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Philippine Tongues of Fire? Latin American Pentecostalism and the Future of Filipino Christianity

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Introduction[1]

Christ…came to America. Journeying from Bethlehem and Calvary, He passed through Africa and Spain on His long westward journey to the pampas and cordilleras. And yet was it really He who came, or another religious figure with His name and some of His marks? Methinks the Christ, as He sojourned westward, went to prison in Spain, while another who took His name embarked with the Spanish crusaders for the New World, a Christ who was not born in Bethlehem but in North Africa. This Christ became naturalized in the Iberian colonies of America, while Mary's Son and Lord has been little else than a stranger and sojourner in these lands from Columbus's day to this.[2]

These strong words were written

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[1] I wish to thank Randall Gleason, of the International School of Theology-Asia, for his suggestion that I turn my ideas on this topic into an article. I appreciate the assistance of Anne Kwantes, of Asian Theological Seminary; Wonsuk Ma, of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary; Pat Mariano, of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines; Eric Smith, of Philippine Challenge; Stephen Smith, of Gordon College; and especially my friend Averell Aragon, of Alliance Biblical Seminary.

[2] John A. Mackay, *The Other Spanish Christ: A Study in the Spiritual History of Spain and South America* (New York: Macmillan, 1932), p. 95.

by the young John Mackay, fresh from over a decade's service as a missionary in Peru, Uruguay, and Mexico. Mackay went on to serve for many years as president of Princeton Theological Seminary, during which time he earned a reputation for unusual openness towards other Protestant denominations and even towards the Roman Catholic Church.[3] Of course his early reaction had been not to Catholicism as such but to the particular strain of Catholicism associated with Spanish spirituality, and especially to the hybridization of this Hispanic Catholicism with the primal religions of Latin America to yield what is commonly described as folk-Catholicism.[4]

Mackay's argument was that the Christ born in Bethlehem, i.e., the Christ of the Bible, might finally escape from his Spanish prison and come to Latin America through the efforts of such 'contemporary religious thinkers' as Gabriela Mistral, a liberal Catholic, Jose Zorilla de San Martin, a more traditional Catholic, and non-sectarian Christians like Ricardo Rojas and Julio Navarro Monzo. If he had written his book forty years later, doubtless he would have cited the work of liberation theologians such as Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff.

Mackay did devote a chapter to Latin American Protestantism, but from his perspective the most important Protestant 'landmarks' were medical missions, educational institutions, and other agencies that gave 'permanent expression to the spirit of Christ'.[5] He dealt with Pentecostalism very briefly, referring to its rapid growth in Chile and noting with approval the high morality of its adherents. Although he commented as well on their 'incandescent religious passion' and 'zeal to save other lives', he claimed that over time '[e]xtravagant phenomena [had] tend[ed] to disappear from [their] gatherings' and that they had 'become more normal in their emotional experience and more disposed to co-operate with fellow-Christians of other groups in the interests of the common cause'.[6] The irony is that it is these Pentecostals who have brought the Christ of Bethlehem to the masses of Latin America, and that they have done so, Mackay to the contrary notwithstanding, while remaining as passionate and fractious as ever.

Recent literature discussing the rise of Latin American Pentecostalism includes landmark volumes by sociologist David Martin (*Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1990]) and anthropologist David Stoll (*Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth* [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press,

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[3] John A. Mackay, *Ecumenics: The Science of the Church Universal* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1960), pp. 16-18 and 207

[4] Even in *Ecumenics*, pp. 42 and 124-31, Mackay essentially recapitulated his earlier assessment of Spanish and Latin American Catholicism.

[5] Mackay, *Other Spanish Christ*, p. 242

[6] Mackay, *Other Spanish Christ*, pp. 247-8

1990]).[7] The question I wish to address in this article is whether the Philippines may also be turning Protestant, or at least whether this nation, whose culture, like that of Latin America, has up to now been defined by the norms of Hispanic Catholicism, may be approaching the time when its culture will be partly redefined by the norms of global Pentecostalism. Might the day have finally arrived when being Filipino and being Protestant are no longer seen as contradictory or even somewhat incongruous?

At first glance this thesis seems implausible. After all, the fifth (1993) edition of Patrick Johnstone's *Operation World* states that Protestants make up only 7.5% of the population of the Philippines, with evangelicals accounting for about two-thirds of that figure (5.1% of the population) and Pentecostals accounting for just over half of all evangelicals (2.8% of the population).[8] But according to the second (1978) edition of *Operation World*, as recently as 1976 Protestants made up only 5% of the population, and the first (1982) edition of David Barrett's *World Christian Encyclopedia* estimates that in 1970 Protestants made up scarcely 3% of the population.[9] In fact, the ratio of Filipino Protestants to Catholics today is broadly similar to the ratio in Brazil and Chile thirty or forty years ago.[10] Might it be that the ratio of Filipino Protestants to Catholics in another thirty or forty years will be similar to the ratio in Brazil and Chile today?

Lending plausibility to this speculation are the numerous historical and cultural parallels between Latin America and the Philippines. Spain did colonize both regions, after all, and the colonizer's culture overlaid, permeated, and ultimately transformed the pre-existing cultures to yield an amalgam that even today preserves traditional values while giving them a special 'spin'.[11] For example, both Latin American and Philippine cultures continue to lay great stress on the family unit, taking

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[7] For recent discussions of this phenomenon, see C. René Padilla, 'The Future of Christianity in Latin America: Missiological Perspectives and Challenges', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 23:3 (July 1999), pp. 105-12; and Lynda K. Barrow, 'Mission in Mexico: An Evangelical Surge', *The Christian Century* 118:7 (28 February 2001), pp. 22-3.

[8] Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World: The Day-by-Day Guide to Praying for the World,* 5th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), p. 448. Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World: 21st Century Edition* (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster Lifestyle, 2001), p. 521, describes evangelicals as constituting 16.7% of the population of the Philippines, but because this latest edition of *Operation World* no longer treats evangelicalism as a category of Protestantism, its data are not directly comparable to those in earlier editions.

[9] Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World: A Handbook for World Intercession*, 2nd ed. (Bromley, England: STL, 1978), p. 124; David B. Barrett (ed.), *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World, A.D. 1900-2000* (New York: OUP, 1982), p. 562

[10] Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, pp. 186, 226

[11] See the discussion of the Filipino cultural 'onion' in Arthur Leonard Tuggy and Ralph Toliver, *Seeing the Church in the Philippines* (Manila: OMF, 1972), p. 8. For a discussion that grounds contemporary differences between Philippine and Latin American cultures in differences between these regions' preconquest societies, see John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), pp. 26-7.

the extended family as the basic building block of society.[12] More generally, both Latin American and Philippine cultures are relation- rather than task-oriented, so that, for example, continuing a significant conversation takes precedence over adhering to a strict timetable.[13] One result of this is that both Latin American and Philippine cultures tend to deprecate the complex of values commonly referred to as the Protestant work ethic.[14]

Related to this is the observation that in both Latin America and the Philippines, religion and ethics are commonly de-coupled, with liturgy and daily life seen as having little direct connection.[15] In addition, the rites most characteristic of folk-Catholicism as practised in both Latin America and the Philippines focus on Mary and the saints, with relatively little concern for Christ, God the Father, or the Holy Spirit.[16] What attention Christ does receive is usually as an infant, the Filipino 'Santo Niño', or a corpse, the Filipino 'Santo Entierro', both of these figures being obviously weak and thus presumably vulnerable to the devotee's manipulation.[17] Such manipulation is most often attempted not in the church, at its public altar, but in the home, at its private shrine. One extreme example of this sort of behaviour, the 'punishment' of an image of the Santo Niño perceived to have failed to deliver on the supplicant's request, is common to both cultures.[18]

Yet another shared practice is that of penitential self-scourging, especially during Holy Week, often understood as a means of atoning for one's sins. On Good Friday, processions of so-called 'flagellantes' can be found at shrines throughout the Philippines, across Latin America, and even here and there in the

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[12] Francis Fukuyama describes Spain, Latin America, and the Philippines as 'low-trust' societies that lack 'spontaneous sociability' and therefore require the family to carry the sort of cultural weight that in 'high-trust' societies like the US and Japan is carried by voluntary organizations such as the church and the joint-stock corporation. See his discussion in *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York: Free Press, 1995), especially pp. 49-67

[13] Mackay, *Other Spanish Christ*, p. 18; Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), pp. 141-3

[14] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Talcott Parsons (tr.) (New York: Scribner's, 1950); R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1926); Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, Olive Wyon (tr.), 2 vols. (New York: Harper, 1960), 2:644-50; S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *The Protestant Ethic and Modernization: A Comparative View* (New York: Basic Books, 1968); Mackay, *Other Spanish Christ*, pp. 7, 29; Fukuyama, Trust, pp. 43-8

[15] Mackay, *Other Spanish Christ*, pp. 37, 102

[16] Mackay, *Other Spanish Christ*, pp. 13-14, 53, 112, and passim; Raul Pertierra, *Religion, Politics, and Rationality in a Philippine Community* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1988), pp. 140-1

[17] Mackay, *Other Spanish Christ*, pp. 96-8, 102, 110-11, and 113; Benigno P. Beltran, *The Christology of the Inarticulate: An Inquiry into the Filipino Understanding of Jesus the Christ* (Manila: Divine Word, 1987), pp. 116-24. For a discussion of a Latin American counterpart to the 'Santo Entierro', the 'Cristo Yacente' venerated by the inhabitants of a town in southern Peru, see Curt Cadorette, 'Christs in the Night: The Missiological Challenge of Andean Catholicism', *Missiology* 25:1 (January 1997), pp. 51-60.

[18] Mackay, *Other Spanish Christ*, p. 54; Beltran, *Christology of the Inarticulate*, p. 120

American Southwest.[19] The list of such cultural congruencies could be extended almost indefinitely. This close similarity strongly suggests that since Latin America has proved a fertile medium for Pentecostalism's propagation, the same may be true of the Philippines. However, whether this is in fact the case, and indeed whether it may already be taking place, can be determined only by taking a closer look at the specifics of contemporary Philippine religious life. Such will be the focus of the next section of this article.

1. Philippine Roman Catholicism

Any consideration of the Philippine religious 'pie' must begin with an evaluation of the largest 'slice' of that pie, the Roman Catholic community. Catholicism arrived early, with friars in the company of the Spanish explorer Magellan celebrating the first Mass on Philippine soil in 1521. Although the friars went on to baptize Rajah Humabon of Mactan, a number of other Cebuano princes, and thousands of their vassals, later that year Magellan and many of his men were killed and the survivors had to flee for their lives, taking with them such vestiges of institutional Catholicism as had already been implanted.[20]

Catholicism finally gained a permanent foothold in the Philippines with the arrival of Miguel Lopez de Legazpi's expedition in 1565.[21] Legazpi brought with him five Augustinian friars, and over the next four decades these were joined by representatives of the Franciscan, Dominican, Jesuit, and Recollect orders. With the passing years, as Spain slowly consolidated its control of the Philippine lowlands, these five orders pursued the Christianization of the ethnic-Malay inhabitants.[22] Although such efforts were at first slow to bear significant fruit, by the early seventeenth century the friars had baptized approximately 500,000 converts and their children, effectively laying the foundations of Filipino Catholicism.[23]

Yet the form of Catholic piety practised by most Filipinos, then as now, would have seemed strange even to a fellow Catholic from north-

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[19] Mackay, *Other Spanish Christ*, p. 34; Beltran, *Christology of the Inarticulate*, p. 115; Lorayne Ann Horka-Follick, *Los Hermanos Penitentes: A Vestige of Medievalism in Southwestern United States* (New York: Tower, 1969); Silvia Novo Pena, 'Religion', in *Reference Library of Hispanic America*, Nicholás Kanellos (ed.), 3 vols. (Detroit: Gale, 1997), 2:269-70. For a discussion of the function served by such corporal discipline in Hispanic Catholicism, see Maureen Flynn, 'The Spiritual Uses of Pain in Spanish Mysticism', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64:2 (Summer 1996), pp. 257-78.

[20] T. Valentino Sitoy, Jr., *A History of Christianity in the Philippines*, Vol. 1, *The Initial Encounter* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day, 1985), pp. 36-63. For primary documents related to Magellan's voyage, see James Alexander Robertson and Emma Helen Blair (eds.), *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, 55 vols. (Cleveland, OH: Arthur H. Clark, 1903-1909), 1:247-337.

[21] For primary documents related to Legazpi's expedition, see Robertson and Blair, *Philippine Islands*, 2:75-329.

[22] Sitoy, *Initial Encounter*, pp. 130-38, 228-45; Pablo Fernandez, *History of the Church in the Philippines, 1521-1898* (San Juan, Philippines: Life Today, 1988), pp. 19-27

[23] Phelan, *Hispanization of the Philippines*, p. 56; Arthur Leonard Tuggy, *The Philippine Church: Growth in a Changing Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 29

ern Europe. Spanish stress on God's absolute transcendence, coupled with the animist concept of a single supreme deity (Tagalog *Bathala*) who had created the world but now took no interest in it, yielded to the folk-Catholic concept of God as one who generally took no interest in the world but was nevertheless open to persuasion. Spanish veneration of Mary and the saints, coupled with the animist concept of a myriad of lesser deities and spirits and the sociological concept of the 'go-between' (Tagalog *tagapamagitan*), yielded the folk-Catholic practice of reliance on Mary and the saints as advocates who might indeed persuade God to take an interest in the devotee's case. Spanish fondness for crucifixes, images, relics, and other such outward trappings of Catholicism, coupled with the animist use of similar trappings and the Filipino love of pomp and ritual, yielded the folk-Catholic dependence on charms and fetishes (Tagalog *anting-anting*) as means of manipulating Mary and the saints in order to gain their advocacy on the devotee's behalf.[24]

The great strength of folk-Catholicism in the Philippines today is eloquently attested by the enormous masses of people thronging the plaza around the parish church at Quiapo, in the old city of Manila. Many of those in the crowd are waiting to file past the famous statue of the Santo Entierro, the 'Black Nazarene', displayed in the church's entranceway, as they do so perhaps rubbing a handkerchief or scrap of cloth on its exposed foot in order to take with them some of its spiritual power. Before leaving, they may pause for a moment to shop among the vendors' carts lining the plaza, hoping to purchase a fetish for protection from an enemy's curses or for inflicting on an enemy curses of their own. They may even buy a black candle to be used in conjunction with a special novena said at the church's high altar in order to cause an enemy's death.

But the same plaza at Quiapo that testifies to the great strength of folk-Catholicism also testifies to the surprising weakness of institutional Catholicism. On the very doorstep of the Quiapo church, along with *anting-anting* and black candles, vendors offer abortifacients, palm and Tarot card readings, and even the chance to communicate with the spirits of dead loved ones. The fact that such practices are emphatically forbidden by scripture and canon law alike carries no weight with the practitioners or their many customers.[25] Unfortunately, most Filipino Catholics have no idea what their church teaches about such things because they have no exposure to its magisterium that might bring them into contact with the Bible, let alone the creeds, the catechism, conciliar documents, or papal encyclicals.[26] Strikingly, only about 5% attend

[24] Peter G. Gowing, 'Christianity in the Philippines Yesterday and Today', *Silliman Journal* 12:2 (1965), pp. 10-11

[25] I determined this for myself during a visit to the Quiapo church in June of 1998.

[26] Gowing, 'Christianity in the Philippines', p. 10

church regularly, a figure comparable to that prevailing in post-Christian Europe.[27]

In 1995, during Pope John Paul II's visit to the Philippines, he issued a challenge to a vast crowd gathered at the Luneta in old Manila: 'You must be the light of Asia!' Yet the Philippine Catholic Church cannot provide enough priests to meet even its own needs, let alone the vast requirements of the Asian mission field. The ratio of priests to parishioners in the Philippines is 1:20,000, among the worst in the world, and even today one-third of all Catholic priests serving in the Philippines are missionaries from other countries.[28]

A final pointer to institutional Catholicism's weakness lies in the political realm. Of the Philippines' five most recent presidents, only two, Corazon Aquino and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, have been observant Catholics. Of the other three, Ferdinand Marcos was a member of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), Fidel Ramos is a member of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), and Joseph Estrada is a flamboyantly non-observant Catholic who supports at least a dozen children by five 'wives'. Although Jaime Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila and Primate of the Philippines since 1974, promoted his own presidential candidates against both Ramos and Estrada, these candidates fared poorly, with Estrada even winning by a landslide. The bottom line is that although most Filipinos respect Cardinal Sin, they often pay little attention to what he has to say.

Such surprising institutional weakness provides the context for David Barrett's conclusion that although the number of Filipino Catholics continues to increase, their rate of increase is considerably lower than that of the general population. Consequently Barrett estimates that the percentage of professing Catholics in the Philippines will have declined from 85% in 1970 to only 78% in 2000.[29] Peter Brierley estimates that the average annual growth rate (AAGR) of the Philippine Catholic community will decline from 2.1% (1995-2000) to 1.8% (2000-2005) and 1.6% (2005-2010).[30] With the AAGR of the general population somewhat less than 3% and only slowly declining, the problem is bound to become even more press-

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[27] Johnstone, *Operation World: Day-by-Day*, p. 448; Ralph Tolliver, 'The Philippines', in Donald Hoke (ed.), *The Church in Asia*, (Chicago: Moody, 1975), p. 534. Pertierra, Religion, Politics, and Rationality, p. 146, states that regular church attendance averages less than 6% among the adult Catholics of one rural community in northwestern Luzon.

[28] *Philippine Star* (Manila), 4 May 1996, citing figures released by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). The article quotes Fr. James Reuter, speaking for the CBCP, to the effect that 'there are many dioceses where there is one priest for 25,000 to 30,000 people' and in some dioceses the figure is closer to one for 40,000. For similar data from an earlier period, see Gowing, 'Christianity in the Philippines', pp. 9-12.

[29] Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, p. 562

[30] Computed from figures in Peter Brierley, ed., *World Churches Handbook* (London: Christian Research Association, 1997), p. 677

ing.[31] This steady shrinkage of the Catholic slice of the Philippine religious pie has other consequences that will be examined below.

2. Philippine Protestantism

As the Catholic slice of the pie has shrunk, the Protestant slice has grown, though its pattern of growth has been neither uniform nor even unbroken. For the first decade after the initial deployment of Protestant missionaries in 1898, their work brought an impressive response.[32] Some of them even claimed to foresee a day when Filipinos might embrace Protestantism as they had previously embraced Catholicism. For example, in 1900 Eric Lund, a Baptist missionary, exclaimed that the island of Negros stood on the brink of a mighty Reformation.[33] Four years later Methodist missionary Homer Stuntz, reporting a total membership of 6,842, predicted 500,000 members within twenty years.[34] He enthused, 'Such ripeness for evangelism has never been seen in any Roman Catholic field.'[35]

This unbridled optimism was one of the factors prompting many missionaries to divert the bulk of their energy from evangelism and the planting of new churches to ecumenism and the building of new institutions, these latter often broadly

[31] Print estimates of the annual population growth rate of the Philippines have varied widely. For example, see Johnstone, *Operation World: Day-by-Day*, p. 448; Edythe Draper (ed.), *Almanac of the Christian World* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1990), p. 130; George Thomas Kurian, *Atlas of the Third World* (New York: Facts on File, 1983), p. 304; George Thomas Kurian, *Encyclopedia of the Third World*, 3rd ed. (New York: Facts on File, 1987), pp. 1612-13; and Brian Rajewski et al. (eds.), *Countries of the World and Their Leaders: Yearbook 1998* (Detroit: Gale, 1998), p. 983. Web sites offer figures that are more up-to-date but just as varied. For example, see the site maintained by the Philippine government's National Statistics Office, <http://www.census.gov.ph/data/sectordata/c2k highlights.html>, and the US Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook 2000, accessible at <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/rp.html#People>. Aiming to err on the side of caution, this article will assume an average annual population growth rate for the Philippines beginning at somewhat less than 3% in 1990 and decreasing to somewhat less than 2.5% in 2000. Denominations whose growth rates consistently slump below these figures will be taken as failing to keep pace with the growth of the general population, thus constituting a declining percentage of that population.

[32] Tuggy and Toliver, *Seeing the Church*, p. 29. For discussions of the earliest period of Protestant missionary activity in the Philippines, see Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines, 1898-1916: An Inquiry into the American Colonial Mentality* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Anne C. Kwantes, *Presbyterian Missionaries in the Philippines: Conduits of Social Change, 1899-1910* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day, 1989); and Mariano C. Apilado, *Revolutionary Spirituality: A Study of the Protestant Role in the American Colonial Rule of the Philippines, 1898-1928* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day, 1999).

[33] Tuggy and Toliver, *Seeing the Church*, p. 44

[34] Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries*, p. 194; Tuggy, *Philippine Church*, p. 103

[35] Homer C. Stuntz, 'Past and Present in the Philippines', *Missionary Review of the World*, ns 17:7 (July 1904), p. 492

ecumenical in scope.[36] One unintended consequence was an abrupt slowing of growth, on which they themselves commented. For example, Congregational missionary Frank Laubach observed: 'While the curve [of membership growth] seems to rise in a satisfactory manner for the entire period [through about 1920], it should be noted that the last half of the period is not nearly so good as the first…. In general that first fine speed which had characterized the earlier years had ceased.' [37]For Methodists, Presbyterians, and most other Protestants, the period from about 1910 to the mid-1930s was a time of slow growth and structural consolidation. Another brief surge of membership in the late 1930s was abruptly terminated by World War II and the Japanese occupation.[38]

The post-war years brought fragmentation as well as further consolidation. This means that today, rather than a single Protestant slice of the Philippine religious pie, we must speak of several distinct Protestant slices, ranging from liberal conciliarism through conservative evangelicalism to traditional as well as indigenous Pentecostalism. Each of these slices merits closer examination.

2.1 Conciliar Protestantism

The conciliar Protestant movement in the Philippines includes the UCCP, the United Methodist Church, the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, and other denominations that have affiliated with the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), founded in 1963.[39] Since considerations of space preclude a close examination of each of these bodies, the UCCP has been selected as the NCCP's most appropriate representative.

The post-war years brought the process of denominational consolidation to a climax in 1948 with the coming together of Presbyterians, Congregationalists, United Brethren in Christ, and several other groups to form the UCCP.[40] Unfortunately, this new denomination failed to break with the laggardly pattern of growth that had been set by its precursor bodies, thus casting a pall over

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[36] See Tuggy and Toliver, *Seeing the Church*, p. 29; and Averell U. Aragon, 'A Study of the History and Development of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches and Its Contribution to the Growth of Protestantism in the Philippines' (ThM thesis, Asia Graduate School of Theology-Philippines, 1999), pp. 7-19.

[37] Frank Laubach, *The People of the Philippines* (New York: George H. Doran, 1925), p. 368f., quoted in Tuggy and Toliver, Seeing the Church, p. 29. For a very different perspective on this plateauing of Protestant growth, see Apilado's chapter, 'Identity Crisis: The Protestant Churches, 1908-1914', in *Revolutionary Spirituality*, pp. 108-58.

[38] See the membership charts in Tuggy and Toliver, *Seeing the Church*, p. 28 (Presbyterian), and in Tuggy, *Philippine Church*, p. 107 (Methodist) and p. 114 (Convention Baptist).

[39] Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, p. 565; T. Valentino Sitoy, Jr., *Comity and Unity: Ardent Aspirations of Six Decades of Protestantism in the Philippines, 1901-1961* (Quezon City, Philippines: NCCP, 1989), p. 128

[40] The best discussion of the UCCP's origins is T. Valentino Sitoy, Jr., Several Springs, *One Stream: The United Church of Christ in the Philippines*, vol. 1, *Heritage and Origins, 1899-1948* (Quezon City, Philippines: UCCP, 1992).

the prospects of Philippine Protestantism as a whole.[41] For at least its first decade of existence, its leaders continued to be preoccupied with questions of organization, leaving few resources for evangelism and church planting.[42] After the initial period of assimilation, rising tensions between the denomination's new ecumenical spirit and its continuing evangelistic vision led first to the latter's subordination to the former and then, in many parishes, to its outright abandonment.[43] The UCCP has emphatically rejected biblical or confessional particularism, embracing instead a lowest-common-denominator approach to doctrine based on nothing more than 'the basic belief: "Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Lord and Saviour"'.[44] One result has been the slow ebbing away of its vitality.[45]

This malaise is reflected in the United Church's membership figures. As with other such 'mainstream' denominations that maintain a low threshold of commitment, these statistics can be quite slippery. For example, the Philippine government's 1990 census found 902,446 people claiming membership in the UCCP, considerably more than are credited to that denomination by any other source.[46] Presumably this reflects the number of Filipinos who think of themselves as members of the UCCP, even though most of them have never formally joined the church and relatively few even attend services regularly. It is broadly comparable to Brierley's estimate of the size of the UCCP's 'community' as 733,000 in that same year.[47] More reasonably, Brierley presents the UCCP's actual membership as having climbed from 119,347 in 1960 to 211,053 in 1970, 270,000 in 1980, 350,000 (rather than 900,000!) in 1990, and 385,000 in 1995. He projects membership as continuing to rise, reaching 447,000 in 2010.[48] This represents an AAGR cresting at 8.2% between 1965 and 1970, ranging from 2.4% to 3.5% between 1970 and 1985, then declining to 1.8% between 1985 and 1990, 1.9% between 1990 and 1995, 1.1% between 1995 and 2000, 1.0% between 2000 and 2005, and only 0.9% between 2005 and 2010. (For more details, see table 1 opposite, columns 2 and 3.) Such a statistical sketch of the UCCP would seem quite plausible, especially given the

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41 Gowing, 'Christianity in the Philippines', p. 32

42 Tolliver, 'Philippines', p. 528; Donald A. McGavran, *Multiplying Churches in the Philippines* (Manila: UCCP, 1958), p. 60, quoted in Tuggy and Toliver, *Seeing the Church*, pp. 27-9

43 Tuggy and Toliver, *Seeing the Church*, pp. 30-33; James H. Montgomery and Donald A. McGavran, *The Discipling of a Nation* (Santa Clara, CA: Global Church Growth Bulletin, 1980), pp. 46, 156

44 Ans J. van der Bent (ed.), *Handbook: Member Churches* (Geneva: WCC, 1982), p. 97

45 Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 118; Lorenzo C. Bautista, 'The Church in the Philippines', in Saphir Athyal (ed.), *Church in Asia Today: Challenges and Opportunities* (Singapore: Asia Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization), p. 185

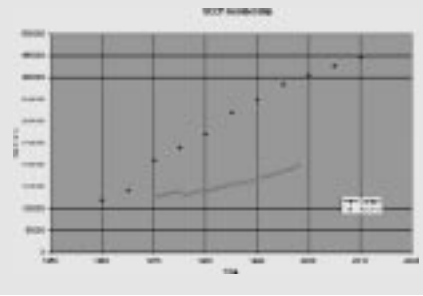
46 Philippine Department of Household Statistics, '1990 Census of Population and Housing', p. 22

47 Brierley, *World Churches Handbook*, p. 683

48 Brierley, *World Churches Handbook*, p. 683

Table 1: UCCP membership and annual growth rates

	Brierley/WCH Membership	Brierley/WCH AAGR	Smith/PC membership	Smith/PC AGR
1960	119,347			
1965	142,405	3.6%		
1970	211,053	8.2%	127,196	
1971		2.6%	128,246	0.8%
1972		2.6%	130,691	1.9%
1973		2.6%	132,480	1.4%
1974		2.6%	135,821	2.5%
1975	240,000	2.6%	137,564	1.3%
1976		2.4%	129,390	-5.9%
1977		2.4%	133,969	3.5%
1978		2.4%	136,606	2.0%
1979		2.4%	138,287	1.2%
1980	270,000	2.4%	139,027	0.5%
1981		3.5%	141,824	2.0%
1982		3.5%	144,677	2.0%
1983		3.5%	147,589	2.0%
1984		3.5%	150,888	2.2%
1985	320,000	3.5%	155,592	3.1%
1986		1.8%	158,588	1.9%
1987		1.8%	159,549	0.6%
1988		1.8%	160,164	0.4%
1989		1.8%	163,989	2.4%
1990	350,000	1.8%	166,705	1.7%
1991		1.9%	172,128	3.3%
1992		1.9%	174,620	1.4%
1993		1.9%	178,084	2.0%
1994		1.9%	180,820	1.5%
1995	385,000	1.9%	184,275	1.9%
1996		1.1%	189,318	2.7%
1997		1.1%	193,181	2.0%
1998		1.1%	197,124	2.0%
1999		1.1%		
2000	406,000	1.1%		
2005	427,000	1.0%		
2010	447,000	0.9%		



above discussion of its history. However, Brierley himself describes all his membership figures after those for 1970 as estimates.[49] My own belief is that he has seriously underestimated of the problem of nominalism in this denomination.

More reliable numbers are available from Eric Smith, Field Director of Philippine Challenge, a mission agency that conducts research into this and other such topics bearing on church growth. Smith's figure for UCCP membership in 1970 is 127,196, in general agreement with figures found in several other sources.[50] He presents UCCP membership as having reached 139,027 in 1980, 166,705 in 1990, 184,275 in 1995, and 197,124 in

[49] Brierley, *World Churches Handbook*, p. 683. He describes his method of computing membership estimates for such low-commitment denominations in *World Churches Handbook*, p. 10, and in Peter Brierley, *Future Church: A Global Analysis of the Christian Community to the Year 2010* (London: Monarch, 1998), pp. 169-90.

[50] Eric Smith, e-mail to author, 27 October 1999. For other estimates of UCCP membership, see the charts in Tuggy and Toliver, *Seeing the Church*, p. 25; Tuggy, Philippine Church, p. 149; and Montgomery and McGavran, *Discipling of a Nation*, p. 44.

1998.[51] This yields a fluctuating pattern of AAGRs without any clear crests or troughs. (For more details, see table 1 on p. 67, columns 4 and 5.) With annual growth rates (AGRs) oscillating wildly, between -5.9% and +3.5%, it does seem much more realistic than Brierley's sanitized estimates. But even if the raw numbers themselves remain somewhat open to question, the basic shape of the curve they define can be taken as reasonably accurate.

That shape, specifically the slope of the curve, describes a denomination that is growing at a rate either somewhat or substantially below the rate of growth of the general population. Brierley's membership figures are larger than those of Smith, but the decline in AAGR he estimates is steeper than the decline in AGR that Smith seems actually to have documented. Ironically, the UCCP depicted by Smith's data appears to be in somewhat better shape, though smaller, than the UCCP depicted by Brierley's data.

Whichever is more nearly correct, though, the UCCP is obviously quite ill. If it cannot regain its precursors' early vigour, if it cannot return to the high growth rates of the early twentieth century, it is doomed to play an ever-decreasing role in Philippine religious life and even in the life of the Philippine Protestant community. Much the same is true of another founding member of the NCCP, the IFI, which has been hobbled by decades of slow growth, no growth, and even precipitous decline.[52] The implication is inescapable. Among Filipinos as among Americans, the so-called Protestant 'mainstream' is no longer the Protestant majority.

2.2 Classic Evangelicalism

Not all Protestant denominations sending missionaries to the Philippines in the early years of the century participated in the drive to consolidation that led to the establishment first of the UCCP and then of the NCCP. For example, the United Methodists and Convention Baptists chose not to follow the Presbyterians and Congregationalists into the UCCP, though they did join the NCCP. Although the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) had participated in the initial comity agreement that assigned responsibility for specific areas of the Philippines to designated US denominations, it joined neither the UCCP nor the NCCP. The Seventh Day Adventists, who had not been signatories to the comity agreement, kept clear of both umbrella organizations as well.

Especially after World War II, many conservative evangelical and Pentecostal denominations and independent mission agencies from the US and other Western nations began new ministries in the Philippines. These organizations, too, had little interest in co-operating with Philippine denominations and

[51] Smith, e-mail, 27 October 1999

[52] Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries*, p. 194; *Handbook: Member Churches*, p. 95; Philippine Department of Household Statistics, '1990 Census of Population and Housing', p. 22; Eric Smith, telephone interview by author, 11 November 1999

church councils related to US denominations and councils with which they would never have co-operated. Their scruples on this point were understandable. Although Filipino Christians had experienced nothing quite like the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy that so devastated American churches during the 1920s and 1930s, by the 1960s, as we have seen, the Modernist spirit had found a home in the churches of the NCCP.[53]

Those who saw Modernism as a threat to the gospel nevertheless conceded the importance of co-operation among churches such as the NCCP was intended to foster. This implied that an alternate organization was needed, one for which the upholding of orthodoxy would not be subordinated to the gaining of unity. Such an organization was the Philippine Council of Fundamental Churches, established in 1964, which four years later became the Philippine Council of Fundamental Evangelical Churches and in 1969 changed its name yet again to the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC).[54] From the outset the PCEC has deliberately defined itself as a theological alternative to the NCCP, upholding what it sees as Christianity's historic essentials. Its statement of faith, adopted in 1965, affirms basic doctrines such as the inerrancy of Scripture, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the depravity of fallen humanity, and salvation by grace through faith apart from works.[55] Among its member denominations are traditional evangelical bodies like the Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines (CAMACOP) and the Alliance of Bible Christian Communities of the Philippines as well as Pentecostal bodies like the Assemblies of God (AoG) and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. Again, considerations of space preclude a close examination of all of the PCEC's members, hence CAMACOP has been selected to represent its non-Pentecostal denominations. (Pentecostal denominations will be considered separately below.)

The first missionary representing the US CMA arrived in the Philippines in 1900.[56] In accordance with the terms of the Comity Agreement of 1901, the CMA initially restricted its evangelistic efforts to southern Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago, both territories largely inhabited by the Islamic Moros. Although Muslim converts were few, the CMA eventually won a following among Filipinos who had immigrated to Mindanao from other parts of the country.[57] After a slow start, with only 800 bap-

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53 For example, see above on the UCCP's theological basis. For a discussion of earlier theological clashes in the Philippines between conservative ('Fundamentalist') and liberal ('Modernist') missionaries belonging to denominational agencies whose daughter churches would later be subsumed in the UCCP, see Apilado, *Revolutionary Spirituality*, pp. 195-7 and 208-13.

54 Aragon, 'Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches', pp. 20-7

55 Aragon, 'Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches', pp. 23-4

56 Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries*, p. 6

57 Tuggy and Toliver, *Seeing the Church*, p. 73

tized members to show for 25 years' effort, the CMA experienced moderate growth in the period leading up to World War II.[58] During the Japanese occupation its ranks were decimated and its faithful members forced to endure great suffering.[59] In 1947 the US parent granted independence to its Philippine offspring and CAMACOP was born. During the 1950s this fledgling denomination experienced a substantial influx of new members, but during the 1960s, like many other Philippine Protestant bodies, it endured a prolonged period of slow growth and thus steady decline as a percentage of the general population.[60] The situation began to change only in the late 1960s and early 1970s as CAMACOP put greater stress on church planting and broadened the focus of its efforts to encompass not just its traditional areas but the entire nation.[61] The denomination developed a nation-wide network of Bible colleges as well, and eventually a graduate-level seminary. Today CAMACOP is one of the Philippines' most robust evangelical denominations, having provided key leadership to the PCEC from its inception and even to the World Evangelical Fellowship.[62]

CAMACOP's excellent overall health is reflected in its membership figures. Brierley presents CAMACOP as having had 15,638 members in 1960, 21,898 in 1970, 64,822 in 1980, and 90,000 in 1990, and he projects that in 2010 it will have 102,000 members.[63] This represents an AAGR starting low, only about 0.5% in the early 1960s, rising to 6.5% in the late 1960s and 7.2% in the early 1970s, cresting at 15.9% in the late 1970s, declining to 6.0% in the early 1980s, and plummeting to 0.8% in the late 1980s, 0.7% in the early 1990s, and 0.6% in the years after 1995. (For more details, see table 2 opposite, columns 2 and 3.) That such strapping figures for the period from 1965 to 1985 are followed by such calamitous figures for the period from 1985 to the present and beyond is hard to understand, especially for those who have had any direct exposure to CAMACOP. But closer examination of Brierley's material shows that, as with the UCCP, his later data points (here all those after 1980) are only estimates.

Again, as with the UCCP, more reliable membership statistics for CAMACOP are available from other sources. Eric Smith gives figures for 1970, 1975, 1980, and 1985 that are quite comparable and in one case identical to Brierley's figures for those years. After 1985, though, Smith diverges from Brierley, at first only

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58 Montgomery and McGavran, *Discipling of a Nation*, pp. 46-7

59 Tuggy and Toliver note in *Seeing the Church*, p. 73, that the CMA's pre-1941 records, kept at its headquarters in Zamboanga City, Mindanao, were destroyed by fire during World War II.

60 Tuggy and Toliver, *Seeing the Church*, p. 74; Montgomery and McGavran, *Discipling of a Nation*, p. 47

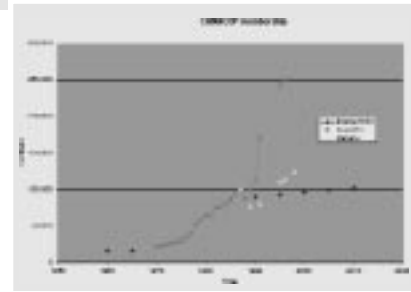
61 McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, pp. 118, 409-10

62 Aragon, 'Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches', pp. 28-9, 44, 53

63 Brierley, *World Churches Handbook*, p. 681

Table 2: CAMACOP membership and annual growth rates

	Brierley/WCH membership	Brierley/ WCH AAGR	Smith/PC m'ship/AGR	Mariano m'ship/AAGR
1960	15,638			
1965	16,000	0.5%		
1970	21,898	6.5%	21,947	
1971		7.2%	22,527/2.6%	
1972		7.2%	24,478/8.7%	
1973		7.2%	25,654/4.8%	
1974		7.2%	26,830/4.6%	
1975	31,049	7.2%	29,470/9.8%	
1976		15.9%	34,022/15.5%	
1977		15.9%	39,298/15.5%	
1978		15.9%	51,629/31.4%	
1979		15.9%	58,734/13.8%	
1980	64,822	15.9%	64,822/10.4%	
1981		6.0%	64,822/0%	
1982		6.0%	74,126/14.4%	
1983		6.0%	74,126/0%	
1984		6.0%	80,230/8.2%	
1985	86,600	6.0%	86,057/7.3%	
1986		0.8%	94,026/9.3%	
1987		0.8%	102,559/9.1%	102,259
1988		0.8%	86,635/-15.5%	-13.3%
1989		0.8%	99,365/14.7%	76,880/-13.3%
1990	90,000	0.8%	112,094/12.8%	2.5%
1991		0.7%	170,947/52.5%	80,847/2.5%
1992		0.7%	9.2%	8.1%
1993		0.7%	9.2%	8.1%
1994		0.7%	9.2%	8.1%
1995	93,000	0.7%	243,200/9.2%	110,538/8.1%
1996		0.6%	249,500/2.6%	113,430/2.6%
1997		0.6%		5.0%
1998		0.6%		125,168/5.0%
1999		0.6%		
2000	96,000	0.6%		
2005	99,000	0.6%		
2010	102,000	0.6%		



slightly but eventually by a factor of more than 100%. He describes CAMACOP as having had 112,094 members in 1990, 243,200 members in 1995, and 249,500 members

in 1996, the last year for which he has data.[64] (For more details, see table 2 on p. 71, column 4.)

Some of this growth reflects merger; for example, in 1995 the Highland Evangelical Christian Association joined CAMACOP, bringing with it 28 member congregations.[65] Some of the growth probably reflects the renewed focus on church planting that characterized Valmike Apuzen's tenure as president of the denomination (1989-1997).[66] As it happens, Apuzen's election to that position came in the midst of turmoil and even schism, with a group of disgruntled pastors and their congregations having broken away to establish Philippine Christian Alliance Ministries, led by Josue Gacal.[67] Presumably this accounts for the short but steep dip in Smith's membership figures from 1987 to 1988. Much of the growth, though, and specifically the dramatic surge in his figures for the late 1980s and early 1990s, apparently reflects CAMACOP's shift at that time to a more 'inclusive' measure of reported membership.[68] Although CAMACOP's own count of baptized members for 1987 is 102,259, almost identical to that of Smith, and although its 'inclusive' figures for subsequent years continue to track with Smith's figures, its count of baptized members for 1989 is just 76,880, rising to 80,847 in 1991, 110,538 in 1995, and 125,168 in 1998.[69] (For more details, see table 2 on p. 71, column 5.)

Smith's statistics yield AGRs ranging as low as -15.5% in 1988, at the time of the Gacal schism, and as high as +52.5% in 1991, reflecting CAMACOP's change in reporting guidelines and possibly another denominational merger. For most years, though, his AGRs are confined to a narrower range of values, only rarely exceeding 15% and just as rarely dipping below 5%. (For more details, see table 2 on p. 71, column 4.) These yield an AAGR of 8.5% from 1970 to 1990, at the point of the artificial bulge noted above, and an AAGR of 7.9% from 1991 to 1996. This shows remarkable consistency. CAMACOP's own statistics yield AAGRs of 2.5% from 1989 to 1991, 8.1% from 1991 to 1995, 2.6% from 1995 to 1996, and 5.0% from 1996 to 1998, with an overall AAGR of 5.6% from 1989 to 1998. (For more details, see table 2 on p. 71, column 5.) The bottom line is that neither Smith nor CAMACOP itself corroborates the dramatically lower AAGRs Brierley projects as having prevailed from the mid-1980s to the present and on into the future.[70] We should certainly expect a further slowing of the

64 Smith, e-mail, 27 October 1999

65 Pat Mariano, e-mail to author, 9 November 1999

66 Averell Aragon, e-mail to author, 15 November 1999

67 Averell Aragon, e-mail to author, 4 November 1999; Mariano, e-mail, 9 November 1999

68 Mariano, e-mail, 9 November 1999

69 Pat Mariano, e-mail to author, 3 November 1999

70 Stephen Smith has pointed out to me that Brierley's estimates of CAMACOP membership after 1985 involve nothing more than adding a nearly-constant amount (3,400 from 1985 to 1990, 3,000 thereafter) every five years. This cautious approach, which uses an arithmetical progression, presumes rather than proves a constantly declining growth rate.

denomination's growth rate as it continues to expand, but even if the AAGR declines to no more than 4.5% over the next decade, this means that by 2010 CAMACOP's baptized membership will still be well over 200,000, more than double Brierley's projection for that year. With its growth rate considerably above the declining growth rate of the general population, its slice of the Philippine religious pie will surely continue to grow as well.[71]

By extension, the same outcome can be expected for the Philippine evangelical community as a whole. Not all members of the PCEC have shown such consistent growth as CAMACOP. For example, between 1970 and 1998 the Philippine Baptist Mission, affiliated with the US Southern Baptist Convention, could muster an AAGR of just 3.2%, barely keeping pace with that of the general population. Quite a few smaller denominations have grown even more rapidly than CAMACOP, though. For example, between 1970 and 1998 the Free Methodists kept up an AAGR of 6.7%, the Church of the Nazarene sustained an AAGR of 10.1%, and the Wesleyan Church achieved an AAGR of 13.0%.[72] This line of argument strongly suggests that over the coming decades the evangelical community will become increasingly prominent in Philippine society, just as it has already become quite prominent in the societies of Latin America.

2.3 Classic Pentecostalism

Since the Latin American evangelical community's rise to prominence has been driven by the growth of Pentecostal denominations, it is important to take a closer look at Pentecostal denominations in the Philippines. These will be considered under two headings. First are classic bodies like the Assemblies of God and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel; second are indigenous bodies like Eddie Villanueva's Jesus Is Lord (JIL) Church.

The Foursquare Church's first missionary to the Philippines only arrived in 1949, but by that time Filipinos moved by the ministry of Foursquare founder Aimee Semple McPherson had already planted congregations in Cavite, Iloilo City, and elsewhere.[73] Just as McPherson's ministry had centred on Angelus Temple in Los Angeles, early Foursquare ministry in the Philippines centred on Calvary Foursquare Church in Manila. By the time of the denomination's first national convention in the early 1960s, workers had established 80 churches nationwide. Philippine Foursquare minis-

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[71] On the other hand, that slice will surely not grow as rapidly as was suggested by CAMACOP's 'Two, Two, Two' plan, apparently adopted in the late 1980s, which set a goal of two million members in 20,000 congregations by 2000. See Jim Montgomery, DAWN 2000: Seven Million Churches to Go (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1989), pp. 146, 219.

[72] Computed from membership data in Smith, e-mail, 27 October 1999. More recent membership figures and annual growth rates for the Church of the Nazarene are given in 'The Nazarene Church Church [sic] Growth Experience, 1995 to 2000', *Philippine Challenge* 21:3 (October 2000), p. 7.

[73] Joseph R. Suico, 'Pentecostalism: Towards a Movement of Social Transformation in the Philippines', *Journal of Asian Mission* 1:1 (March 1999), p. 12

ters participated in another important event of that era, the founding of the PCEC, and in 1973 they gained their independence from the American denomination.

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of rapid growth, both numerical and institutional, with Foursquare leaders establishing a number of Christian schools and Bible colleges.[74] Although the denomination apparently went through a time of turmoil in the 1980s, it continues with an aggressive programme of evangelism and church planting known as Harvest Plan 2002. Reflecting this longstanding commitment, the number of Foursquare congregations has grown from 80 in the early 1960s to more than 200 in 1972, 568 in 1982, and 1343 at present.[75] The Foursquare Church is certainly one of the most prominent classic Pentecostal denominations in the Philippines today.

The Foursquare Church's great vitality is reflected in its membership statistics. Brierley presents the denomination as having had 6,000 members in 1960, 13,500 in 1970, 29,900 in 1980, and 43,300 in 1990, and he projects that it will have 70,100 members in 2010.[76] This reflects a high initial AAGR, between 6.2% and 10.8% over the interval from 1960 to 1985, followed by a plunge to negative average annual growth from 1985 to 1990, followed by a return to positive though much smaller AAGRs from 1990 to the present and beyond, beginning at 2.9% and slowly settling towards 2.0%. (For more details, see table 3 opposite, columns 2 and 3.) Again, though, almost all of Brierley's figures after 1980 are estimates. As with the denominations examined previously, hard numbers are available from Smith, though with the Foursquare Church the discrepancy between estimate and observation is relatively small. In Smith's reckoning, there were 12,350 members in 1970, 32,372 in 1980, 42,212 in 1990, and 57,752 in 1998.[77] AGRs have been quite erratic, soaring as high as 40% and plunging as low as 43%, with some of the former probably the consequence of mergers and much of the latter doubtless the consequence of schisms. Nevertheless, for the entire 28-year interval the AAGR has been 5.7%, very similar to the AAGR of 4.9% over the 30-year interval from 1970 to 2000 yielded by Brierley's membership estimates. (For more details, see table 3 opposite, columns 4 and 5.)

The one point on which Brierley and Smith diverge significantly is Brierley's assumption that average growth rates peaked in the late 1970s and early 1980s, then

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[74] For a discussion of the Foursquare Church's aggressive programme of expansion during the 1960s and early 1970s, see Jim Montgomery, *New Testament Fire in the Philippines* (Manila: Church Growth Research in the Philippines, 1972).

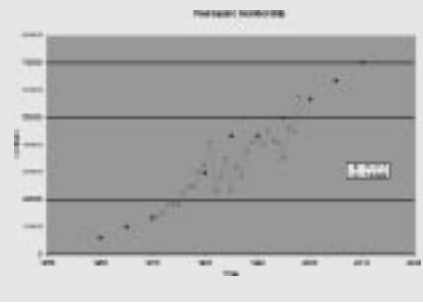
[75] Montgomery and McGavran, *Discipling of a Nation*, pp. 119-121; Wonsuk Ma, e-mail to author, 6 November 1999

[76] Brierley, *World Churches Handbook*, p. 679

[77] Smith, e-mail, 27 October 1999. For 1998 both Brierley's and Smith's figures are in broad agreement with Wonsuk Ma's estimate that in 1999 the Foursquare Church had 60,700 members; Wonsuk Ma, e-mail to author, 6 November 1999.

Table 3: Foursquare membership and annual growth rates

	Brierley/WCH Membership	Brierley/WCH AAGR	Smith/PC membership	Smith/PC AGR
1960	6,000			
1965	10,000	10.8%		
1970	13,500	6.2%	12,350	
1971		6.4%	13,963	13.1%
1972		6.4%	15,232	9.1%
1973		6.4%	17,878	17.4%
1974		6.4%	18,409	3.0%
1975	18,409	6.4%	18,409	0%
1976		10.2%	22,283	21.0%
1977		10.2%	24,590	10.3%
1978		10.2%	25,097	2.1%
1979		10.2%	30,273	20.6%
1980	29,900	10.2%	32,372	6.9%
1981		7.7%	41,100	27.0%
1982		7.7%	23,129	-43.7%
1983		7.7%	28,329	22.5%
1984		7.7%	34,731	22.6%
1985	43,401	7.7%	22,844	-34.2%
1986		-0.05%	32,197	40.9%
1987		-0.05%	28,362	-11.9%
1988		-0.05%	37,834	33.4%
1989		-0.05%	40,899	8.1%
1990	43,300	-0.05%	42,212	3.2%
1991		2.9%	40,091	-5.0%
1992		2.9%	45,311	13.0%
1993		2.9%	41,563	-8.3%
1994		2.9%	40,690	-2.1%
1995	50,000	2.9%	35,095	-13.7%
1996		2.5%	46,545	32.6%
1997		2.5%	44,590	-4.2%
1998		2.5%	57,752	29.5%
1999		2.5%		
2000	56,700	2.5%		
2005	63,400	2.3%		
2010	70,100	2.0%		



entered a long decline. Instead, Smith finds very high average growth rates in the late 1970s, late 1980s, and late 1990s somewhat counterbalanced by negative average growth rates in the early 1980s and early 1990s. Brierley's prediction of slower growth in the recent past and the immediate future seems to have no basis in reality. In fact, if the denomination only maintains the average annual rate of growth it sustained from 1970 to 1998, by 2010 membership will have passed 112,000, 60% more than the membership Brierley predicts for that year. The Foursquare Church's perseverance in a healthy overall pattern of growth in spite of the fissiparous tendencies of some of its members strongly suggests that, like CAMACOP, it is destined to play a leading role in the Philippine Christian community.

A classic Pentecostal denomination that has been even more prominent in the Philippines than the Foursquare Church is the Assemblies of God. The first AoG missionaries arrived in 1926, though health problems forced their early departure.

More missionaries soon followed, though again the lead in planting churches was taken not by expatriates but by Filipinos who had accepted the Pentecostal message while in the US. In 1940 the Philippine District Council of the Assemblies of God was established under the aegis of the US AoG, and in 1953 the District Council was chartered as the Philippine General Council of the Assemblies of God, thus gaining its autonomy.[78]

Like the Foursquare Church, this denomination has been concerned to co-operate with other evangelical bodies wherever possible, its ministers also having taken part in the establishment of the PCEC.[79] It too has devoted considerable resources to theological education, supporting a seminary and a network of Bible colleges. But most importantly, it has always had a passion for evangelism and church planting, making frequent use of revival meetings and outdoor crusades. A period of slow growth in the years immediately after World War II was followed by an explosive expansion between 1953 and 1955 that has been called the 'Philippine Pentecost'.[80] By 1969 the number of AoG congregations had reached 320.[81] An ugly schism in 1973 and the lengthy ensuing court case absorbed energy that otherwise might have gone into outreach.[82] Even so, by 1979 there were 383 AoG congregations, by 1989 there were 1,329, and at present there are 2,357.[83] As these numbers attest, the Assemblies of God are to Philippine Pentecostalism what CAMACOP is to non-Pentecostal evangelicalism.

The AoG's vigour is demonstrated by an examination of its membership statistics. Brierley presents the denomination as having had 12,022 members in 1960, 30,500 in 1970, 50,000 in 1980, and 70,000 in 1990, and he projects that it will have 117,000 members in 2010.[84] This reflects high initial AAGRs, reaching even 10.0% between 1960 and 1965, but a general downward trend that would yield AAGRs of 1.9% between 1980 and 1985, 4.9% between 1985 and 1990, 3.5% between 1990 and 1995, 2.6% between 1995 and 2000, 2.3% between 2000 and 2005, and only 2.0% between 2005 and 2010. (For more details, see table 4 opposite, columns 2 and 3.) These figures imply that the A/G will be doing well just to maintain the place it currently holds in Philippine society. If Brierley is correct, more likely it will represent a slowly declining percentage of the population and even of the evangelical community. Yet again, though, most of his figures after 1970 and all of them after 1985 are estimates.

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78 Suico, 'Pentecostalism', pp. 11-13

79 Aragon, 'Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches', p. 22

80 Tuggy and Toliver, *Seeing the Church*, p. 79

81 Eric Smith, telephone interview by author, 12 November 1999

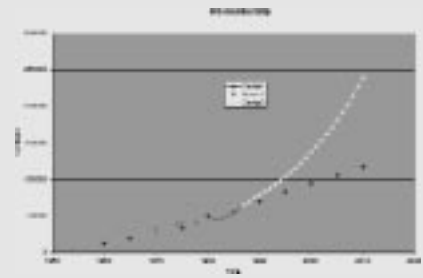
82 Montgomery and McGavran, *Discipling of a Nation* p. 115.

83 Smith, interview, 12 November 1999; Ma, e-mail, 6 November 1999

84 Brierley, *World Churches Handbook*, p. 679

Table 4: AoG membership and annual growth rates

	Brierley/WCH Membership	Brierley/WCH AAGR	Smith/PC membership	Smith/PC AGR
1960	12,022			
1965	19,382	10.0%		
1970	30,500	9.5%	30,500	
1971		1.8%		5.3%
1972		1.8%		5.3%
1973		1.8%		5.3%
1974		1.8%	37,500	5.3%
1975	33,300	1.8%	40,000	6.7%
1976		8.5%		0%
1977		8.5%		0%
1978		8.5%	40,000	0%
1979		8.5%		4.1%
1980	50,000	8.5%		4.1%
1981		1.9%	45,078	4.1%
1982		1.9%	45,738	1.5%
1983		1.9%	46,662	2.0%
1984		1.9%	50,266	7.7%
1985	55,000	1.9%	52,272	4.0%
1986		4.9%	59,136	13.1%
1987		4.9%	67,056	13.4%
1988		4.9%	(70,878 see text)	(5.7% see text)
1989		4.9%	(74,918)	(5.7%)
1990	70,000	4.9%	(79,189)	(5.7%)
1991		3.5%	(83,702)	(5.7%)
1992		3.5%	(88,473)	(5.7%)
1993		3.5%	(93,516)	(5.7%)
1994		3.5%	(98,847)	(5.7%)
1995	83,100	3.5%	(104,481)	(5.7%)
1996		2.6%	(110,436)	(5.7%)
1997		2.6%	(116,731)	(5.7%)
1998		2.6%	(123,385)	(5.7%)
1999		2.6%	(130,418)	(5.7%)
2000	94,400	2.6%	(137,852)	(5.7%)
2005	106,000	2.3%	(181,881)	(5.7%)
2010	117,000	2.0%	(239,973)	(5.7%)



Unfortunately, Smith's membership figures for the AoG are incomplete, missing entries for several years and breaking off entirely after 1987. His figures from 1970 to 1987 are broadly comparable to those of Brierley, yielding 30,500 members in 1970, 45,078 in 1981, and 52,272 in 1985.[85] But where Brierley describes AAGRs as trending downward after 1980, Smith finds growth rates beginning to rise again in the mid- to late 1980s, the point at which Brierley's hard data end. Smith finds growth rates reaching as high as 13.3% between 1985 and 1987, the point at which his own data end.

Unfortunately, the AoG's Philippine General Council has no current or recent membership data that could be used to extend Smith's figures and assess Brierley's projections.[86] As noted above, though, several sources give fairly reliable counts of the number of AoG con-

[85] Smith, e-mail, 27 October 1999

[86] Felipe Acena, telephone interview by author, 11 November 1999

gregations. These yield a congregational AAGR starting at 3.7% between 1969 and 1979, surging to 28.3% between 1979 and 1989, and holding at 12.1% between 1989 and 1999. The first figure is more or less in line with Brierley's membership AAGR of 5.1% between 1970 and 1980, but the latter two figures are very difficult to reconcile with his estimated membership AAGRs of 3.4% between 1980 and 1990 and just 3.0% between 1990 and 2000. As with CAMACOP and the Foursquare Church, it is my belief that Brierley has seriously underestimated the AoG's growth over the past decade or more and its likely growth over the coming decade and beyond.

Starting where Smith's figures stop, if we credit the AoG with an AAGR of just 5.7%, the same average rate of growth the Foursquare Church apparently maintained over the entire span from 1970 to 1998, it would have had 79,189 members in 1990, 104,481 in 1995, and 137,852 in 2000. By 2010 its membership would be approaching 240,000. (For more details, see table 4 on p. 77, columns 4 and 5.) The fact that the computed membership figure for 2000 is in close agreement with the AoG's current membership as estimated by Wonsuk Ma lends support to my contention that here as elsewhere Brierley has seriously misconstrued Philippine denominational trends.[87] Again, it seems likely that in coming years the AoG will play an ever-increasing role in Philippine society.

[87] Ma, e-mail, 6 November 1999

2.4 Indigenous Pentecostalism

One last evangelical slice of the Philippine religious pie remains to be examined, that of indigenous Pentecostal denominations and near-denominations like the March of Faith, the Bread of Life Fellowship, and the JIL Church. A stroll through any working-class neighbourhood or even a simple perusal of the telephone directory will attest that this is by far the liveliest sector of the Christian community.[88] Storefront chapels dot the streets, the names on their signboards indicating their pastors' theological proclivities: the Jesus Loves You Full Gospel Church, the Victory in Jesus Christ Congregation, and even the Church of World Messianity (sic!). Newspapers often feature articles about and interviews with celebrities belonging to one or another of these groups. Banners promoting their rallies and crusades festoon the streets, and their leading evangelists make extensive use of radio and television as well. Without a doubt the best known of these evangelists is Eddie Villanueva, and the most visible of the Philippines' many indigenous Pentecostal bodies is his JIL Church. Thus JIL will be taken as representative of other such groups that cannot be

[88] It is significant that Oscar Baldemor's ThM thesis, 'The Spread of Fire: A Study of Ten Growing Churches in Metro Manila' (Fuller Theological Seminary, 1990), considers three classic evangelical congregations and seven Pentecostal or Charismatic congregations. Most of the latter are indigenous.

treated here individually for reasons of space.

Villanueva himself has led a fascinating life. After spending some years as a university professor, political activist, and committed Marxist, he experienced conversion in 1973. Five years later he began a Bible study for his students that quickly blossomed into the Jesus Is Lord Fellowship. As numbers grew, he held meetings in a series of borrowed facilities, each larger than the last, culminating with an open-air amphitheatre capable of accommodating tens of thousands. This led to JIL's nickname, 'the church without a roof'. At the same time, he and his associates planted satellite congregations first throughout metro Manila, then across Luzon, next around the Philippines, and finally spanning the globe, focusing especially on cities like Hong Kong and Singapore that have large expatriate Filipino communities.[89] Today there are 478 of these congregations, including 72 overseas.[90] An electrifying public speaker, Villanueva has long had a television ministry that is now broadcast by his own TV station. He himself was one of the most prominent participants in the ceremony held in 1998 at the Quirino Bandstand in Rizal Park, Manila, to mark the hundredth anniversary of Protestantism in the Philippines.[91] Today JIL is the dominant voice in the Philippines for Jesus Movement, a Pentecostal umbrella organization.[92] With its explosive growth, with its evolution in just twenty years from a single fellowship into a fellowship of fellowships and finally into a fledgling denomination, JIL's sheer size is likely to lead to steadily increasing visibility.

What exactly is that size? Unfortunately, it is impossible to give a precise answer. JIL's current claim to upwards of two million members world-wide may be taken to indicate two million sympathizers or perhaps two million regular viewers of Villanueva's television programmes, but it cannot refer to active members of JIL congregations, since this would mean that those congregations must average around 4,000 each in attendance. If such were the case, JIL would be a fellowship of mega-churches![93] Brierley is no help in resolving the question, since JIL is not one of the denominations for which he presents statistics. This is not surprising, given that he seems to have gathered no hard data at all on the Philippines beyond the early to mid-1980s, when JIL would still have been quite small. Nor has Smith been able to go beyond the group's own claim of 600,000 members in 1988, one million in 1991, and two

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89 Michael Wourms, *The J.I.L. Love Story: The Church without a Roof* (El Cajon, CA: Christian Services Publishing, 1991); Eddie C. Villanueva, 'Jesus Is Lord Church', in C. Peter Wagner (ed.), *The New Apostolic Churches* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1998), pp. 257-70

90 Ma, e-mail, 6 November 1999

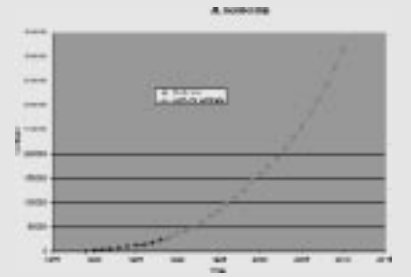
91 Program, 'The Centennial of Biblical Christianity in the Philippines, Grand Celebration, August 15, 1998'

92 Averell Aragon, e-mail to author, 29 October 1999

93 Villanueva, 'Jesus Is Lord Church', p. 262

Table 5: JIL membership and annual growth rates

	Baldemor	AGR	Author's estimate	Assumed AAGR
1979	30			
1980	2,000	6567%		
1981	3,300	65.0%		
1982	4,800	45.4%		
1983	7,500	56.2%		
1984	11,000	46.7%		
1985	13,000	18.2%		
1986	14,000	7.7%		
1987	18,000	28.6%		
1988	23,000	27.8%		
1989	29,000	26.1%		
1990			34,800	20%
1991			41,760	20%
1992			50,112	20%
1993			60,134	20%
1994			72,161	20%
1995			82,985	15%
1996			95,433	15%
1997			109,748	15%
1998			126,210	15%
1999			145,142	15%
2000			159,656	10%
2005			257,128	10%
2010			414,107	10%



million, as already noted, in 1998.[94]

The only plausible source of such information that I have been able to identify is Oscar Baldemor's thesis cited above. Drawing on JIL's own in-house statistics, Baldemor gives the group's membership as just 30 in 1979, the year after its founding, rising to 11,000 in 1984 and 29,000 in 1989. (For more details, see table 5, columns 2 and 3.) This yields AGRs averaging 365.7% from 1979 to 1984 and 21.4% from 1984 to 1989. All other things being equal, it seems likely that JIL's AAGR will have continued to decline as its numbers have grown. If we assume that the AAGR was 20% from 1989 to 1994 and 15% from 1994 to 1999, this yields a membership for the latter year of 145,142, which is in fairly close agreement with Ma's estimate of 150,000.[95] (For more details, see table 5, columns 4 and 5.) The implication is that although JIL is not nearly so numerically dominant in the Philippine Pentecostal and evangelical communities as it claims, it certainly deserves a place alongside such long-established denominations as CAMACOP and the Assemblies of God. If it can maintain an AAGR of even 10% over the coming decade, by 2010 it will have a membership of over 400,000, which is truly remarkable for such a

[94] Eric Smith, telephone interview by author, 11 November 1999.

[95] Ma, e-mail, 6 November 1999.

young denomination.

New indigenous Pentecostal groups are constantly springing up in the Philippines, and as with JIL, their growth rates are generally highest early in their life cycles. For example, Love of Christ Ministries sustained an AAGR of 53.9% over the first eight years after its founding in 1981, attaining a membership of 4400 in 1989.[96] Bread of Life Fellowship expanded even more rapidly, having been founded in 1982 and sustaining an AAGR of 65.0% over the next seven years to reach a membership of 4,000 in 1989.[97] This enumeration might be extended almost indefinitely. The point is that such fellowships represent the youngest and hence the most dynamic, rapidly growing sector of the Philippine evangelical community. JIL may not have millions of members — yet! — but Villanueva and those like him lead churches with an aggregate membership already in the hundreds of thousands. No one who has spent much time in the Philippines would doubt that they now have a large slice of that nation's religious pie, nor that over the coming decades their slice will likely continue to grow.

Conclusion

The time has come to draw some conclusions. Borrowing a phrase from David Stoll, is the Philippines 'turning Protestant'? And is the form of Protestantism to which it seems to be turning predominantly Pentecostal? In short, can we expect to see a reprise of Latin America's recent religious transformation in this nation on the far side of the Pacific Ocean? The answer, I believe, is a qualified yes.

It must be conceded that collecting accurate membership statistics for most indigenous Pentecostal and Charismatic bodies is simply impossible, and that collecting such statistics even for established denominations like CAMACOP and the Assemblies of God is very difficult. This means that even the most conscientious scholar cannot offer a comprehensive demographic 'snapshot' capturing every detail of the Philippine religious scene as it is now, let alone as it may be twenty or thirty years in the future.

Still, the data assembled here strongly suggest that Filipino Protestantism may finally be on the verge of the mass movement some missionaries expected almost a century ago. The vigorous growth exhibited by denominations like CAMACOP, the Foursquare Church, the Assemblies of God, and JIL is entirely consistent with the picture of evangelical expansion in the Philippines already noted. Let us take as a baseline *Operation World*'s estimate that in 1990 5.1% of all Filipinos were evangelicals, and let us assume that the population of the Philippines will continue to increase at an average rate of 2.5% per year (probably high) while the Philippine evangelical community will continue to increase at an average rate of 5% per year

[96] Calculated on the basis of figures taken from Baldemor, 'Spread of Fire', p. 120.

[97] Calculated on the basis of figures taken from Baldemor, 'Spread of Fire', p. 73.

(possibly low). The implication is that by 2000, evangelicals will have constituted 6.5% of the population, reaching 8.2% in 2010, 10.5% in 2020, 13.4% in 2030, and 17.0% in 2040. Such an outcome would be comparable to the situation in Chile today, where evangelicals make up between 15 and 20% of the population.[98]

This is not to say that Philippine religious developments will precisely duplicate those in Latin America. The two regions have many things in common, but there are many things that set them apart as well. For example, Filipinos showed more resilience in the process of Hispanization than did the Aztecs, Incas, and other aboriginal American peoples.[99] Furthermore, although the US has long practised 'Coca-Cola colonialism' in the lands south of the Rio Grande River, it never exercised direct political control over those territories in the way that it exercised control over the Philippines after the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1899. Americanization is certainly a factor today in Latin America, where young people wearing jeans and sneakers eat fast-food hamburgers while listening to the latest hip-hop musicians. However, American culture has been much more of a magnet for Filipinos who spent half a century under American sovereignty.

Perhaps this helps to explain why non-Pentecostal evangelicalism has done almost as well in the Philippines as classic and indigenous Pentecostalism. Pentecostals and Charismatics probably already constitute a majority of the Philippine evangelical community, and their lead over non-Pentecostal evangelicals will likely grow in the coming decades. Yet denominations like CAMACOP seem positioned to continue indefinitely as major players, unlike similar Latin American bodies. For all its similarities to Latin America, the Philippines is a unique cultural and religious environment.[100]

What does this augur for the future? What new challenges will Filipino evangelicals face in coming years? What new opportunities may present themselves?

First, it seems very likely that inter-religious tensions will rise as the Catholic community continues to suffer relative numerical decline and the evangelical community is made to bear the blame for this. Already the Philippine Catholic hierarchy has issued a series of statements warning the faithful against the blandishments of so-called 'Fundamentalists'.[101]

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98 Martin, *Tongues of Fire*, p. 51.

99 Phelan, *Hispanization of the Philippines*, p. 26.

100 In this respect the Philippines stands apart from the rest of East Asia as well. David B. Barrett, in 'Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1989', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 13:1 (January 1989), p. 20, estimates that 80% of East Asian Christians are Pentecostal or Charismatic.

101 For example, see 'Pastoral Statement on Fundamentalist Groups', in Abdon Ma. C. Josol (ed.), *Responses to the Signs of the Times: Selected Documents [of the] Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian, 1991), pp. 348-53. This document, originally issued in 1989, clearly differentiates between so-called 'Fundamentalists' and members of 'mainline Churches like the Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists, and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines' (pp. 348-9). A number of mass-market tracts issued by Philippine Catholic publishing houses have amplified on its warning.

During John Paul II's visit to the Philippines in 1995 he sounded a similar note of alarm, much as he has done during his visits to Latin America, rather than striking the more ecumenical posture he generally takes during his travels across western Europe and the United States. Of course this is a two-way street. Philippine evangelicals have been slow to see anything good in developments like the rise of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and other forms of what might be called 'evangelical' Catholicism. Perhaps they fear the competition of Catholic organizations like El Shaddai, founded in 1984 by layman Mariano ('Mike') Velarde, and Couples for Christ, established in 1981 and more closely aligned with the Catholic hierarchy. Although these groups today claim more than a million members each, it seems that their rise has not greatly affected the concurrent rise of Protestant evangelical and Pentecostal denominations.[102] Still, most Filipino evangelicals remain sceptical about co-operative ventures with Catholics that are coming almost to be taken for granted in the US.[103] That scepticism seems unlikely to wane in the near future.

Second, as evangelicalism's slice of the Philippine religious pie continues to grow, it will be challenged to move beyond the 'Christ against culture' paradigm that was natural when its numbers were much smaller. With greater size will come greater influence, and from this will flow greater responsibility to address social problems that could previously be ignored or blamed on the failings of the folk-Catholic cultural backdrop—problems that institutional Catholicism has failed to address adequately.

For example, the Catholic magisterium has always taught that abortion is wrong, yet it remains an extremely common practice in the Philippines, with at least 150,000 and possibly as many as 750,000 abortions being performed every year.[104] In the countryside one woman in six admits to having had at least one abortion, and half of these women believe it to be permitted by church law.[105] What do evangelicals

[102] Ma, e-mail, 6 November 1999; Melinda Joy Magdayao, 'The DWXI-PPFI El Shaddai: Is This the Work of God?' (Paper submitted for course, 'Theology and History of Church Renewal', Alliance Biblical Seminary, Manila, Philippines, 3 August 1995). Neither group keeps attendance records, so their claimed membership figures are likely at least as inflated as those of Villanueva; see Smith, e-mail, 27 October 1999.

[103] The best example of this is the Philippine evangelical response to the document, 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium'. For example, see Agustin 'Jun' B. Vencer, Jr., 'Comments on Evangelicals and Catholics Together', *Evangelicals Today and Asia Ministry Digest* (April 1995), p. 7; and Agustin 'Jun' B. Vencer, Jr., 'An International Perspective on Evangelical-Catholic Cooperation', *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 31:3 (July 1995), pp. 278-9.

[104] Florentino Timbreza, *Bioethics and Moral Decisions* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1993), p. 70.

[105] 'Pastoral Letter on the Life of the Unborn Child', in *Responses to the Signs of the Times*, p. 219.

have to say about this?[106]

Again, Catholic teaching emphatically rejects divorce, hence in the Philippines there is no legal provision for it, yet spousal abandonment is endemic, and the result is that, as in the US and other countries where divorce is permitted, millions of children are being raised in broken homes. What do evangelicals have to say about this?[107]

Then again, in recent years Catholic teaching on economics has undergone a fundamental shift, recognizing the market economy's great potential for good. However, many aspects of Philippine culture remain hostile to the capitalist entrepreneurship needed to generate jobs, boost income, and raise the nation's masses out of their accustomed poverty.[108] What do evangelicals have to say about this?[109]

Clearly most Filipinos have yet to meet the Christ who speaks of the sanctity of work, of marriage, and indeed of life itself. This is 'the other Spanish Christ' of whom Mackay wrote, the Christ eventually brought to Brazil, Chile, and the other nations of Latin America by Protestant Pentecostals and Charismatics. This may also prove to be 'the other Philippine Christ' brought to Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao by Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal evangelicals.

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[106] I have heard only one Filipino evangelical address abortion in a sermon, and his attack was on the situation in the US rather than that in his own country.

[107] Suico, 'Pentecostalism', pp. 15-16.

[108] See Pope John Paul II's encyclical, Centesimus Annus, issued in 1991, and recent works by Michael Novak, including especially *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982). For a grudging concession that Philippine folk-Catholicism's values do indeed pose a major obstacle to economic development, see Romeo J. Intengan, 'Are We Poor Because We Are Catholics?', in *Go and Teach: A Festschrift in Honor of Joseph L. Roche, SJ* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Office of Research and Publications, 1997), pp. 149, 156.

[109] Suico, 'Pentecostalism', p. 17.