
- D7. What growth have you seen?
- D8. What has been the reaction of and the reception by the local people outside the church?
- D9. Do you think that you are making a difference in the community? If so, how?
- D10. What publicity have you done?
- D11. What budget do you have now?
- D12. Has it been worth beginning this church? Why/why not?

E. Future

- E1. What are the next things that you plan to do?
- E2. How long do you intend to do this ministry?
- E3. What are your goals and plans for the future?

Appendix 4

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First questionnaire for Chapter 3

1. What church(es) did you grow up in?
2. Why did you decide to go to college?
3. Why did you decide to become a preacher? [If wife, how do you feel about your husband being a preacher?]
4. Why did you decide to return to minister back in your [your husband's] home congregation?
5. When did you begin to minister with them?
6. How do you feel your family members have accepted you as their preacher [preacher's wife]?
7. Why do you think that they wanted you [your husband] to preach at their church?
8. How many people attended worship when you came?
9. How many people attend worship now?
10. What are the goals of your [you and your husband's] ministry?
11. What things do you [your husband] do to grow the church?
12. Describe your [husband's] typical day of work.
13. What has succeeded?
14. What has been particularly difficult?
15. How do you feel about your ministry with your [husband's] home congregation?
16. What has not worked/failed?
17. If you were to do it all again, what would you do differently?
18. What are the joys of your [husband's] work?
19. What are your disappointments and regrets?
20. Would you accept another ministry if it was offered? YES / NO Why/why not?
21. How long do you intend to stay in your current ministry?

Appendix 5

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First questionnaire for Chapter 4

What is the name of your church?

A. Income

- A1. How much does your church give you each month?
- A2. Does this amount vary? If so, by how much?
- A3. What is this money called? |_____| love gift; |_____| salary; |_____| other
- A4. What is your wife's work?
- A5. How much does she earn each month?
- A6. Does anyone give you money from other sources, such as *balikbayans* or family or another church? If so, how much each month?
- A7. If so, what relationship are they to you?
- A8. Do you have any additional income? If so, how much each month?
- A9. Does the amount vary? If so, by how much?
- A10. How do you earn this money?
- A11. What is your average total income each month?

B. Expenditure

- B1. How much does you and your family spend each month on the following?
 - Housing
 - Electricity
 - Water, including drinking water
 - Telephone
 - Food
 - Transport
 - School fees
 - Medical and dental
 - Helping your extended family (e.g. brothers, parents, cousins)

C. Poor or Rich?

- C1. Compared to the other people in your church, do you feel that you are
 - |_____| much richer than most of them
 - |_____| a little richer than most of them
 - |_____| about the same income as them
 - |_____| a little poorer than most of them
 - |_____| much poorer than most of them
- C2. Do you think that you have enough income each month? Why/why not?
- C3. Why do you not get another job with a better income?
- C4. Why do you stay in the ministry?
- C5. How long do you intend to stay in this ministry?

C6. What do you go without because you do not have enough income?

C7. What, in your opinion, should be done to increase your income?

C8. Which of these do you do?

YES	NO	PAST ONLY	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Smoke or chew tobacco
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drink alcohol
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take illegal drugs
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gamble, play Loto, go to the Cock Pit

C9. Answer these pls. concerning borrowing money:

How many times have you borrowed money?

How much have you borrowed each time?

What was the interest rate?

Have you repaid all of it? Why/why not?

Why did you borrow it?

D. Your Church

D1. What is your church's income?

D2. How many people attend on average during your main worship service?

D3. How many of the regular attendees have a paying full-time job?

D4. What are their main jobs?

D5. What is the job of the richest person in your congregation?

D6. Why do the people of the church not give you more salary?

D7. What have you done to try to increase the income of the church?

D8. What could be done to increase the church's income?

D9. What else would you like to say about finances, poverty, and the like?

Appendix 6

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Second questionnaire for Chapter 4

Following Standing, Guy and Richard Szal. *Poverty and Basic Needs: Evidence from Guyana and the Philippines*. Geneva: International Labour Office, 1979.

1. **Total income:** What is your total income per month?
2. **Expenditure by basic need category:** What are the main items you spend money on each month?

Housing
Electricity
Water, including drinking water
Telephone
Food
Transport
School fees
Medical and dental
Helping your extended family (e.g. brothers, parents, cousins)

3. Demographic characteristics

	Husband	Wife	1 st Child	2 nd Child	3 rd Child
Name					
Age					
Highest Education					
Height					
Weight					
No of siblings					
Your place in family					
No of siblings still alive					
Age of mother at death					
What did she die of?					
Age of father at death					
What did he die of?					
Other family					

4. and 5. **Occupational characteristics and Employment status:** Please list all employment:

4. Husband

5. Wife

	Dates worked	Job	Place (city/town) of employment	Salary per month Php	No of hours per week worked
Current					
Before					
Before That					
3 rd Job					
2 nd Job					
1 st Job					

6. **Nutritional intake:** What have you eaten in the last 24 hours? Please include amounts.

	Breakfast	Merienda	Lunch	Afternoon Merienda	Supper	Evening Snack
Drink						
Carbohydrates						
Viand/Meat						
Vegetables						
Fruit						
Sweets/Dessert						

7. **History of illness with days' work lost:**

- 7a. What medicines or drugs do you take?
- 7b. What past operations have you had?
- 7c. What illnesses have you had in the past?
- 7d. How many days were you unable to work because of these?
- 7e. What medical conditions do you have now?
- 7f. What physical handicaps do you have?
- 7g. What health problems have your children had?
- 7h. Do you have any form of medical insurance?
- 7i. If you get sick, where do you get medical help from?
- 7j. Where did you/your wife give birth to your children?
- 7k. How do you pay for your medical bills?

8. **Educational characteristics:** What post-high school education have you had?

9. **Sources of water:** Where do you get your water from?

10. **Sanitation facilities:** What CR facilities does your house have?

11. **Housing characteristics and conditions**

11a. How many rooms does your home have?

11b. How many people live in your home?

11c. What materials is your house made of?

11d. Which of these does your house have?

Inside CR

TV

Computer

Electricity

Refrigerator

Inside Running Water

11e. Who owns your house and lot?

11f. Who built your house?

11g. How big is your lot?

12. **Access to public transport and markets:**

12a. Where do you shop?

12b. What public transport could you use? How much does it cost?

13. **Amount and type of assets owned:** Which of these do you have/own:

Bank account

House & Lot

Furniture

Motor vehicle

Jewelry

Clothing

Other

Appendix 7

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Third questionnaire for Chapter 4

1. What is the attendance of your church now?
2. How have you tried to increase the income of the church?
3. Have you had any success in raising the income of the church? If so, please give details.
4. What growth have you seen your congregation?
5. What is your church's income now?
6. Who is poorer than you in your community? Why?
7. Who is poorer than you in your church? Why?
8. Why do you stay in the ministry?
9. What would you do if you left the ministry?
10. What have you done in the past to try to earn more money?
11. What could you do to earn more money?
12. Do you grow any fruit and vegetables? Why/Why not?
13. Why do you not get another full-time job?
14. How much is your personal income per month?
15. What are the main items you spend money on each month?
16. How much money have you borrowed – past and present?
17. Where and how did you get all the materials for your house?
18. Why did you buy your motorbike?
19. What to you is poverty? Define poverty?
20. How much poverty do you feel that you are in?
21. Why do you think that you are in poverty? What do you think are the reasons?
22. What have you done to try to get out of poverty? How have you tried to overcome poverty?
23. Following Lister, do you ever feel any of these? When or how?
 - Lack of voice
 - Disrespected
 - Humiliation
 - Assault on dignity
 - Low self-esteem
 - Shame
 - Stigma
 - Powerlessness
 - Denial of rights
 - Diminished citizenship
24. When or how? Do you:
 - Do you feel as though you are a regular part of society?
 - Do you function as a regular citizen?
 - Is there anything you cannot do as a citizen because you are poor?
25. What are your dreams for the future of your children?

26. Which of these are problems for you? When or how?
- Hunger
 - No primary education
 - Gender inequality
 - Child mortality
 - Maternal health
 - Diseases
 - Environmental destruction
27. How do you think/feel about dependency/entitlement/welfare mentality?
28. How have typhoons or other natural disasters contributed to your poverty? If so, how? What was your loss? What did you experience?
29. Do you feel that you have made any unwise decisions that have caused/help cause poverty? If so, how? What was your loss? What did you experience?
30. Has the action or decision of someone else caused you poverty? If so, how? Which action or decision? What was your loss? What did you experience?
31. Does corruption cause you poverty? If so, how? Please give a few examples.
32. Do you ever give help to others? If so, what?
33. Mylyn, do you support Jun staying in the ministry? Why/why not?
34. Have you ever had any doubts about being in the ministry? If “yes,” what doubts have you had.
35. Specifically, can I have permission to divulge your financial affairs in my thesis?

Appendix 8

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Second questionnaire for Chapter 3

1. Has your situation at the church changed since 2008? If so, in what ways?
2. How has the church grown since 2008?
3. What problems and/or disappointments have you had since 2008?
4. Has your personal/family situation changed since 2008? If so, in what ways?
5. Are you still employed full-time at the church? If no, why not?
6. Besides from the church, do you have any further income/employment? If so, what?
7. Has Karen's situation changed at all since 2008? If so, what?
8. What are your main jobs at the church now?
9. What is the average offering at the church now?
10. What is the attendance at the church now?
11. What is your income from the church now?
12. How do you feel about ministering with your home congregation now?
13. Do you think that your standing/relationship/respect in the church grown? If so, how and why? If not, why not?
14. Do Nelson and Oscar still live in the same compound? Are there any changes in your relationship with them? If so, what?
15. How is Tomo?
16. Who are the elders now at Agos? What are their relationships to you?
17. Who are the deacons? What are their relationships to you?
18. What percentage of the church now are your relatives?
19. Karen, how do you feel about living in Albay now?
20. Karen, how much Bicolano can you speak now?
21. Have you had any relationship problems with your family? If so, what?
22. Do you feel that your family – in any way – still treats you like a child? If so, what?
23. Who really “leads” in the church? Why?
24. Who is the most influential person in the church? Why?
25. Have you had any successes in getting members/converts to leave their vices?
26. Have you done any further education? If so, what?
27. Did you attend any seminars in 2009 or 2010? When and where?
28. Where, if anywhere, do you get encouragement or ideas to continue/improve your ministry?
29. What “success” have you had in your ministry recently (2009 and 2010)?
30. Do you still feel “Church of Christ?” Why/why not?
31. How has your worship ministry grown?
32. What is the situation with your cell groups now?
 - How many?
 - Attendance?
 - How have they grown?
 - How have they been helpful to the church?
33. Prayer:
 - Have you had any examples of how prayer has worked for you in the last two years?
 - How has prayer helped the church?
34. If you had your ministry at Agos to begin all over again, what would you not change?
35. What things would you do differently?

Appendix 9

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Second questionnaire for Chapter 1

1. What is your current ministry? Anu ang iyong kasalukuyang ministeryo?
2. Do you feel contented in your ministry? Why/why not? Kuntento ka ba sa iyong ministeryo? Bakit/Bakit hindi?
3. Do you think your ministry is worthwhile? Why/why not? Kapaki-pakinabang ba ang iyong ministeryo? Bakit/Bakit hindi?
4. What in your ministry is worthwhile? Anu ang kapakinabangan sa iyong ministeryo?
5. What did you achieve in your ministry in 2010? What “successes” did you have? Anu-anong mga bagay na nakamit mo sa iyong ministeryo noong 2010? Anu-anong mga katagumpayan ang iyong nakamit?
6. How many baptisms did you perform in 2010? Ilan ang iyong nabautismuhan sa taong 2010?
7. What were the disappointments of your ministry in 2010? Anu-anong mga kinadismayaan mo s iyong ministeryo noong 2010?
8. Why do you stay in the ministry? Bakit ka nananatili sa ministeryo?
9. Write down the main things that you do in your ministry. Please list at least 10 or 12. Isulat ang mga pinakaimportanteng bagay na ginagawa mo sa iyong ministeryo. Pakiusap, sumulat ng 10 o 12 bagay.
10. Now, in Question 9. above, please number them in order of what you think is the most important. No. “1” is the most important. Mula sa ika-9 na tanong sa itaas, paki-ayos ito ayon sa tingin mong pagkakasunod-sunod . Ang una ay ang pinaka-importante.
11. Concerning Nabuntugan: Tungkol sa Nabuntugan:
 - a. What is your ministry there? Anu ang iyong ministeryo doon?
 - b. When does this group meet? Tuwing kelan nagkikita-kita ang grupong ito?
 - c. How many people attend? Ilan ang dumadalo sa pagtitipon?
 - d. How many baptisms have you had there? Ilan na angiyong nabautismuhan doon?
 - e. How is it growing? Paano ito lumalago?
 - f. What problems do you have? Anu ang iyong mga suliranin?
12. What help do you give to the Apad congregation? Anu ang tulong na iwong ibinibigay sa kongregasyon ng Apad?
13. Concerning Mambongalon, Camarines Norte: Tungkol sa Mambongalon, Camarines Norte:
 - a. When did you last travel there? Kelan ka huling pumunta doon?
 - b. What help do you give to them? Ano ang iyong ibinibigay na tulong sa kanila?
14. Concerning Tagbac: Tungkol sa Tagbac:
 - a. What is happening at the Tagbac church now? Anu ang kalagayan ng Iglesia sa Tagbac sa ngayon?
 - b. How many are attending now? Ilan ang dumadalo sa ngayon?
 - c. Who is preaching there now? Sino ang tagapag-bigay mensahe ngayon?
 - d. Did the floor, doors, and windows get finished? Why/why not? Natapos ba ang pagkakagawa sa sahig, pintuan at bintana? Bakit/Bakit hindi?
15. Concerning the railway evangelism work: Tungkol sa evangelismo sa riles:
 - a. Are you still doing it? If yes: Patuloy mo ba itong ginagawa? Kung Oo:

- b. What programs did you do in 2010? Anu-anong mga programaang iyong ginawa noong 2010?
 - c. Which people/preachers were involved? Sinu-sinong mga tao/tagapag-bigay-mensahe ang kasali ?
 - d. What methods did you use? Anu-anong mga paraan ang iyong ginamit?
 - e. What results did you get? Anu ang resulta na iyong nakuha?
 - f. What was not very successful? Anu ang hindi naging mabuti?
16. How much more do you need to repay on your motorbike? Magkanu pa ang kailangan mo para muling mabayaran ang iyong motorsiklo?
 17. What is the update on your family now? Ano ang kalagayan ng iyong pamilya ngayon?
 18. Concerning your part-time work: Tungkol sa iyong "part-time" na trabaho:
 - a. What jobs are you doing now? Anung mga trabaho ang iyong ginagawa sa ngayon?
 - b. How much do you earn from each job? Magkanu ang iyong kinikita mula sa mga trabaho na iyon?
 19. What is the attendance at Banga Caves? Ilan ang dumadalo sa Banga Caves?
 20. What do you do to “revive” lapsed members? Anu ang iyong ginagawa upang maipanumbalik ang mga dating miyembro?
 21. What has happened to the group of people who were baptized at Banga in 2007? Anu na ang nangyari sa mga taong nabautismuhan sa Banga noong 2007?
 22. Why do you think the job of being a minister is important? Bakit sa tingin mo ay importante ang trabaho ng isang ministro?
 23. What would help you to improve your effectiveness as a minister? Ano ang makakatulong upang mas maging mainam ang isang ministro?
 24. Do you read any books? Which ones? Nagbabasa kaba ng kahit anung libro? Anong mga libro iyon?
 25. Do you use the computer or the internet? Gumagamit ka ga ng “Computer” o “Internet”?
 26. What do you do to help you grow personally? Anu ang iyong ginagawa upang tulungang lumago ang iyong sarili?
 27. What do you do to expand your ministry skills? Anu ang iyong ginagawa upang mas lumawak ang iyong kakayahan sa ministry?
 28. From where do you get new ideas about ministry? Saan mo nakukuha ang mga bago mong ideya patungkol sa ministry?
 29. What minister’s meetings do you regularly attend? Describe them. Anung pagtitipon ng mga ministro ang palagi mong dinadaluhan? Ihalintulad mo sila.

Appendix 10

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Second questionnaire for Chapter 2

1. Please describe the main points of Acts 2.
2. What do you believe about the Day of Pentecost? What is important about it?
2. What are the names and ages of your children now (2011)?
3. What do you know about these:
 - a. Donald McGavran and Church Growth
 - b. C. Peter Wagner
 - c. Jim Montgomery and DAWN
4. Do you have any information about others who are doing church planting in Bicol? YES / NO If so, who and what?
5. Please give more information on other churches in Libmanan?
6. Do have any information on the Catholic seminary in Libmanan?
7. What were the annual offerings for your church?
8. Please give an update on E.A.R.M.
9. Please give an update on C.S.E.
10. How much rent are you paying on the building now (2011)?
11. What building improvements have you been able to make recently?
12. Please give an update on your 5 Year plan:
 - a. Recent achievements
 - b. Things that have not worked
 - c. New things that you have tried
 - d. Items that are running behind schedule
13. May I please have a copy of any new documents you have made for the church?
14. Have you had any more prayer events?
15. Do you have any updates on prayer in your church?
16. Have you done any more house-to-house evangelism? YES / NO Why/why not?
17. If yes in Question 17., what have been the results?
18. Concerning the Community Religious Survey that you have used:
 - a. When did you first use it in Libmanan?
 - b. What is the source of the survey?
 - c. Have you used it any further in Libmanan? YES / NO If yes, details, please.
19. Please give an update on your work/contact with the following:
 - a. Your pastoral visitation
 - b. Home Bible studies
 - c. LMCI?
 - d. Jail ministry
 - e. Police chaplaincy
 - f. City hall chaplaincy
 - g. Current political climate in the town council
20. What are the aims and goals of these programs?
 - a. Your pastoral visitation
 - b. Home Bible studies
21. Why did you choose the “founding pastor” model for church planting?
22. If, due to some unforeseen circumstances (God forbid), you and Moriel were to leave the church today:
 - a. What would happen to the church?
 - b. How could it survive?
 - c. What do you think it would be like in two years' time?
 - d. Who would lead?
 - e. What would the church miss if you departed?

Appendix 11

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Third questionnaire for Chapter 1

A. Definitions. Please define these words as you understand them:

1. evangelism
2. prospect
3. sin
4. conversion
5. salvation
6. Christian
7. eternal life
8. faith
9. confession
10. repentance
11. baptism
12. good confession
13. invitation

B. Concerning Evangelism

14. Is evangelism important? Why/why not?
15. Do you do evangelism? Why/why not?
16. What methods of evangelism do you use? Please describe in detail.
17. What is the purpose of evangelism?
18. What do you want to change in people's lives?
19. How do you get contacts for evangelism?
20. What are the results of successful evangelism?
21. Whom should you evangelize?
22. Whom should you not try to evangelize?
23. What methods of evangelism work best for you?
24. What methods of evangelism are not good for you?
25. Evangelism sometimes has a bad reputation. Why do you think this is so?
26. What is inappropriate to do in evangelism?

C. Concerning Salvation

27. Who provides salvation?
28. What is a person's part in becoming a Christian?
29. Describe the process of becoming a Christian.
30. Why should a person become a Christian?
31. How does a person become a Christian?
32. Who should become a Christian?
33. What happens when a person becomes a Christian?
34. What changes are expected when a person becomes a Christian?

35. The usual Church of Christ theology in becoming a Christian includes faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. Do you agree? Why/why not?

D. Concerning Faith, Repentance, and Confession

36. Are there any other words for faith?
37. How does one get faith?
38. What should one have faith in?
39. Why is faith important?
40. Why is repentance important?
41. How does one repent?
42. Who should repent?
43. What changes are expected when one repents?
44. How does one confess?
45. Why should one confess their faith in Christ?
46. How is confession different from confessing sins to a priest?
47. What is the “good confession?”

E. Concerning Baptism

48. What are the purposes of baptism?
49. Whom should you baptize?
50. How do you baptize? Describe in as much detail as you can, please.
51. Why do you not sprinkle babies?
52. Once a person is baptized, what is important for them to do?

F. Concerning Your Practices

53. How do you get to know who wants to be baptized?
54. What different methods/practices do you use to invite people to be baptized?
55. Do you use an “invitation?” Why/why not?
56. What are some thoughts/phrases that you use in your invitations?
57. When do you use invitations?
58. What do you “invite” people to do?
59. What words do you use when you baptize?
60. What words do you use for the “good confession?”

Appendix 12

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Fourth questionnaire for Chapter 1

1. How often do you preach?
2. Is preaching important? Why/why not?
3. What is a sermon? Define in your own words.
4. Can you please give me a few of your own sermon outlines?
5. What are your purposes in preaching?
6. What are the results of your preaching?
7. How long do you preach for?
8. Where and how did you learn to preach?
9. What type of preaching do you do? Please describe.
10. What do you do to improve and/or refresh your preaching?
11. What are key themes in your preaching?
12. What is your style of preaching? Please describe.
13. What are your favourite topics for preaching?
14. Please give the titles, topics, and Bible reading for the last 4 sermons you preached.
15. What were the Bible books that you preached from in 2010?
16. What were the main series that you preached in 2010?
17. How do you decide what to preach on?
18. What do you attempt to achieve in the introduction?
19. What types of things do you do for the introduction?
20. What do you attempt to achieve in the conclusion?
21. What types of things do you do for your conclusion?
22. Do you offer an invitation at the end of your sermon?
23. How often do you offer an invitation?
24. Do you offer different types of invitations?
25. Please describe your invitations. Use the back of this paper if needed.
26. What do you do to make your sermons interesting?
27. What do you do to make your sermons memorable?
28. What are some applications that you have made in your recent sermons?
29. What do you do to make the Bible relevant for today?
30. What notes do you write for your sermons? If any, please describe.
31. From where do you get your ideas for sermons?
32. How long do you spend preparing each sermon?
33. Please describe the process you do in preparing your sermon.
34. Do you have your sermons planned for 2011?
35. What will you preach on next Sunday?
36. What should be the characteristics of a man who preaches?
37. Who, in your opinion, should not preach?
38. What education should a man have to preach?

Appendix 13

Ethics approval letter

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University of St Andrews

University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee

5 February 2009
Ross Wissmann
School of Divinity

Ethics Reference No: <i>Please quote this ref on all correspondence</i>	DI5179
Project Title:	A Critical Examination of Problems in Ministry from the Perspective of the Preachers of the Churches in the Bicol Provinces of the Philippines
Researchers Name(s):	Ross Wissmann
Supervisor(s):	Professor MI Aguilar

Thank you for submitting your application which was considered at the Divinity School Ethics Committee meeting on the 10 December 2008. The following documents were reviewed:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Ethical Application Form | 10 December 2008 |
| 2. Participant Information Sheet | N/A |
| 3. Consent Form | N/A |
| 4. Debriefing Form | N/A |
| 5. External Permissions | N/A |
| 6. Letters to Parents/Children/Headteacher etc... | N/A |
| 7. Questionnaires | N/A |
| 8. Enhanced Disclosure Scotland and Equivalent
(as necessary) | N/A |

The University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC) approves this study from an ethical point of view. Please note that where approval is given by a School Ethics Committee that committee is part of UTREC and is delegated to act for UTREC.

Approval is given for three years. Projects, which have not commenced within two years of original approval, must be re-submitted to your School Ethics Committee.

You must inform your School Ethics Committee when the research has been completed. If you are unable to complete your research within the 3 three year validation period, you will be required to write to your School Ethics Committee and to UTREC (where approval was given by UTREC) to request an extension or you will need to re-apply.

Any serious adverse events or significant change which occurs in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration, must be reported immediately to the School Ethics Committee, and an Ethical Amendment Form submitted where appropriate.

Approval is given on the understanding that the 'Guidelines for Ethical Research Practice' (<http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/UTRECgelines%20Feb%2008.pdf>) are adhered to.

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR TA HART
Convenor of the School Ethics Committee

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