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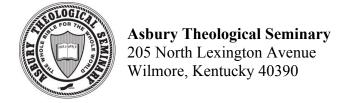
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ABSTRACT

Toward Recontextualization of Christianity with Popular Catholicism: A Study of

Dialogical and Cooperative Mission with Popular Catholicism through

the Perspectives of Methodist Christians in Batangas, Philippines

This study is an investigation of Methodists' understandings of popular Catholicism in the Batangas province in the Republic of the Philippines. Popular Catholicism is the popular form of Christianity most commonly practiced in the Philippines, and thus the religion to which these Methodists previously belonged. Their understandings will provide a foundation from which to suggest and present the possibility of the recontextualization of Christianity, as a way to formulate the "Filipinized Church" in the 21st Century, through dialogical and cooperative mission between the Methodist Church and popular Catholicism. This study, thus, represents Christian mission as a particular effort to recontextualize Christianity in the context of an "already-Christianized area" through dialogue and cooperation between a new form of Christianity (e.g. the Methodist Church) and a previously existing form of Christianity (e.g. popular Catholicism).

The empirical research for this study demonstrates that all of the Methodist Christians interviewed in Batangas came from popular Catholic backgrounds, which means that they had already experienced popular Catholic religion and culture in their lives. However, the research also revealed that these Methodists had different understandings of, and reactions to, popular Catholicism, which affect the way they

conceive and practice missions and ministry within the context of popular Catholicism in Batangas.

Catholic beliefs and practices in the Philippines were greatly impacted by Spanish colonialism for more than 300 years, and this influence is still seen in the culture of popular Catholicism today. Christianity in the Philippines, thus, has been inculturated with colonialism and Filipino indigenous religious influences in forms of popular Catholicism. In this inculturated Christian context, this study suggests a concept of deculturation of Christianity through a critical examination of the culture and inculturated Christianity, in order to get rid of colonial and cultural impacts from Filipino popular Catholicism, and to suggest recontextualization of Christianity which is the purpose of Christian mission in Batangas, Philippines. Consequently, deculturation is a prerequisite for recontextualization of Christianity in this popular Catholic context.

Finally, bible study as missional evangelism, social gospel as missional cooperation, and Pentecostalism as missional ecumenism are suggested as the best ways to achieve dialogue and cooperative mission in order to deculturate and recontextualize Christianity in Batangas, Philippines.

Different lenses are used to investigate popular Catholicism and its relationship to Methodist mission in this study: religious comparison to examine the foundations of popular Catholicism; examination of religious expression in popular Catholicism compared with Protestantism; and, ethnographical research to explore Methodists' understandings of popular Catholicism.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation, entitled

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A Study of Dialogical and Cooperative Mission with Popular Catholicism through the Perspectives of Methodist Christians in Batangas, Philippines

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and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Toward Recontextualization of Christianity with Popular Catholicism:

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Chapter 1

Overview of the Study

Introduction

"Why are you going to the Philippines for Christian mission work? I heard that the Philippines is already Christianized by Catholicism. Is Protestantism really different from the Catholic Church?" A Korean immigration officer questioned me during a routine interview at the immigration desk in the Kimpo airport in February 2001, as I prepared to leave on a short-term mission trip to the Philippines. I felt paralyzed because I had not thought about these questions before. During my full-time mission work as a Methodist minister, from 2003-2007, in Batangas, Philippines, this question stayed in the back of my mind: What does Christian mission mean to me and to Filipinos in their religious context, Catholicism? What am I doing here as a Methodist pastor?

Generally speaking, more than 88% of Filipinos claim that they are Christian whether they belong to Catholic, Protestant, or independent churches. While Catholicism remains the dominant branch of Christianity in the Philippines, Evangelicals now represent approximately 10 percent of the total population of around 90 million. Due to the historical influence of Christianity, church has become a very important part

¹ https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/thepworld-factbook/geos/rp.html

² Timoteo Gener, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together? Issues and Prospects for Dialogue and Common Witness in Lowland Philippines," in *Ecumenical Review of Theology*, 33 no3. July 2009, 230.

³ Because of the Christianization brought to the Philippines by Spanish colonialism from the mid-16th Century through the end of 19th century, most Christian churches in the Philippines are Roman Catholic. Colonial imperialism by the United States also

of the lives of Filipinos, not only with regards to ideational aspects such as worldview, religion, and values, but also to material aspects such as technology, arts, and handicrafts.⁴ Thus, it is not possible to think of the daily lives and culture of Filipinos apart from Christianity.

Considering the historical development of Christianity in the Philippines, this dissertation seeks to investigate how Catholicism developed within Filipino contexts, and how the Methodist Church in the Philippines has interacted with the Filipino Catholic influences. For this investigation, this study will focus on how Filipino Methodist Christians in Batangas province perceive Filipino Catholicism (especially in its "popular" form), its adherents, and their religious practices, in order to present the possibility for the recontextualization of Christianity through dialogue and cooperation with popular Catholicism in the Philippines.

Background to the Problem: Protestant Views of Filipino Popular Catholicism

Philippine Catholicism and its religious practices have often been viewed by

Protestant Christians as a syncretistic mixture of pre-Hispanic animistic elements and the

Catholic faith, in which "certain folk elements [of animism], either encouraged or at least
tolerated by the Church, are integrated into what is fundamentally a Catholic belief and
value system." This perspective on Filipino Catholicism can also be found among

influenced Filipino Christianity, introducing Protestantism after the Spaniards withdrew at the end of the 19th Century.

⁴ J.B. Banawiratma S.J. and J. Muller S.J., *Contextual Social Theology: An Indonesian Model*. Retrieved March 5, 2011, online: http://eapi.admu.edu.ph/eapr99/chap10.html ⁵ John Schumacher, "Syncretism in Philippine Catholicism: Its Historical Causes," *Philippine Studies* 32 (1984): 251.

Methodist Christians in Batangas province.⁶ Why do Protestant Christians have this perspective of Filipino Catholicism? How does this perspective affect Christian mission conducted by the Protestant Church? What does Protestant Christian mission work look like in the context of Filipino Catholicism? In order to answer to these questions it is necessary to look at the historical relationship between Catholicism and Protestantism in the Philippines.

After Spanish colonial power withdrew in 1898, Protestant missionaries came to the Philippines along with American colonialism. Many Protestant missionaries in the early part of the 20th century believed that "Roman Catholicism had scarcely any connection with true Christianity." They found that "[the Philippines] had inherited a number of vexing problems in which the Roman Catholic Church was involved." As a result, many Protestant missionaries and denominations felt the need to proselytize among the Roman Catholic population. However, American Roman Catholics predicted that any attempt to proselytize Filipinos from Catholicism to Protestantism would fail because of the close connection between Filipinos and Catholicism. During the Spanish colonial era, Catholicism had become an important cultural influence to Filipinos through religious beliefs and practices.

According to historical viewpoints, Protestant missionaries held two different

⁶ This observation is based on surveys and interviews with Batangs Methodist Christians and pastors from April 2011 to June 2011 during the field research.

⁷ Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines, 1898-1916* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 94.

⁸ Peter G. Gowing, *Islands Under the Cross: The Story of the Church in the Philippines* (Manila: National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 1967), 114.

⁹ Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines*, 1898-1916 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 95.

¹⁰ Anne C. Kwantes, *Presbyterian Missionaries in the Philippines: Conduits of Social Change (1899-1910)* (Quezon, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1989), 16.

perspectives about Filipino Catholicism at the beginning of Protestant missions in the Philippines. First, there was a group of missionaries, notably the Methodists, United Brethren, Episcopalians, and some Presbyterians, who evaluated the Catholic Church based upon its historical Christian role in the Philippines: Catholicism at least prevented the spread of Islam in the main islands in the Philippines. Second, although Catholicism provided historical contributions to prevent the spread of Islam throughout all of the Philippines, many Protestant missionaries thought of Catholicism as "a deficient form of Christianity"11 because of the belief in the existence of multitudinous saints who were more real and practical than God to Filipinos. For example, Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries concluded that Catholic worship consisted "of adoration of wooden and stone images."12 Even William McKinley who was a Methodist missionary in the 1900s, said to a group of Methodists visiting the Philippines, "there was nothing left for us to do but to take them [Catholics] all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift them and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could do for them, as our fellowmen for whom Christ also died."13 With this colonial concept of Protestant missions, Homer C. Stuntz, a Methodist missionary in the Philippines in the 1900s, also said "Protestantism must make use of the opportunity which the conquest created to counteract errors in Catholicism."14

Along with the negative and positive view of Filipino Catholicism, there were

¹¹ Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines*, 1898-1916 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 96.

¹² Ibid., 95.

¹³ Charles S. Olcott, *The Life of William McKinley*, 2nd Vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916), 2: III.

¹⁴ Lorenzo Bautista, "Colonization and the Philippine-American War: Perceptions of Early Protestant Missionaries," Anne C. Kwantes, ed., *Chapters in Philippine Church History* (Colorado: International Academic Publishers, 2002), 143.

also two different views among American Protestant missionaries to see indigenous Filipinos. Some missionaries thought that indigenous Filipinos did not have the intellectual capacity to collaborate with them in missions, while others were more optimistic about such a partnership with indigenous Filipinos. ¹⁵

Consequently, like the Catholic missionaries during Spanish colonialism, the endeavors of many Protestant missionaries were hampered by their own ethnocentric attitudes. As a result, although some Protestant missionaries and Christians had seen their Catholic neighbors as an important bulwark against the spread of Islam, the purpose of Christian mission conducted by the Protestant Church was to not contextualize the gospel into Filipino Catholic context. Rather, it was to covert Filipinos from Catholicism to Protestantism because of the perspective which understood Filipino Catholicism as a syncretistic form of Christianity (folk Catholicism or popular Catholicism).

Statement of Problem

Contextualization of Christianity should be an ongoing process; since cultures and societies are always changing due to both internal and external influences, the church must constantly be reevaluating its beliefs and practices in light of these changing contexts--adapting to, as well as challenging, the local culture. Any attempt to mediate the Gospel, whether it is called inculturation or contextualization or evangelization, depends on the communication, which can be understood by the people addressed.

¹⁵ Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines, 1898-1916* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 72-74. It will be dealt more in chapter two.

¹⁶ See more detail, Dean Flemming, Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission (Illinois: IVP, 2005).

¹⁷ J.B. Banawiratma S.J. and J. Muller S.J., Contextual Social Theology: An Indonesian

Accordingly, Christian mission should not stay only at the cognitive level, but need to move to the level of practical communication with people in order to learn their spiritual and material needs. Therefore, any endeavor to contextualize the gospel into the local culture needs to be grounded in a profound understanding of the people's everyday lives. Since popular Catholicism provides the framework in which people in Batangas make sense of the world around them, Methodist missions should interact with popular Catholicism via cultural and theological studies in order to contextualize the gospel again in that popular Catholic context.

However, there have been few attempts by Protestant Christians to contextualize the gospel within popular Catholic contexts in the Philippines for primarily two reasons. First, popular Catholicism has been considered a form of Christianity that has contributed to the indigenization of the faith by having its values, traditions, and culture handed down from generation to generation, and it has helped prevent the destruction of the indigenous cultures during the periods of Spanish rule and American colonization. Thus, some Methodist Christians in Batangas think it is unnecessary to contextualize the gospel into the current Filipino contexts because the gospel has already been contextualized in its Catholic form, although it has been combined with some folk religious practices, in what is typically considered popular Catholicism. They are focusing more on the ecumenical movement between the Catholic Church and other Protestant churches for good works in society. Therefore, these Methodists just accept Catholicism as a viable Filipino form of

Model. Retrieved March 5, 2011, online: http://eapi.admu.edu.ph/eapr99/chap10htm ¹⁸ Jose De Mesa, "Holy Week and Popular Devotions," in Rene Javellana, ed., *Religion and the Filipino: Essays in Honor of Vitaliano Gorospe*, (Quezon, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila, 1994), 221.

¹⁹ The interview with a co-founder of BEC (Batangas Ecumenical Council), Rev. Ramos

contextualization of the gospel although it has become a popular religious form. Second, contrary to the first, some other Methodist Christians do not acknowledge any positive Christian contribution of popular Catholicism to the development of Filipino society and culture. They have assumed that popular Catholicism is already a heresy due to syncretism with folk religious practices and beliefs.²⁰ Thus, they think it is important to abandon all the popular Catholic religious practices and to convert Catholics from folk Catholicism to Protestantism rather than any attempt for contextualization of the gospel (see Table 1-1 below).²¹

Perspective 1.	Perspective 2.
Popular Catholicism is already an indigenized	Popular Catholicism is heretical as it
form of Christianity. Thus, Protestants do not	represents a syncretistic form of Christianity.
need to attempt to contextualize the gospel for	Thus, the previous contextualization of the
Catholics.	gospel by the Catholic church must be
	rejected and Catholics need to be converted
	from popular Catholicism to Protestantism.

Table 1-1. Two Protestant perspectives on popular Catholicism and contextualization

For these reasons, most Methodist Christians and pastors do not attempt to

contextualize the gospel for those Filipinos who mostly belong to popular Catholicism.

Rene, has presented that it (BEC) has focused only on unity, peace, justice, social concern, and social responsibility rather than theological discussion concerning religious practices in popular Catholicism. He personally disagreed to popular Catholic religious practices. Interview with Author, May 1st, 2011.

²⁰ Many Batangas Methodist pastors who came from Catholicism have been against popular Catholic practices and beliefs because of perspective of syncretism.

²¹ These two reasons for not attempting contextualization of the gospel in the Batangas Catholic context have been manifested through my missionary experiences (4 years) and field research through interviews and surveys in Batangas.

As a result, those Methodist Christians and pastors in Batangas, who have emphasized a rejection of popular Catholicism and have focused on conversion from popular Catholicism to Protestantism (perspective 2), may be able to lead to a "neo-split level Christianity" in which persons who come from popular Catholicism to the Methodist Church put each leg into two different forms of Christianity, one into the Methodist Church and the other into the popular Catholic tradition. On the contrary, the naïve (or, perhaps romantic) perspective which sees popular Catholicism as an already-contextualized form of Christianity (perspective 1) can also say that the contextualization of the gospel is unnecessary while doing Christian mission in Batangas because it has been contextualized already by Catholicism.

Perspective 2 (table 1-1) can be separatism, and perspective 1 can be liberalism.

Timoteo Gener mentions separatism and liberalism as two abandoned perspectives for Evangelicals to view Catholicism already. Separatism means no tolerance of different doctrines in Catholicism, while liberalism refers to uncritical blends of different values and practices even though they are unbiblical. According to Gener, PCEC (the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches) already rejected these two attitudes (separatism and liberalism) for understanding Filipino Catholicism from the beginning of its organization. However, those two attitudes have continued to exist among Methodist Christians in Batangas. Consequently, any attempt to contextualize the gospel into the

²² This assertion is based on my missionary experiences in Batangas, Philippines. Moreover, this assertion is an assumption to develop the concept of recontextualization of Christianity in popular Catholic areas.

²³ Timoteo Gener, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together? Issues and Prospects for Dialogue and Common Witness in Lowland Philippines," in *Ecumenical Review of Theology*, 33 no3. July 2009, 231-232.

²⁴ BEC (Batangas Ecumenical Council) shows liberalism, while conservative Methodist

popular Catholic context in Batangas has not been accessible.

The necessity of contextualizing the gospel in a popular Catholic context does not mean that popular Catholicism had not been through the process of contextualization of Christianity. Indeed, it had been contextualized in Filipino contexts whether we may call it syncretistic Christianity mixed with other traditional and animistic beliefs and practices. If the task of Christian mission is to contextualize the gospel, contextualization in Batangas means enhancing and restoring the faith in Christ through individual evangelism and social evangelism. Therefore, Christian contextualization in Batangas or other Christianized areas might be different from contextualization of Christianity in non-Christian (un-reached) areas. Thus, this study will use the terminology "recontextualization" rather than "contextualization" because Christianity has been contextualized in Batangas as a form of popular Catholicism by Roman Catholics already, and because Methodist missions need to figure out the meaning of being Christians through the "re"-contextualization of the gospel into the popular Catholic context for the people in Batangas.

Given these relational realities between Methodist Church and popular

Catholicism in Batangas, this study investigates how Batangas Methodist Christians

interpret the historical, cultural and religious aspects of popular Catholicism, with

implications for the recontextualization of Christianity through dialogue and cooperation.

Consequently, it is necessary to recognize the following assumptions: 1) Popular Catholicism and its religious practices can be understood as indigenous forms of Filipino Catholic Christianity; 2) Historically speaking, Methodism represents a new form of

Christianity, which is able to introduce Protestant traditions, theologies, and evangelical beliefs to popular Catholic Christians; and 3) Christian mission is not only for those who haven't heard about the good news of Jesus Christ, but also should be a continuing process through recontextualization of Christianity in areas already Christianized, in order to enhance and revitalize the local Christian communities in the era of the global church.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer several important research questions, which deal with the foundation of popular Catholicism, understandings of Methodist Christians to popular Catholicism, and the role of Methodist Christians in recontextualizing the gospel in Batangas, Philippines. The two main questions of this study are: 1) What are the Batangas Methodist Christians' understandings of popular Catholicism today in terms of the evangelical and ecumenical purpose of Christian mission in the 21st century?; 2) What is a proper missiological model for Methodist Christians in Batangas in order to recontextualize the gospel in the popular Catholic context?

Sub-questions are the following two: 1) How do the Methodist Christians in Batangas interpret popular Catholicism - as an indigenized form of Christianity to build upon, as a syncretized form to be rejected, or as something other than these two perspectives?;

2) To what degree do Methodist Christians currently dialogue with popular Catholic Christians in regards to Christian mission? Is there any cooperation between Methodists and popular Catholic Christians in Christian mission?

Delimitations

First, this research does not include the entire country of the Philippines, but, instead, focuses on Batangas Province, where I was a missionary from 2003 to 2007. I met with Methodist Christians and ministers in Batangas to investigate the research questions during my field research in 2011. Second, this research confines itself to the United Methodist Church in Batangas, because of my accessibility to these churches due to having formerly been a missionary working with the UMC in this geographical area. Thus, this research is limited to Methodist Christians in Batangas.

This research will not investigate how popular Catholic Christians approach

Methodist Christians and the Methodist Church; it will, instead, be limited to the
investigation of Methodist Christians in Batangas, Philippines in an effort to suggest the
possibility of recontextualization of the gospel in the popular Catholic context.

<u>Definition</u> of Key Terms

Recontextualization

Contextualization should be an ongoing process of continuous interaction with the gospel and culture for doing Christian mission. David Bosch presents two major types of contextualization: the indigenization model (inculturation), and the socio-economic model (social revolution).²⁵ According to Bosch, missions as "contextualization" are focused on doing missions, and doing theology in a local culture,²⁶ which may be

²⁶ Ibid., 420-432.

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²⁵ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2007), 421.

described as the "product-oriented model."²⁷ Contextualization is for the inculturation of the gospel by doing Christian mission; it results in Christianization.

If contextualization focused on Christianizing culture, then recontextualization moves beyond initial contextualization. "As the one church-expressed-in-many-churches seeks to reconcile one-theology-expressed-in-many-theologies, there will be a need for the recontextualization of the gospel of Jesus Christ for multiple generations of believers in differing contexts." Charles E. Van Engen states.

...the world of this new century has undergone radical changes that significantly alter our approach to contextualization, changes that call for an epistemological approach of critical contextual theologizing that entails a re-contextualization of the gospel everywhere the church has existed for more than one generation.²⁹

If contextualization focuses on "doing missions" within different cultures for Christianization, recontextualization tends to express "being mission" to find out what it means to be a Christian in an already-Christianized context. As Van Engen notes, it is imperative to recognize both contextualization (God with us) and recontextualization (people knowing God in their midst)³⁰ for conducting mission, especially in a popular Catholic context. Thus, recontextualization focuses on being with already-Christianized people through dialogue and cooperation for the revitalization of what it means to be a Christian.

²⁷ Daniel Shaw, "Beyond Contextualization: Toward a Twenty-first Century Model for Enabling Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 34, No. 4, Oct 2010, 209.

²⁸ Charles E. Van Engen, "Critical Theologizing: Knowing God in Multiple Global/Local Contexts," *Evangelicals, Ecumenical, and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation*, ed. James R. Krabill, Walter Sawatsky, and Charles E. Van Engen (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2006), 94.

²⁹ Ibid., 95

³⁰ Ibid., 88-97.

Religiosity

The terminological meaning of religiosity in this research does not refer to any specific positive/negative spirituality or belief system in a certain religion. Instead, it refers to a socio-religious term in order to explain religious practices in which one regularly participates as an expression of his or her religion. Thus, for the purposes of this research, religiosity refers to the origin of and the reason for religious activities, and religious dedication. For example, when this study talks about Catholics' religiosity in the Philippines, the term religiosity refers to a natural and comprehensive sense of their religious activities in order to express their Catholic beliefs.

Colonialism

According to Rynkiewich, colonialism is ... "the expansion of western Europe, and later Japan, through trade [state or private corporations], military conquest, forced eviction and resettlement, cultural imperialism and economic exploitation of local populations, lands and resources" carried out between 1492 and 1960. Colonialism in the Philippines began in the middle of the 16th century through the Spanish invasion. It affected Filipinos' lives and cultures, especially religious cultures that were primal and folk before they encountered colonial Christian mission. Historically, Christianity expanded with types of colonialism in which the colonizers were missionaries as well. In the Philippines, Catholic missionaries arrived in the Philippines with colonial influences.

³¹ This definition of colonialism came from a syllabus for the class, "Colonialism and Neocolonialism," Spring 2010.

³² After Spanish colonialism, the United States had taken over the Philippines from Spain

Folk Catholicism

Folk Catholicism in the Philippines emerged during this period of time, when the diffusion of Christianity was taking place among Filipinos. Doeppers states:

The pattern of variation in Catholic practice during Spanish times can be interpreted as an incomplete diffusion down the imposed hierarchy of religious administrative center. ... For some time the more cogent explanation of folk-Catholic practice and relict pre-Christian beliefs have involved these principles of diffusion and accessibility as well as the dynamics of culture change. ³³

At this point, the incomplete indigenization of Christianity had been caused by the lack of indigenous Christian leaders who could indigenize the gospel for the Filipinos' socio-cultural and religious contexts. The reason the Filipino Church lacked indigenous leaders was because of "...crown [Spanish authority] interference which tended to discourage the emergence of a numerous and well-trained indigenous clergy." Consequently, folk Catholicism emerged because of an incomplete diffusion of Christianity. Furthermore, Spanish colonialism brought a Christianity that mixed political purposes with a religious passion for Christian mission. As a result, Filipinos altered this "politically-driven Christianity" into a type of religious Christianity that mixed with their pre-Christian belief system, which eventually became folk Catholicism.

Popular Religions

According to Robert Schreiter, there are two categories for the interpretation of

between 1898 and 1935. Thus, colonialism from the United States influenced the spread of Protestantism as well. Conrado Benitez, *History of the Philippines* (Manila: Ginn And Company, 1954), 258-306.

³³ Daniel Doeppers, "The Evolution of the Geography of Religious Adherence in the Philippines before 1898," *Journal of Historical Geography 2*, no. 2. (1976): 109 ³⁴ Ibid., 109.

popular religion: negative approaches and positive approaches.³⁵ In negative approaches, there are two sub-categories: elitist approaches and Marxist approaches. Elitist approaches to the negative interpretation of popular Catholicism in the Philippines seem to be quite prevalent among Protestant ministers because of their ethnocentric attitudes religiously. According to Schreiter, Protestant converts, or foreign missionaries, for Protestant missions in the Philippines think of themselves as intellectuals who will transform popular religions. These persons say that evangelization and education are imperative to the dissolution of the folk church and to foster the emergence of a consciously committed Christian community.³⁶ Thus, Protestant ministers and missionaries frequently perceive Catholic Christians in the Philippines as a people to be converted from popular religions to the Protestant Church. Furthermore, they believe that verbal evangelization and education can foster religious transformation among popular Catholic Christians.³⁷

Positive approaches to popular religion include the romanticist approach, the remnant approach, the subaltern approach, and the social-psychological approach. The remnant approach can be used to interpret popular Catholicism in terms of pre-Christian religious aspects still present in Catholicism as a style transformed from old beliefs into a new mixed form. Two things are evident in the remnant approach: first, elements of the old religion have survived, and second, these elements have been incorporated into Christianity. Thus, "there is no such thing as "pure" Christianity; a culture receives faith

³⁵ Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985), 131-139.

³⁶ Ibid., 132.

³⁷ Ibid.

with an admixture of cultural and religious elements."³⁸ This remnant approach to popular religions seems closely relevant to the way of interpreting popular Catholicism in the Philippines, because it (popular Catholicism) presents mixed and mingled religious elements of pre-Catholic religious aspects.

Popular Catholicism

Instead of using the term, "folk Catholicism," this study uses the term "popular Catholicism," which refers to the way in which Filipinized Catholicism has become popular among Catholic Christians in the Philippines. However, precisely speaking, the difference between "folk" and "popular" in religiosity seems not to be obvious, although the word "popular" gives a more complimentary nuance. Jaime A. Belita describes the slight difference between "folk" religiosity and "popular" religiosity as following:

In general, "folk religiosity" is used to describe a cosmic or nature-oriented system of practices engaged in by illiterates; "popular religiosity" may also refer to folk religiosity, but it makes use of more modern methods like seminars, bible studies, and prayer groups, which are engaged in by literates. ... Today we have a bias for the word "popular," because we have gone beyond the mere "folk"; we cannot be too strict in the distinction because the line between the two is quite thin.³⁹

In understandings of the slight difference between the words "popular" and "folk," Schreiter mentions the different understandings of "popular" in the Latin American and North American contexts: it refers to the majority and the lower class in Latin America, and it refers to the majority and the middle class in North America. ⁴⁰ Moreover, Schreiter

³⁸ Ibid., 136.

³⁹ Jaime A. Belita, "Let Us Through: Multidisciplinary Reflections on Popular Catholicism in the Philippines," Jaime A. Belita, ed., *And God Said: Hala!* (Manila, Philippines: De Lasalle University Press, 1991), 166.

⁴⁰ Robert Schreiter, Constructing Local Theologies (New York: Orbis Books, 1985), 124.

observes "popular" religion as an expression of "folk" in religion, and thus, popular religion also refers to "common religions." In this dissertation, "popular" will refer to the majority of people from the lower to upper classes in the Philippines, and it also refers to a certain level of folklore common in Filipino contexts.

"What Filipinos call 'folk Christianity' ... is really a product of pre-Hispanic religious imagination and Catholicism of the Iberian variety...."

"Split-level Christianity," describing the "co-existence within the same person of two or more thought-and-behavior systems which are inconsistent with each other."

This assumes that "Filipinos are basically Roman Catholic in all areas of life, thereby making some of their actions inconsistent with what they believe."

Thus, folk Catholicism refers to folk religious practices, which had been conducted before the Spanish arrival and have remained, integrated into Filipinos' daily religious lives, but with Catholic forms. Therefore, folk Catholicism emerged and it became popular among Filipinos.

Thus, it can be named "popular Catholicism."

In this understanding of the emergence of popular Catholicism in the Philippines,
I agree that popular Catholicism can be understood as a production of the people's own
version of Catholicism as a people's endeavor to reinterpret the normative of official
Catholicism.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Melba Padilla Maggay, *Filipino Religious Consciousness* (Quezon, Philippines: Institute For Studies in Asian Church and Culture, 1999), 14.

⁴³ Jaime Bulatao, "Split-level Christianity," *Philippine Sociological Review*, XIII: 2, April 1966, 2.

⁴⁴ Rodney Henry, *Filipino Spirit World: A Challenge to the Church* (Manila: OMF Publisher, 1971), 11.

⁴⁵ Orlando O. Espin, *The Faith of the People: Theological Reflections of Popular Catholicism* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 113.

Batangas

Batangas is one of the Philippine provinces located in the southern part of Luzon Island. The size of Batangas is 1,204.5 mi² with a population of 2,245,869 in 2007.⁴⁶ People living in Batangas have been named "Batanguenos," and they are a people who were resistant to outside influences, especially the effects of colonialism and different cultures. "Batangas was among the first of the eight Philippine provinces to revolt against Spain and also one of the provinces placed under Martial Law by Spanish Governor General Ramon Blanco on August 30, 1896."47

Religion in Batangas province plays an important role in the daily lives of Batanguenos, as "it is home to the Archdiocese of Lipa, 48 one of the most powerful centers of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines."⁴⁹ Batangas is one of the most staunch and non-persuadable provinces for evangelism by Protestantism, because of the solid tradition and connectedness of Catholicism in social networks and family unity. One of my interviewees said, "... because of the strong Catholic tradition in Batangas, Batanguenos don't want to change their religion from Catholicism to Protestantism. Catholic tradition is one of the important features of being *Batanguenos*."50 The number of Methodist churches in Batangas is eleven, and only three mission points exist in the entire Batangas province as of March 2011.⁵¹ None of them is independent from any outside aid (financially, church construction, etc.). Thus, Protestant mission, particularly

⁴⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batangas

⁴⁷ http://www.batangasnow.com/history.html

⁴⁸ Lipa is one of cities in Batangas. It was, personally, my mission area during I staved in the Philippines, 2003 to 2007.

⁴⁹ http://www.eemfoundation.org/batangas.html

⁵⁰ Eva Ramos, Interview with Author, May 14th, 2011.

⁵¹ Batangas Provisional/Mission District Study – Summary: Inventory of Local Church Assets (March 7, 2011). See Appendix C.

Methodist Christian mission, has struggled for survival in this popular Catholic context, and has been challenged by strong Catholic traditions and culture.

Dialogue and Cooperation in Mission

Christian mission should be a significant Christian activity based on dialogue and conversation to understand people's contexts in order to bring the gospel into their situations and contexts effectively. If Christian mission could not be established through dialogue with people's contexts, as the history of Christian mission shows, it would be colonial / ethnocentric missions to simply impose Christianity. In this study, dialogue for Christian mission means I will interact with popular Catholicism, which is the socio-religious context of Methodist missions in Batangas.

"Dialogue is a crucial method of the movement for promoting ecumenical cooperation and growth." Thus, dialogue dose not stay at the stage of conversation only, but it moves to missional cooperation with other Christianities, as Christian cooperation is to "transcend denomination, national, and racial barriers and distinctions." In other words, dialogue and cooperation refer to ecumenical endeavors with popular Catholicism (the religious context of Batangas) to recontextualize the meaning of the gospel. Further discussion on this concept will be revealed in Chapter Six.

⁵² Tony Richie, *Speaking by the Spirit: A Pentecostal Model for Interreligious Dialogue* (Kentucky: Emerth Press, 2011), 80.

⁵³ John R. Mott, *Cooperation and the World Mission* (New York: International Missionary Council, 1935), 29.

Framework of This Study

Three theoretical and methodological aspects will be used to help frame the collection and analysis of the data for this dissertation: 1) Development of popular Catholicism (religious comparative studies), 2) Methodists' understandings of popular Catholicism (ethnographical studies), and 3) Understandings of Methodist missions for recontextualization (suggestible studies).

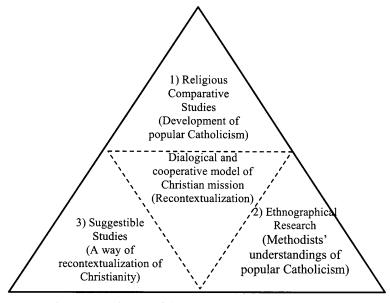


Figure 1-1. Triangle of the Framework of This Study

My study of the development of popular Catholicism, Methodists' understandings of popular Catholicism, and understandings of Methodist missions for recontextualization will contain analysis, reflection, and evaluation of the relationships between Methodist Christians and popular Catholicism in Batangas. Ethnographic methods, which include

structured and semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions⁵⁴ with Methodist Christians in Batangas, have been used in order to investigate what the relationship is currently, as well as how it has developed between Methodist churches and popular Catholicism.

Religious Comparison⁵⁵

In this study, religious comparison will be used to investigate the understandings of Batangas Methodists' understandings of popular Catholic beliefs regarding Biblical themes, such as "salvation, cooperation, dialogue, practices, deity, and religion," order to present what Methodist ministers and Christians should deal with for missions in Batangas. The religious comparison between popular Catholicism and Methodist Christianity may be dissimilar to other studies of comparative religions because both Catholicism and Methodism have the same basic Christian beliefs and roots, such as God being the creator; Jesus as the savior, etc. However, there are also differences due to religious contexts, theological interests, etc.

⁵⁴ Structured and semi-structured interviews were for Methodist workers (pastors, deaconesses, and lay leaders), and surveys with questionnaires were for all lay Methodist Christians and Methodist workers. The focus group discussion had been conducted by Methodist workers.

⁵⁵ Religious comparison between popular Catholicism and Methodist Church is the methodological way to compare what people believe differently. With several theological issues (topics), religious comparison between popular Catholicism and Methodist Church will be dealt through the development of popular Catholicism in Chapter three and through the Methodists' understandings of popular Catholicism in Chapter four.

⁵⁶ Terry Muck and Frances Adeney, *Christianity Encountering World Religions: The Practice of Mission in the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009), 44-49. Dr. Terry Muck and Dr. Frances S. Adeney indicate some important questions in order to provide the necessity of studying the text of other religions for the Christian mission: truth, salvation, cooperation, dialogue, practices, deity, and religion in their book.

The criteria for the analysis of the people's theology in popular Catholicism are truth, salvation, practices, and deity. 57 Moreover, Christology will be added to the four criteria in order to understand popular Catholic theologies at a personal level and investigate Batangas Methodist Christians' theological understandings of popular Catholicism. Dialogue and cooperation, which Muck and Adeney have also suggested as being important elements to study religions, 58 will be studied for missiological implications and as suggestions of a model of Christian mission in Chapter Six.

This research will consider popular Catholicism through these criteria in order to illuminate differences and similarities between popular Catholicism and Methodist Christianity at the level of "people's theology"⁵⁹ to present the process of "Filipinizing Church"60 in Batangas.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 44-49. Although Muck and Adeney include "religion" as one of their criteria, I would like to exclude it because it refers to religious origin. I do not consider Filipino Catholicism as a religion different from Christianity, but as a form of Christianity following "indigenous principles" which focuses on the locality and diversity of Church. ⁵⁸ Terry Muck and Frances Adeney, Christianity Encountering World Religions: The

Practice of Mission in the Twenty-first Century (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009), 47-48.

⁵⁹ This means theology which is not systematic theology's categories, but pastoral theology's area of practical beliefs and behaviors.

⁶⁰ Rodney L. Henry, Filipino Spirit World (Manila: OMF, 1971), Chapter 10. Rodney uses Paul Hiebert's critical contextualization model to see the Filipinized Christianity to transform into 'indigenous church.' However, I would like to employ the six questions of Muck and Adeney to mold "Theology of Religions in Popular Catholicism."

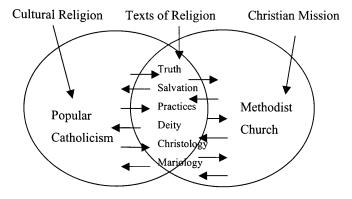


Figure 1-2. Religious Comparison for the Christian Mission⁶¹

Religious Expressions

While religious comparison deals with the biblical understanding of both popular Catholic Christians and Methodist Christians, religious expressions will be used to define the differences between the two in terms of religious practices. Thus, it will be "phenomenological studies" of religious practices as an important expression of people's religiosity. "The slow growth of Protestantism in the 20th century was due to the missionaries' failure to connect deeply with critical elements of the indigenous culture." This statement implies the lack of cultural and biblical engagement with the indigenous culture in the early work of the Protestant mission in the Philippines. The Protestant

⁶¹ Among six criteria, "practices" will be studies more in religious expression, and "dialogue" and "cooperation" will be investigated missional implication. Thus, "truth," "salvation," and "deity" will be more focused in religious comparison section. Moreover, Christology will be investigated in religious comparison.

Religious Comparison

Religious Imagination

Missiological Implication

Truth, Salvation, Deity, Christology

Practices (Sto. Niño, Adoration of Saints, etc)

Dialogue, Cooperation

⁶² Timoteo D. Gener, "The Catholic Imagination and Popular Religion in Lowland Philippines: Missiological Significance of David Tracy's Theory of Religious Imaginations," *Mission Studies* (22.1): 27. 2005.

Church failed to see the Filipino's religious culture and the way in which Catholicism had developed Filipinos' expression of religiosity.

According to David Tracy, a distinct difference between the two branches of Christianity was found in the different religious expressions: Catholic manifestation and Protestant proclamation.⁶³ Tracy defines the two terms, manifestation and proclamation, in the following way:

... when the dialectic of intensification of particularity releasing itself to a radical sense of participation predominates, the religious expression will be named manifestation; when the dialectic of intensification of particularity releasing itself to a sense of radical nonparticipation dominate, the religious expression will be named proclamation.⁶⁴

Tracy uses a "dialectical approach" to religious expressions in order to understand the reality of Christianity in relation to these different religious practices. As a result of a dialectical investigation, he clarifies manifestation and proclamation in relation to the central theological claim of Christianity that "Jesus Christ is the decisive event of God's self-manifestation insisting that Jesus Christ as Word of God is not just Word in the form of *Logos*, but also Word in the form of Proclamation, *Kerygma*."

Because Protestant missionaries have rejected popular Catholic religious practices

⁶³ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), 202-218.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 203.

⁶⁵ "Dialectical approach" refers to the conversational approach to two different expressions; manifestation (vision) and proclamation (hearing), in order to bring them into the one purpose; action (act) for the Christian mission. In other words, manifestation (vision) and proclamation (hearing) are not belonging to different realities, but they are just two different expressions in one reality (Christianity). Thus, conversational approach is about to understand them as two different ways to express Christianity in a structure of reciprocal complement each other.

⁶⁶ Timoteo D. Gener, "The Catholic Imagination and Popular Religion in Lowland Philippines: Missiological Significance of David Tracy's Theory of Religious Imaginations," *Mission Studies* (22.1): 34. 2005.

due to a different form of religious expression from Protestantism, the Protestant church could not give Catholic liturgy, rituals, and worship a legitimate status. Nor could Catholics go along with the Word-centeredness of Protestantism.

The new Christian spirituality introduced by Protestant mission stressed the individual, personal, character of the faith. It established conceptual ground by which to understand the implication of the faith in both piety and conduct, and in so doing promoted a more cognitive faith contrasted with the more ritualistic, symbolic, cyclic, sacramental, animistic, and community-based spirituality formed by the amalgam of Catholic and indigenous religions of the Filipinos.⁶⁷

The study of these different religious expressions in Protestant and Catholic churches will be used in order to compare the meanings of different religious expressions between Protestantism and Catholicism from a religious phenomenological perspective.

The purpose of phenomenological comparison when studying different religious expressions is to suggest the possibility of indigenization of Christian mission through understanding the differences between manifestation (ritual) in Catholicism and proclamation (verbalization) in Protestantism.⁶⁸

Figure 1-3, below, illustrates that differences of religious expression can be intersected in order to recontextualize the gospel through acknowledging the value of each religious expression.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 27-28, citing Lorenzo Bautista, "Mission and Emerging National Consciousness: The Case of Early Protestant Mission in the Philippines 1899-1915" *Conversion to Protestant Christianity Under Early American Rule* (Quezon City, Philippines: Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture, 2001), 6.

⁶⁸ Tracy says manifestation and proclamation are different religious expressions between the Catholic and Protestant Churches. I would like to modify this a bit and argue that ritualization and verbalization are different tendencies for the expression of faith in the Catholic and Protestant Churches.

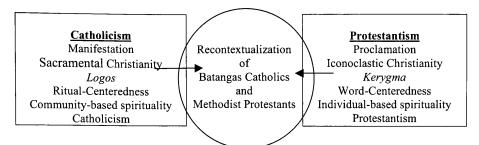


Figure 1-3. Religious Expressions in Catholic and Protestant Church

Synthetic Model of Contextual Theology

The synthetic model is one that Stephen Bevans presents as a model of contextual theology. ⁶⁹ This model will be used for the dialogical approach between popular Catholicism and Methodist mission. "The synthetic model is both/and," which means it looks for a way to find unity and cooperation in contextual theology. Thus, this model involves constant dialogue between contexts and Christian theology.

This model indicates the possibility of being dialogical between popular

Catholicism and the Methodist Church for Christian mission as a way of re-Christianizing

Filipino social and religious contexts through the recontextualization of the gospel.

⁶⁹ Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology: Faith and Cultures* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 88-102.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 89.

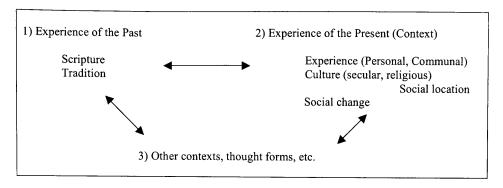


Figure 1-4. The Synthetic Model of Contextual Theology⁷¹

1) The past experiences of the Philippines include colonialism with both Spanish Catholicism (16th Century to 1898) and American Protestantism (1898 to 1943). 2) The experience of the present is a "cultural religion of Catholicism"⁷² in the Filipino sociocultural context. 3) Other contexts and thought forms would be Protestantism, especially Methodist mission in Batangas, Philippines. These three parts need to be connected and integrated with one another for the recontextualization of the gospel. Therefore, this model will be used to consider the possibility of this dialogical approach between Methodist mission and popular Catholicism using the synthetic model's basic methodological attitude of "openness and dialogue."⁷³

These three research areas for this study intertwine and interact with one another to present a model of recontextualization of the gospel in the "already-Christianized context" through and for Methodist missions in Batangas.

⁷¹ Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology: Faith and Cultures* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 93.

⁷² "Cultural religion of Catholicism" refers to the culturalization of Catholic because of historical impacts.

⁷³ Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology: Faith and Cultures* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 93.

Dissertation Outline

Chapter two will investigate historical backgrounds of Filipino Christianity. It will deal with colonialism from Spain which had embedded Catholicism, and another colonialism from the U.S., which introduced Protestantism to Filipino Christianity.

Moreover, it will investigate how Catholicism has become an important cultural feature among Filipinos through history.

Chapter three will explore the development of popular Catholicism through the topics of truth, salvation, Christology, deity system (Mariology and Sto. Niño), and popular religious practices which are based on Muck and Adeney's criteria for comparing religions (top of triangle of framework, Figure 1-1).⁷⁴ Furthermore, it will deal with the difference of religious expressions between popular Catholicism and Protestantism.

Chapter four will present Methodist understandings of popular Catholicism based on ethnographical studies through surveys and interviews, with topics mentioned in chapter three. Moreover, it will present how Methodist Christians deal with popular Catholic religious expressions which are different from Methodist Christians (right side of triangle of framework in figure 1-1).

Chapter five will study of the possibility of recontextualization of Christianity through the synthetic model of contextual theology (left side of triangle in figure 1-1). In order to address recontextualization, this chapter will deal with a conceptual idea of deculturation, interreligious dialogue, and Methodist understandings of missional implication for Christian mission in Batangas as suggestible studies.

⁷⁴ Terry Muck and Frances Adeney, *Christianity Encountering World Religions: The Practice of Mission in the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009), 47-48.

Finally, chapter six will suggest dialogical and cooperative missions with popular Catholicism (center of triangle in figure 1-1) as a model of recontextualization of Christianity in the popular Catholic context of Batangas, Philippines.

Data Collection

In order to present the possibility of the recontextualization of Christianity through the work of Methodist ministers and missionaries in a context of popular Catholicism, it is vital to collect data on how Methodist Christians perceive popular Catholicism, its Christians, and their religious practices. For understandings of popular Catholicism through Methodists' lenses, the field research employed two methodologies to collect data: anthropological research and library research.

Anthropological Research

This study primarily has been based on field research using ethnographic methods of personal interviews and focus groups for qualitative data collection, and surveys for quantitative data collection. By and large, ethnographic research is composed of three elements: experience, enquiry, and examination. Ethnographic researchers are observers, but not simply observers of experience. Instead, they are participant observers. Participant observation of Methodist ministers' mission work in Batangas needs to consider the three aforementioned critical elements of research. Enquiry refers to questions that a researcher raises concerning persons living inside the society and culture. There are several types of interviews, such as casual conversation, life history, key

⁷⁵ Harry F. Wolcott, *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing* (Plymouth, UK: Altamira Press, 2008), 50-67.

informant interviewing, semi-structured and structured, focus groups, surveys, etc.⁷⁶ For this study, key informant interviewing (intensive personal interviews with Methodist workers), focus groups (group discussions with Methodist workers), and surveys (mostly of Methodist Christians) have mainly been used.

Overall, I conducted interviews with sixteen workers (ten pastors, one deaconess, and five lay leaders of Methodist churches) and one former District Superintendent of the United Methodist Church, who is now a senior pastor of St. Mark UMC in Manila, a church that is conducting Christian mission in Batangas province. Interviews with Methodist workers brought to light the theological issues in the process of Methodist mission in Batangas, and also illuminated missiological suggestions regarding the process of recontextualization of the gospel. Interviews with lay members have been used to address the differences and similarities in the daily religious lives of Methodist Christians and popular Catholic Christians. These interviews presented the Filipino Methodists' missional views and practices among their Catholic neighbors.

Surveys were given to all Methodist lay members and workers to learn how and what they think of Christian mission in their socio-religious contexts.

Filipinos whom I encountered are great storytellers. Their personal stories, experiences, and suggestions have helped me to understand what they think of popular Catholicism. Thus, this study is an analysis of their story for Christian mission.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 55.

Library Research

Examination refers to archival records: a researcher investigates the products previously left by others. Thus, relevant literature research should be included as data collection for this study. Due to the lack of library data concerning the Batangas province and Christianity, I visited libraries and institutes in the Philippines for data collection while doing field research. Libraries that I visited for research were the main library collection at University of the Philippines in the city of Quezon (May 4, 2011), the main library at De LaSalle University in Pasay (May 12, 2011), and the Loyola School of Theology at Ateneo de Manila in Quezon (May 31, 2011). Library research would provide the historical, cultural, phenomenological, and theological perspectives of popular Catholicism and the missions conducted by Catholic and Protestant Churches.

General Information of Field Research and General Statistics of Surveys

Surveys and interviews for this study were conducted in Batangas, Philippines from April 28th 2011 to June 14th 2011. All surveyed people were 135 members from 9 Methodist churches in Batangas. ⁷⁷ Overall, female Methodist Christians (63.7%) numbers are more than male Methodist Christians (36.3%) in Batangas. Interestingly, among 10-Methodists (those who have been Methodist Christians less than 10 years), female Methodist Christians (71.7%) make up more than a double the numbers of male Christians (28.3%). This means that there is a higher number of female converts who came from popular Catholicism into the Methodist Church and have remained Methodists

⁷⁷ Faith UMC, Knox Crossville First UMC, Redeemed UMC, God is Faithful UMC, Nasubgu UMC, Lakeview UMC, Higher Ground UMC, Full Grace UMC, and Balayan Batangas UMC.

for 10 years or less.⁷⁸

According to the survey, 43 of 135 (31.6%) have been Methodist Christians from between five to ten years, and 47 of 135 (34.5%) have been Methodist Christians for less than five years. In other words, more than half of the total Batangas Methodist Christians have been in the Methodist Church less than 10 years. Therefore, they have been familiar with popular Catholic culture, which is their previous religious culture. This statistic shows that Methodist missions in Batangas have been active and effective within the past ten years.

Significance of this Research

This study is the first study to investigate Batangas Christianity through lens of Batangas Methodist Christians in order to develop the concept of recontextualization of the gospel into the popular Catholic context. As this study will illuminate the necessity and possibility of recontextualization of Christianity in "already-Christianized areas," this study is not for "contextualization of Christianity" to the "un-reached peoples," but is for "recontextualization of Christianity" to "already-reached peoples," who may easily lose the meaning of being a Christian because of the "culturalization of Christianity," in which Christianity simultaneously has become a culture and a religion among people. The interface between culture, religion, and Christianity will be dealt with in Chapter Five, in the section "deculturation;" however, briefly speaking, Christianity has become

⁷⁸ See Table 4-1 for general statistics of survey.

⁷⁹ What I mean by the term "culturalization" is the process of becoming a culture of new ideas, lifestyles, thinking patterns, etc. The culturalization of Christianity, thus, means that Christianity has become a culture in a society which has affected people's socioreligious behaviors. Therefore, the characters of religion (Christianity) have dissolved into social life.

a religion through the process of the culturalization of the gospel. In other words, culture, religion, and Christianity have been blended as a form of cultural Christianity and Christianized culture through "religionization of Christianity." Thus, the distinction between culture, religion, and Christianity is not possible in a popular religious culture (e.g. popular Catholic culture). This mixture of culture and religion has succeeded over the span of generations through the process of "socialization." This phenomenon can be observed in an "already-Christianized area" because of the socialization of cultural Christianity. Therefore, this study is a case study of Christian mission to "already-Christianized areas" in order to renew the meaning of Christianity through dialogue and cooperation between mission agents (e.g. Methodist Christians) and cultural Christianity (e.g. popular Catholicism) for recontextualizing the gospel.

There are many tribes, ethnic groups, nations, and people who have already been reached by Christianity in the 21st century. "Recontextualization" of Christianity based on dialogue and cooperation with the "culturalized gospel" will provide a new concept of Christian mission to those who have heard about Christianity, and it will reach beyond the 20th century mission concepts and methodologies. Thus, recontextualization of the gospel through Methodist missions to popular Catholics in Batangas will indicate the

⁸⁰ The term "religionization of Christianity" refers to the process of classifying Christianity as a religion in a culture. Of course, Christianity can be a religion, as it needs to fit into local cultures to contextualize the meaning of the gospel. However, it seems to be a culturally naïve understanding of Christian mission as Christian mission means to spread a culture with a new religion (Christianity) to other societies. For more details, see, Charles H. Kraft, "Is Christianity a Religion Or a Faith?" in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft (California: William Carey Library, 2005), 94-95. ⁸¹ Socialization refers to "the process by which a new generation is taught to live in accordance with the institutional programs of the society." Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1969), 15.

encounter between 20th century missions (doing missions for the culturalization of Christianity) and 21st century missions (being missions for living faithful Christianity) for the *missio Dei*.

Chapter 2

Historical Review of Christianization and Contextualization in the Philippines

While Christianity in the early Church era had been spread into local areas through integration with local cultures and low religious features, 82 Christian mission, in the era of colonialism, has presented different ways of doing the task, which has included suppressing and oppressing the traditional religions, and imposing the gospel on local people without serious endeavors for contextualization. A colonial type of Christianization emerged. Michael Amaladoss explains the result of this colonial type of Christian mission, saying:

The people, of course, were not ready to surrender their own cosmic religious rootedness, even when they embraced Christianity. So the result was a parallel religiosity. Side by side with official Catholicism, the people built up their own parallel religion, often Christianizing it in many ways. 83

The parallel religious features can be also observed in Filipino Catholicism because of the colonial type of Christianization. Thus, Filipino Catholicism cannot be understood without a proper understanding of colonialism. As a result, in order to understand the Filipino Christianity, it is necessary to study the history of Christianization conducted by colonial authority in the Philippines.

⁸² Low religions refers to local religions which are folk and popular religions, while high religions means world religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity. Aloysius Pieris and Michael Amaladoss use the terminology of cosmic religions (local religions) and metacosmic religions (world/global religions) in order to explain religious encounters in local context. This will be dealt with chapters 3 and 4.

⁸³ Michael Amaladoss, S. J., "Toward a New Ecumenism: Churches of the People" in Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation, eds. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 286.

The attempts to integrate the gospel within local cultures and societies have become an important theme of Christian mission, not for syncretizing the gospel with local cultures, but for contextualizing the gospel into local cultures and contexts. 84 In terms of contextualization of Christianity in the Philippines, this chapter investigates a religio-cultural integration between Catholicism from Spanish colonialism and the cultures of Filipinos through studying the historical background of Christianization in the Philippines. For the clear understanding of a religio-cultural integration between Catholicism and Filipino culture, this chapter also studies Filipinos and pre-colonial contexts in the Philippines. After studying Catholicism and its connection to Spanish colonial history, this chapter studies how Protestantism, after American colonialism arrived in the Philippines, has interacted with Catholicism, which had already become an important cultural feature for many Filipinos. Moreover, this chapter illuminates how popular Catholicism developed in Filipino historical, cultural, and religious settings. Lastly, this chapter will try to interpret popular Catholicism as a possible form of resistance to the oppressive powers such as Spanish colonialism, American imperialism, and indigenous political dictatorship.

Who Are the Filipinos?

Investigating Filipinos from a sociological and psychological perspective is not to try and present them in an essentialist way, but rather to try and understand the processes

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⁸⁴ Contextualization and syncretism are Christian responses to local cultures while doing Christian mission. When the gospel (Christianity) encounters local cultures, it needs to be contextualized in order to bring the gospel into local settings. See Gailyn Van Rheene, ed., *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents* (California: William Carey, 2006).

that provide the framework for their sociability. Doing so will help in understanding how Christianity was contextualized during the Spanish colonial period, as well as issues that will affect its recontextualization in their current context. In order to know who Filipinos are, the understanding of their process of forming social relationships is significant.

A Relationship-Centered People

In order to understand the social life of Filipinos, it is imperative to acknowledge the value they place on sociability, because Filipinos are relationship-centered people. "Relationships are very important to a Filipino. Perhaps this is because he has always lived his life intimately within a group." Filipinos are deeply related to other people while maintaining certain individuality. One of the important Filipino values is pakikipagkapwa. According to Jesus B. Villamin who is a Methodist minister and missionary in Batangas, pakikipagkapwa is the way to build up relationships with others. He states:

This [pakikipagkapwa] means how you relate to others. This relationship is affected by hiya 'shame', utang na loob 'indebtedness', etc. Historically speaking, these traits (hiya, etc.) were developed during the Spanish era where Filipinos were used to conniving against the authority for illicit ends. These collusive acts were accepted by Filipinos in order to be freed from servile conditions brought about by Spanish dominion. Pakikipagkapwa 'shared identity, interconnectedness with others', however, connotes firm positive traits for Filipinos because it shows how Filipinos are warm and friendly believing that they have moral obligation to one another. Generally speaking, in pakikipagkapwa there is the innate attribute of Filipinos not to harm the soul of their fellow human being. ⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano, ed., *All Things to All Men* (Quezon, Philippines: New Day Publisher, 1988), 3.

⁸⁶ Jesus B. Villamin, Email to Author, June 14th, 2010.

Pakikipagkapwa is interconnectedness with others through "sharing the same identity,"⁸⁷ and is a core value in relationship with others in the Philippines. It consists of different cultural and psychological concepts: pakikisama (togetherness), hiya (shame, shyness), untang na loob (indebtedness), intrusion, and personalism.

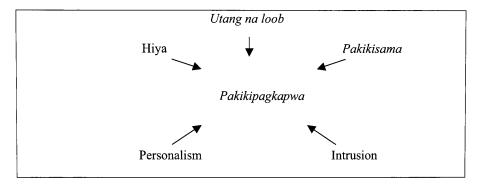


Figure 2-1. Understanding Filipino Values in the Light of "Pakikipagkapwa" 88

All of these values are based on communal life rather than individualism. Thus, Filipino values of social life related to *pakikipakapwa* are similar to ethnicity in terms of a shared-identity. Specifically, *kapwa* refers to similarity of human beings, in contrast with the "other" (the one who is different from me). Thus, *kapwa* emphasizes the importance of relationship in "in-group similarity."

⁸⁷ It refers to the primordial concept to share the same identity, as "We are all Filipinos." ⁸⁸ Violeta V. Bautista, "The Socio-Psychological Make-Up of the Filipino," in *All Things to All Men*, ed. Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano (Quezon, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1988), 3

⁸⁹ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 23. Eriksen presents the concept of tribalization and detribalization as one way of understanding ethnic identity. I think *pakikipagkapwa* (shared identity) is a tribal (communal) concept to define their ethnic identity.

⁹⁰ Barbara Bowe, "Reading the Bible through Filipino Eyes," *Missiology: An*

Barbara Bowe, "Reading the Bible through Filipino Eyes," *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. XXVI, no. 3, July 1998, 351, citing Jose de Mesa, "Tuloy Po Kayo Sa Loob: Some Guidelines in Understanding Lowland Filipino Culture," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 27 (3), 1990, 156.

Utang na loob (indebtedness) and hiya (shame and shyness) are also important concepts for understanding Filipinos because they create relationships with others through a sense of mutual indebtedness. "Utang na loob (indebtedness) can certainly be seen as a sign of gratitude, a symbol of true friendship forged between two parties who have both proven their worth to each other." Furthermore, shame and shyness (hiya) also manipulate the behaviors of Filipinos as they go to great lengths to avoid any shame in their relationships.

However, Filipinos' social and psychological approaches to forming relationships with other people may seem passive and negative to Westerners. For example, as Miranda-Feliciano has noted;

...Thus *utang na loob* [indebtedness] is seen [by Westerners] as a social evil, *hiya* as primarily shame, intrusion as a catalyst for malicious gossip, *pakikisama* [togetherness] as a psychological weakness and personalism as a hindrance to effective functioning of a Filipino at work.⁹²

This Western negative ethnocentric opinion of the way Filipinos value establishing and developing social relationships does not help foreign missionaries build close relationships with Filipinos. Missionaries sometimes do not realize that relationships are more valuable than any other thing to Filipinos. Filipinos, in general, are "being-centered," rather than "working-centered" or "doing-centered" people. Therefore, communication with Filipinos should be based on personal relations and intimacy. Building relationships with other people is not for the purpose of exchanging some information, but rather for enjoying social life through a feeling of unity with others.

⁹¹ Violeta V. Bautista, "The Socio-Psychological Make-Up of the Filipino," in *All Things to All Men*, ed. Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano (Quezon, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1988), 4-5.

⁹² Ibid., 6.

Thus, "the foundation and goal of relational communication is not merely to pass on truth, but to establish, maintain, and enjoy the fruits of relationship." ⁹³

Filipinos' Religious Tendency

William Dyrness writes, "... the Filipino feels vulnerable to evil and in constant need of protection. Amulets and images are often assumed to have magical power. Food is left for the dead in cemeteries ... and sacrifices are offered to avoid crop failure." Thus, religious symbols, images, amulets, etc. have become important objects to express their (Filipinos) religiosity. This tendency has been applied to their religiosity in Catholicism. Filipino Catholic mission history conducted during Spanish colonialism favored ritualized images (non-verbal but visible images) of Christianity (e.g., statues of Mary and the saints, pictures of Jesus), which continues today in Filipino Catholicism. Compared to Catholicism, when Protestantism arrived with the American colonization of the Philippines, a more analytical (verbal, less image-based) form of Christianity was emphasized by Protestantism.

However, even verbal communication in Filipino society tends to utilize a more intuitive mode of processing information and knowledge through the use of symbolic language. Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano states:

In the Philippines, especially in the rural areas, one will notice a predilection for symbolic speech. The *balagtasan* "poetic debate", the *bugtong* "riddles", the *alamat* "myths", the *salawikain* "proverbs" all bring pleasure to the Filipino mind through the use of highly symbolic language. ⁹⁵

⁹³ Gary Scheer, "How to Communicate in a Relational Culture." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 31 (1995): 471.

William A. Dyrness, *Invitation to Cross-Cultural Theology: Case Studies in Vernacular Theologies* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 96.
 Violeta V. Bautista, "The Socio-Psychological Make-Up of the Filipino," in *All Things*

Symbolic language fits well within the Filipino expression of religiosity through an almost continual saying of the rosary, which is "a devotion not too popular after Vatican II among European and North American Christians, but apparently very much alive as a faith-symbol for Filipinos."

However, while Protestant Filipinos have adopted a more analytical and verbally-based religiosity, there remains a tension between a Western and Eastern way of understanding. As Padilla Maggay puts it, "Apart from incongruity in theological content, there is considerable distance between [Filipino] ways of thinking and feeling, and western cognitive orientation." The difference between the Filipino and the Western tendencies is that Filipinos tend to be more holistic while the Westerners tend to be more compartmentalized. Thus, among Filipinos there is no sharp distinction "between the natural and the supernatural, the sacred and the secular, public and private realms." As a result, "communication must be highly symbolic, continuous, personal and engaged" with other people. This is because symbolic signs, rituals, and visible images lead people to communicate profoundly with truths, feelings, and judgments about reality, as it is understood by the people involved.

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to All Men, ed. Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano (Quezon, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1988), 13.

⁹⁶ Jaime A. Belita, *And God Said: HALA!* (Manila, Philippines: De La Salle University Press, 1991), 11.

⁹⁷ Melba Padilla Maggay, *Filipino Religious Consciousness: Some Implications to Mission* (Quezon city, Philippines: Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture, 1999), 29.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 29.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 34.

Paul Hiebert, "Syncretism and Social Paradigms," in Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents, ed. Gailyn Van Rheenen (California: William Carrey Library, 2006), 37, citing Victor Turner, The Ritual Process (Harmondsworth:

Victor Turner argues three properties of ritual symbols through anthropological perspectives. ¹⁰¹ The first property of ritual symbols is condensation, because "many things and actions are represented in a single formation." ¹⁰² Thus, ritual symbols (e.g. religious symbols, images, and statues) in popular Catholicism can be interpreted as condensed representatives of Filipinos' religious desire and hope to connect with the God. In this understanding, the usage of symbols, images, and statues in their religious activities is understandable. The second property is unification of disparate *significata*. "The *significata* are interconnected by virtue of their common analogous qualities, or by association in fact or thought." ¹⁰³ Thus, ritual symbols in popular Catholicism can be understood as significant features that often unite Filipinos from disparate religious identities or thoughts. Last but not least, polarization of meaning or bipolarity is a property of ritual symbols. Polarization of meaning in symbolic rituals refers to two distinct poles: ideological (normative) pole and sensory pole. Turner writes.

At the sensory pole are concentrated those *significata* that may be expected to arouse desires and feelings; at the ideological pole one finds an arrangement of norms and values that guide and control persons as members of social groups and categories. ¹⁰⁴

In other words, one dominant symbol represents "an intimate union of the material and the moral," and a holistic approach to the natural and the supernatural, and the secular and the sacred. Therefore, the usage of ritual symbols in popular Catholicism has essentially matched up with Filipino religious tendency, which is the holistic symbolism

Penguin Books, 1969).

¹⁰¹ Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (New York: Cornell University, 1967), 27-28.

¹⁰² Ibid., 28.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 54.

in religion.

I think these three properties (i.e. roles) of ritual symbols, which Turner presents in anthropological perspectives, indicate why Filipinos have come to use symbols, images, and statues in their (popular) Catholicism. First, the usage of symbols presents Filipinos with religious meanings connotatively. Thus, Filipinos' religiosity is condensed into popular Catholicism through symbols. Second, the usage of symbols brings unification between Filipino values and thoughts in popular Catholicism. Third, the usage of symbols makes materialistic desires and moral responsibility coexist in popular Catholicism.

The Protestant Church, on the other hand, is still a minority within Filipino Christianity at least partly because of "Protestantism's emphasis on the cognitive, propositional, and verbal expressions of faith as against Catholicism's emphasis on the affective, ritual and image." Contrary to popular Catholicism, Protestantism has developed verbal, analytic, and critical faculties in the process of learning God's word. These faculties can be used as a Protestant method to do Christian mission in the Philippines (i.e. *remissionization*¹⁰⁷ in the Philippines with Protestantism); however, these faculties cannot be a substitute for the Filipinos' way of expressing their religiosity in Catholicism – a way which is symbolic and largely non-verbal, because of who Filipinos essentially are.

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¹⁰⁶ Melba Padilla Maggay, *Filipino Religious Consciousness: Some Implications to Mission* (Quezon city, Philippines: Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture, 1999), 34.

¹⁰⁷ This is a terminology that Dr. Terry Muck mentioned in a class, *Christian Witness and Other Faiths*, Fall 2009, in order to express the necessity of re-Christianization, re-evangelization, restoration, and recontextualization of Christianity in the already-evangelized areas.

Pre-Colonial Context

Geography and Society

Filipinos' lives and religious activities were fragmented due to the fact that the Philippines consists of more than 7,100 islands¹⁰⁸; the large number of languages and dialect groups¹⁰⁹ in the Philippines reflects the great historical and cultural depth of this fragmentation. However, pre-colonial society in the Philippines, in general, was filled with similar folklore and animistic beliefs in that "folk supernaturalism or local forms of animism involving belief in a variety of spirits [was] common to most groups in Southeast Asia." ¹¹⁰

Socially, prior to Spanish colonization, the Philippine islands were divided into many independent districts, called *barangay*, "the word for a settlement of anywhere from thirty to a hundred families." "Unlike in Northeast Asia (China, Korea, Japan), a large and impersonal state bureaucracy never developed in the [Filipino] region." Instead of a centralized state bureaucracy, it was common for several *barangay* to be

Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 3. And "only 2,773 of the islands bear names, with elongated Luzon in the north the largest, and Mindanao to the south the next in size." Luis H. Francia, *A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2010), 24. ¹⁰⁹ There are eighty dialect groups. Paul Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 6.

¹¹⁰ Daniel Doeppers, "The Evolution of the Geography of Religious Adherence in the Philippines Before 1898," *Journal of Historical Geography* 2, no. 2 (1976): 96.
111 The word literally means, "boat," and the appellation is derived from the sailboats which brought the early Malay immigrants to the Philippines. Recited by Arun W. Jones from John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967). 15.

¹¹² Kathleen M. Nadeau, *Liberation Theology in the Philippines* (Connecticut: Praeger Press, 2002), 5.

grouped together for economic trades, political cooperation, and cultural assimilation 113 Due to the absence of a centralized bureaucracy, politics was not centralized, and economic relationships were formed by reciprocal exchanges among those within and outside of the kinship network.

While the absence of the development of political centralism prevailed in the Philippines, each barangay was ruled by a king, in Tagalog a datu. There was a hierarchical system in the local area before the Spaniards arrived, and kinship was important to this system. 114 Filipinos had their own social system to keep their territorial identity and hierarchical society.

The Philippines was involved in a maritime trade economy: "Arabs, Indians." Siamese, Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans traded with Cebu [in central Philippines] in pre-Hispanic time." Furthermore, there are many traces which can be found in the Philippines of cultural influences derived from India and China through cultural contacts. 116 Thus, Filipinos were participating in trade with neighboring nations, and this participation stimulated the growth of their society.

¹¹³ Arun W. Jones, Christian Mission in the American Empire (Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang, 2003), 31.

^{114 &}quot;The social structures that existed in both the Visayas and Luzon were remarkably similar, consisting of the datus, and the maginoo at the top, the timawa and maharlika in the middle, and, occupying the bottom rungs, the alipin." Luis H. Francia, A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos (New York: The Overlook Press, 2010),

¹¹⁵ Kathleen M. Nadeau, Liberation Theology in the Philippines (Connecticut: Praeger Press, 2002), 8.

¹¹⁶ Joseph W. Regan, The Philippines: Christian Bulwark in Asia (New York: Maryknoll Publications, 1957), 7.

Religion

Traditionally, Filipinos had their own belief system to explain nature and supernatural phenomenon before they encountered Catholicism. As Jocano puts it, "Prior to the coming of Christianity, there existed among the different ethnic groups in the archipelago established belief systems having to do with [human's] relations with the spirit world."¹¹⁷ There was no division between the natural and the supernatural in Filipinos' lives through their religious concepts as Rodell describes, "... Filipino religious thought has an immediacy based on a perceived close relationship between the supernatural and daily human life."¹¹⁸

Dominantly, religious characteristic of the Philippines was animism (the worship of spirits in nature) and deism (a vague belief in numerous gods). ¹¹⁹ In the animistic belief system, the spirit world consisted of three hierarchical structures: the sky world, the earth world, and the lower world. In the earth world, Filipinos believed that many spirits inhabited nature, such as in trees, caves, mountains, rivers, and rocks. While many spirits existed in the earth world, Filipinos believed there was one supreme god who affected the afterlife and a person's fate in the sky world. It was called *Bathala Maykapal*, which means "the creator" in Tagalog. ¹²⁰ *Bathala* was a supreme but remote deity, so there was no direct connection between *Bathala* and Filipinos in their daily life. ¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Landa Jocano, Folk Christianity (Manila: Trinity Research Institute, 1981), 16.

¹¹⁸ Paul Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 29.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 30.

¹²⁰ Pablo Fernandez, *History of the Church in the Philippines (1521-1898)* (Manila: National Bookstore, 1979), 1.

¹²¹ Bathala was the God of creation to Filipino. This belief system has been mostly found

Instead of *Bathala*, "the most important religious forces in the lives of the [Filipino] people were spirits of ancestors and of nature." These spirits were called anitos in Tagalog and diwatas in Visayans, as they were considered secondary deities lower than Bathala Maykapal. They were directly connected to the Filipino's daily life. These lower spirits were in charge of the affairs of everyday life while Bathala was considered as the highest god only for concerns of the afterlife. Filipinos' religious lives before Catholicism were ordered by this dual deity system.

Filipinos believed that lower gods would try to harm them if they did not please them. "The religious life of the pre-Spanish Filipino was based on a fear of angering the spirit-world by violating a taboo."123 In order to appease these lower gods. Filipinos used ritual sacrifices. 124 Paul Rodell describes as, "Sacrifices were also made to these spirits to gain favor and to ward off any angry influence."125 Idols and images were crafted to represent *anitos*, and "the images then gained supernatural power as a result of their representation of the spirit reality."126

The cure of illness was one of the main reasons for religious rituals, as Arun Jones notes, ¹²⁷ besides worship, sacrifice, and religious rituals, Filipinos thought protection from malevolent sprits was possible through possessing amulets. Thus, ritualism and the

among Tagalog people. Bathala itself is a Tagalog language.

¹²² Arun W. Jones, Christian Mission in the American Empire (Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang, 2003), 34.

Pablo Fernandez, History of the Church in the Philippines (1521-1898) (Manila: National Bookstore, 1979), 8.

¹²⁴ Rodney Henry, *Filipinos Spirit World* (Manila: OMF Publishers, 1971), 7.

¹²⁵ Paul Rodell, Culture and Customs of the Philippines (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 30.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Arun W. Jones, Christian Mission in the American Empire (Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang, 2003), 35.

possession of religious objects had become common religious practices to Filipinos before the Spaniards came to them with Catholicism.

Spanish Colonialism and Catholic Mission

"Religions emerge and develop within particular historical contexts." Christianity in the Philippines had emerged and developed within Filipino history, especially colonial history and post-colonial contexts. Therefore, the process of Christianization in the Philippines (the process of becoming Filipino Catholics) should be understood in relation to the history of Spanish colonialism.

Spanish Colonialism and Catholicism

March 16th, 1521, Ferdinand Magellan, Portuguese by birth but Spanish by choice, concluded one of the world's epochal events when he arrived on the island of Mindanao, southernmost of the Philippine Islands.¹²⁹ After he arrived, he began spreading Christianity to the people called *Cebuanos* living on Cebu Island. The purpose of his voyage was to discover a new route to the fabled Spice Islands.¹³⁰ However, colonization and Christianization with imperialistic aspirations became a result of his voyage in the Philippines.

Colonization had been approved by Rome (Roman Catholicism) for the reason of

¹²⁸ Jose Mario C. Francisco, "Creating Tagalog Christian Discourse: Body, Soul and Loob in Oliver's Doctina Christiana" Anne C. Kwantes, *Chapters in Philippine Church History* (Colorado: International Academic Publishers, 2002), 3.

¹²⁹ Mark Maxey, *History of the Philippines Mission* (SanClemente: Go Ye Books, 1973),

¹³⁰ Luis H. Francia, A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos (New York: The Overlook Press, 2010), 51.

a perfect harmony of political and economic hegemonies and religious zeal (Christianization of the world). Luis Francia describes it this way:

The papal blessing provided Spain and Portugal with theological cover for their voyages of conquest and the brutal but profitable undertaking of land expropriation and exploitation of indigenous peoples, otherwise known as colonization. Through the conquistadors and the civil and religious personnel that followed in lockstep, Rome extended its reach wherever these two European countries planted their flags – a perfect combination of economic enterprise, worldly power, and religious zeal.¹³¹

Colonization and Christianization had begun with Magellan's arrival to the Philippines.

Magellan became the natives' friend quickly, and a month later in April, "approximately 800 *Cebuanos* [people in Cebu island] were baptized, including the spectacular public baptism of Rajah Humabon, the local cacique [a native chief] in Cebu." After converting, Rajah Humabon complained to Magellan about another Filipino local chief, named LapuLapu who ruled Mactan Island and was a rival to Rajah Humabon, as he was a rebel to the cross and to the Spanish crown. Magellan decided to teach a lesson to LapuLapu by sending 60-armed men to Mactan Island, but they were defeated by LapuLapu and his men. During this skirmish, on April 27, 1521, Magellan was killed. Consequently, Christianity and colonialism could not take root in Filipino soil at that time. Magellan's other boats went back to Spain after having baptized only 800 *Cebuanons*.

After the failure of the first expedition to the Philippines, there were several more expeditions, but they were not effective. Finally, Spain decided to send Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, an official with the Spanish colony in Mexico. He arrived in the Philippines in

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² F. Albert Tizon, *Mission as Transformation in the Philippines: The Holistic Journey of Radical Evangelicals in Global-Local Perspective*, Ph.D. diss., Graduate Theological Union, 2005 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI, 2005), 198.

1565. Finally, these rediscovered islands became a colony of Spain in 1572 when Lopez de Legaspi established the city of Manila.¹³³

An Augustinian friar, Andres de Urdaneta, along with four other friars, accompanied Lopez de Legaspi on his voyage to the Philippines in 1565. ¹³⁴ The friars began to preach the gospel to the Filipinos, and were soon assisted by members of other Catholic communities who arrived from Europe: "the Franciscans in 1577, the Dominicans in 1587, and the Jesuits in 1588."

During the initial stages of Christianization in the Philippines, Catholic religious leaders (missionaries) held Filipinos as slaves and forced the natives to provide food and other provisions for them. At that time, Catholic missions in the Philippines was not only for religious purposes, but also political and economic purposes based on imperialism and colonialism. After observing how Catholic missionaries treated the indigenous people, however, Bishop Salazar, who had come to the Philippines in 1581, called a meeting of ecclesiastical and civil officials in 1582, in order to lay down rules for the proper treatment of Filipinos. Slavery was firmly condemned, and Spanish rule was justified only inasmuch as it benefited the Filipinos. He said, sovereignty and adjudication by natural right belong to the Indios and neither the King nor the Pope can take it away from them... the Indios are as free in their lands as the Spaniards are in

¹³⁴ Arun W. Jones. Christian Missions in the American Empire: Episcopalians in

¹³³ Daniel Doeppers, "The Evolution of the Geography of Religious Adherence in the Philippines Before 1898," *Journal of Historical Geography* 2, no. 2 (1976): 99-100.

Northern Luzon, the Philippines, 1902~1946 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003), 42.
¹³⁵ Joseph W. Regan, *The Philippines: Christian Bulwark in Asia* (New York: Maryknoll Publications, 1957), 12.

¹³⁶ He was the first Bishop of Manila, the Dominican.

¹³⁷ Arun W. Jones, Christian Missions in the American Empire: Episcopalians in Northern Luzon, the Philippines, 1902~1946 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003), 44.

theirs, and their liberty is not taken away by the King or by the Gospel." However, his noble sentiments were easily disregarded, "as the trappings of power came to fit the friar as comfortably as they did the civilian administrator."

From the arrival of the first missionaries in 1565 until 1578, there was no formal ecclesiastical organization in the Philippines. He Bishop Salazar became the first bishop of the Philippines, and his first act after his arrival in 1581 was to take possession of his diocese. More bishops, following the order of the Pope, came to the Philippines after Bishop Salazar. The ecclesiastical organization of the Philippines grew after the bishops' arrival, and this organization remained virtually unchanged until the 20th century. During these many years, the Roman Catholic Church maintained its influence through tight rule and control.

The foundation of Christianity in the Philippines conducted by Spanish missionaries was quite impressive. John Leddy Phelan proposes three stages of this missionary activity.

- 1) From 1567 to 1578, in which exploratory work was done but no real concerted effort was made to evangelize the Filipinos;
- 2) From 1578 to 1609, the "golden age" of the missionary enterprise when zeal and enthusiasm for conversion ran high; and
- 3) From 1610 to 1635, when unrealistic expectations for the complete conversion of the Filipinos, generated by the successes of the first generation, led to disillusionment and a lowering of morale in the second generation. 141

There were an increasing number of baptisms, from 100,000 in 1583 to 500,000

¹³⁸ Luis H. Francia, *A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2010), 71.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ John N. Schumacher, *Reading in Philippine Church History* (Quezon city: Ateneo de Manila University, 1979), 18.

¹⁴¹ John L. Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 70.

in the early 1600s.¹⁴² Furthermore, by the year 1591, the missionaries in the Philippines numbered 140: 79 Augustinians, 9 Dominicans, and 42 Franciscans.¹⁴³ The Philippines grew into a largely Christian nation by efforts of missionaries and the Catholic Church from the late 1500s onwards, even though there were some tensions between local missionaries and Catholic officials regarding the control and maintenance of the church. By 1605 most Filipinos had become Christians though Spanish missionaries and the influence of the political and economic power of Spanish colonialism.¹⁴⁴

Christianization in the Philippines

"Christianity came to the Philippines as the religion of the conqueror and clashed with the influence of Islam in the south and the beliefs of non-Islamic Filipinos throughout the rest of the country." Through the colonial history, Christianity had taken an important role in the process of shaping Filipino culture. Roman Catholic priests and friars came to the Philippines to bring Filipinos the Roman Catholic Church, and gradually they had become representatives of Spanish crown and supervisors for local towns and villages.

Politically and socially, local people welcomed early Spanish friars into their communities to ward off abuses by Spanish soldiers and officials, as well as attacks from

¹⁴² Arun W. Jones, Christian Missions in the American Empire: Episcopalians in Northern Luzon, the Philippines, 1902~1946 (Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang, 2003), 48. ¹⁴³ Elmer K. higdon, The development of a Filipino Church (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1930), 8.

¹⁴⁴ Joseph W. Regan, *The Philippines: Christian Bulwark in Asia* (New York: Maryknoll Publications, 1957), 12.

¹⁴⁵ Paul Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 30.

Southeast Asian slave traders. ¹⁴⁶ This is not to say that friars completely succeeded in helping the local people, but "these friars, leaders, not just religious but social leaders, were the predecessors of today's theologians of struggle." ¹⁴⁷ Consequently, "… the heads of the monastic orders were considerably more powerful than many of the king's own appointed representatives." ¹⁴⁸ In this way, Catholicism gained political power in the Philippines through the process of Christianization. However, "whenever a religion gained political power, it usually used that power to impose its beliefs on others," ¹⁴⁹ and this is what occurred in the Philippines.

Apparently, a way Catholics imposed the gospel and coerced Filipinos to leave their traditional religions to come to Roman Catholic Church had been influenced by colonial principle to have power over the colonized. However, as mentioned previously in a section of "who are the Filipinos," Filipinos are relationship-centered people based on sharing identity with others. Thus, "Filipinos are very sensitive to the quality of interpersonal relationships," as they are very dependent on interpersonal relationships. Catholic missions had to be conducted within this understanding of interpersonal relationships among Filipinos, but the Catholic mission had failed to keep the Filipino relational values while doing the mission. Kathleen M. Nadeau says, "a prior system of

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¹⁴⁶ Kathleen M. Nadeau, *Liberation Theology in the Philippines* (Connecticut: Praeger Press, 2002), 12-13.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 13.

¹⁴⁸ Paul Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 30.

¹⁴⁹ Terry Muck, Frances S. Adeney, *Christianity Encountering World Religions: The Practices of Mission in the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 19.

¹⁵⁰ Patricia Licuanan, *A Moral Recovery Program: Building A People – Building A Nation* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University). From http://www.crvp.org/book/Series03/III-7/chapter iv.htm

relating to others in terms of mutual indebtedness [*utang na loob*] and exchange based on the kinship network was replaced by one of divine patronage tied to the bureaucracy of colonial Spain."¹⁵¹ As a result, Spanish colonialism had a strong influence on Catholic missions as "the Crown's Christianizing mission."¹⁵² Thus, Filipinos were forced to orient themselves to a divine authority by Spanish colonial mission, rather than situating themselves in relation to the world around them in the mutual dependency based on interpersonal relationships. Consequently, Filipinos' traditional local autonomy based on mutual dependency was lost because of Spain's colonial Christianizing mission.

However, Filipino's relational concept, *utang na loob* (indebtedness), reemerged in popular Catholicism in a different way. Bowing to colonial aspirations, "early Spanish Catholic missionaries indigenized Christianity" for economic and political reasons, not for purely religious reasons. Because of the economic and political benefits that came with Christianity, Filipinos felt reciprocity and mutual indebtedness in their relationship with Spanish missionaries. However, this reciprocity and mutual indebtedness was not recognized by the Spanish missionaries, and the relationship between them and Filipinos became unilateral. The Spanish missionaries gave orders and Filipinos, according to their relational system, generally followed them. ¹⁵⁴ Thus, Filipinos considered themselves as always in debt to Spanish missionaries, and gradually they came to be dependent upon

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¹⁵¹ Kathleen M. Nadeau, *Liberation Theology in the Philippines* (Connecticut: Praeger Press, 2002), 13.

¹⁵² Christianization had been undertaken by colonial state power.

¹⁵³ It does not mean they contextualized Christianity, but rather that the early Spanish Catholic missionaries manipulated Christianity for colonial purposes such as economic and political gain.

This fit very well into the Spanish system of patron/client relations rather than *utang na loob* relations. The missionaries saw themselves as the patrons and the Filipinos were the clients.

Spanish missionaries. By such means, "the local workers were further goaded into obeying their Spanish overlord" and Christianization was used for colonial governance and economic gain.

Furthermore, there was no one among indigenous Filipinos who could represent themselves in front of colonial governmental courts, offices, and authorities during the early colonial era; instead, missionaries (friars) represented them. Consequently, injustice in Filipino society became prevalent because of colonialism, and the indigenous people needed to lean on Catholic missionaries and priests more and more for help. Thus, the relationship between Filipinos and the missionaries could not be a mutual, interdependent relationship, but only a belief that the Filipinos should listen to what the Church says for their lives and follow its decisions. This "Colonial spirit" became embedded into Filipino Catholicism during the 16th Century, and it continues to influence Filipinos' lives today. ¹⁵⁶

Emerging Popular Catholicism

As stated above, Catholicism in the Philippines began with colonialism and the political and economic hegemonies imposed by Spain. The Spanish missionaries felt that Christianization should cooperate with the colonial and imperial purposes of Spain.

In this context, Catholicism could merge with traditional religious concepts of the

¹⁵⁵ Kathleen M. Nadeau, *Liberation Theology in the Philippines* (Connecticut: Praeger Press, 2002), 13.

¹⁵⁶ Thus, the spirit or mindset of the people came to be dependent on outsiders who were considered more powerful and influential. Gradually, colonial spirit had become cultural gods in the Philippines, according to Jimmy Belita, which are fatalism, passivity, elitism, ritualism, and rationalism. See, Jimmy Belita, "Filipino Popular Catholicism: The Struggle Against Cultural Gods," *Dialogue & Alliance* 5 (4), Winter 1991-1992.

pre-Spanish era without serious religious conflict. Especially because, "the religious practices of the natives were not taken as objects of evangelization. Mostly they were ignored or integrated into a syncretism that had no scruples in mixing the sacred and the profane." For example, the pre-Hispanic *larawan*, which are little statues of ancestors who have distinguished themselves through valiant deeds, were replaced by images of Mary and the saints in Catholicism. ¹⁵⁸

The traditional religious system of double-deities, i.e., lower gods (*anitos*) and a supreme god (*Bathala*), initiated two different levels of religiosity: higher, dealing with ultimate concerns such as life and death, and lower, dealing with daily concerns such as food, health, finance, etc. Animism in the Philippines was more concerned with the practical areas of everyday life. However, higher and ultimate concerns were met by Catholicism. Rodney Henry accurately summarizes how Filipinos accepted Catholicism in terms of ultimate concerns:

With the coming of the Spaniards, the Filipino animist was confronted with a religion which was and is very strong on these higher or ultimate concerns. Roman Catholicism taught a different story than the one from their own traditions, but one which was not completely incompatible with their own understanding of their supreme god: God was the creator of the universe; man had sinned and needed salvation; Jesus came to earth to be the sacrifice for man's sins; and now, God had given the authority of salvation to the Roman Catholic church. The Filipino only needed to repent of his past sins, and be baptized by the priest in order to have his ultimate concerns [i.e., salvation] taken care of. 159

In order to provide the concept of the Christian God for the local population, the

¹⁵⁷ Norberto Saracco, "Mission and Missiology from Latin America," William D. Taylor, ed., *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2000), 358.

Melba Padilla Maggay, Filipino Religious Consciousness: Some Implications to Mission (Quezon, Philippines: Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture, 1999),
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¹⁵⁹ Rodney L. Henry, Filipino Spirit World (Manila, Philippines: OMF, 1971), 10.

missionary priest used the name, *Bathala*. However, it resulted as a syncretistic understanding of Christian God with Filipino local supreme God. Paul Rodell describes the result of using *Bathala* among Filipinos as,

The missionary priests would try to make the concept of the Christian God familiar to the local population and used the name *Bathala*, the Filipino name for a powerful god. The local population hearing *Bathala* would imagine that the priest was referring to their local god and saw no inconsistency in attending a mass on Sunday even while retaining their earlier beliefs. Thus, no matter how rigorously the priest might attempt to end beliefs in pre-existing gods and supernatural beings, the Filipino response to the missionary enterprise became a complex layering of both submission and resistance. ¹⁶⁰

Consequently, the poorly conceived endeavors to contextualize the Christian God had initiated syncretistic amalgamation between Christian God and the concept of supreme god among the local population.

Animistic practices among Filipinos were quite common before and after Spanish colonial Catholicism arrived. The Roman Catholic Church believed that Filipino traditions and folklore could be kept as long as they did not conflict with the teaching of the church. As a result, Filipinos' animistic practices survived under the Catholic mission. Indeed, Catholicism and animism could coexist together as long as each fulfilled different and separate functions. The relation between Catholicism and animism is clearly articulated by Regan: "Catholicism is the religion of ultimate concerns, while animism is the religion of everyday concerns, and together, they are called folk Catholicism." Schumacher also says that:

... the Spanish missionaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth century never

¹⁶⁰ Paul Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002). 34.

Joseph W. Regan, *The Philippines: Christian Bulwark in Asia* (New York: Maryknoll Publications, 1957), 12.

¹⁶² Ibid., 13-14.

achieved more than a superficial Christianization of Philippines society, that Christianity more often remained only a veneer over the persistent pre-Hispanic animistic religion, or at best achieved a kind of syncretistic Christianity, retaining under Christian forms much of the ancient, spirit-beliefs and other superstitions. ¹⁶³

Thus, Christianity could easily spread over the Philippines because of syncretistic unity between pre-Spanish Filipino religions and Spanish Catholicism.

The table below compares the pre-colonial religious system in the Philippines with Spanish Catholicism which arrived in the Philippines during colonialism, in order to present the similarity between these two religious systems.

	Pre-Spanish Religion	Spanish Catholicism
Deity	Bathala Maykapal, the Supreme Being and Creator	God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth
Lower deities	Anitos, Lower gods affecting daily lives	Mediums of God such as Mother Mary & other saints
Religious Practices	Possessing amulets and ritual sacrifices	Having icons & images of Mary & other saints

Table 2-1. Comparison Between Pre-Spanish Religion and Spanish Catholicism

However, the easy spread of the gospel among Filipinos because of the similarity between two was a blessing and a curse simultaneously:

On the one hand, it made Christianity easily understandable and acceptable to the Filipinos. Yet, on the other hand, the new converts were assailed by the tendency to continue to hold on to those aspects of their old heathen faith, which they did not find inconsistent with Christianity. 164

The naïve combination of Catholicism and Filipino primal religious aspects could bring the rapid spread of Christianity in the Philippines; however, the lack of critical

¹⁶³ John Schumacher, "The Depth of Christianization in Early Seventeenth-Century Philippines," *Philippine Studies* 16, (3), July, 1968: 535.

¹⁶⁴ Scott W. Sunquist, ed., *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 655.

consideration of the Filipino's traditional religiosity and religious cultures became a reason for an emerging syncretistic Christianity in the Philippines. Thus, popular Catholicism has emerged from "an admixture of elements of pre-Hispanic animistic practices and beliefs with Catholic ritual elements." ¹⁶⁵

American Colonialism and Protestant Mission

Shifting Colonialism from Spain to the U.S.

The Spanish were defeated by the U.S. military and Filipino nationalists in 1898. Filipinos such as "Father Gomez, Burgos, and Zamora, and nationalist intellectuals like Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio, and Emilio Aquinaldo" led the war. However, the joy of national independence after a long colonial history was very short-lived because of a new emergence of colonialism by the U.S.

Filipinos needed the help of the United States in order to get rid of Spanish colonialism. Thus, it could not be completely a Filipino victory; it also had to be a victory of U.S. imperialism over Spanish colonialism. Paul Rodell briefly describes the war between two parts, and the result as:

On August 13, 1898, American and Philippine forces attacked Manila, and by a prior secret agreement, the defending Spaniards allowed themselves to be defeated by the Americans so they would not have to surrender to the "Indios." The Spanish surrender of Manila to American forces also gave the United States an international legal right to the islands that was confirmed by the Treaty of Paris on December 10 [1898]. ¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ John Schumacher, "Syncretism in Philippine Catholicism: Its Historical Causes," *Philippine Studies* 32, 1984: 251.

¹⁶⁶ Kathleen M. Nadeau, *Liberation Theology in the Philippines* (Connecticut: Praeger Press, 2002), 17.

¹⁶⁷ Paul Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 15. The U.S. also paid \$20 million to Spain to cover a portion of the islands' public debt. See, Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines, 1898*-

Gradually, the relationship between Filipino nationalists and the U.S., based on allied power to fight against Spain, deteriorated. The Philippine-American war finally occurred after Spanish withdrawal. However, the war was effectively over in the summer of 1902 when the U.S. gained victory. ¹⁶⁸

The defeat of the Spanish in the Philippines not only led to the U.S. colonization of the islands, but also bolstered the political strength of the States, especially in the aftermath of the other recent U.S.-Spanish conflict—the ousting of Spain from Cuba. In addition to the political benefits of defeating Spain in the Philippines, there was an economic incentive for the U.S. as it was looking for new markets for trade and economic development; the Philippines would serve as a bridge to a new important market — China. The Philippines had become an important market hotspot in Asia for the U.S., as Paul Rodell describes:

By the 1920s, approximately 75 percent of Philippine trade was with the United States. Domestically, American entrepreneurs were active in everything from the Manila Electric Company, to newspapers, to food processing, and Manila soon became one of Asia's economic powerhouses.¹⁷⁰

Arrival of Protestantism and Westernization

Protestantism came to the Philippines as a new form of Christianity. Protestant churches supported the American colonization of the Philippines because "... [Protestant missionaries and churches] realized that American control of the Spanish islands [the

^{1919 (}Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 3

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 16.

¹⁶⁹ Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines*, 1898-1919 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 2-3.

¹⁷⁰ Paul Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 16.

Philippines] would open the way for the Protestant message to be preached in areas from which it had hitherto been excluded."¹⁷¹ The first regular Protestant activities in the Philippines were conducted by the United Presbyterians and the Methodist Episcopalians in 1898, the American Baptists in 1900, the United Brethren and the Disciples in 1901, and the Congregationalists (American Board) in 1902. 172

In August of 1898, the Young Men's Christian Association opened work in Manila for U.S. Army soldiers. Though the record is not certain, it is likely that the Rev. George C. Stull, a Methodist clergyman from Montana who served as an army chaplain, held the first Protestant service of worship in the Philippines, on August 28, 1898. 173

Eventually, many Protestant missionaries began to arrive and win converts who were discontented with the Catholic Church. At the same time, Spanish friars began to withdraw from the Philippines.

Most Protestant missionaries at the beginning of this new missions era accepted the viewpoint that "the American occupation of the Philippine islands was divinely inspired."¹⁷⁴ This was based on ethnocentrism and a sense of religious superiority, and it provided justification for the American invasion of the Philippines. Thus, "religious concepts were used to justify colonization."175 Furthermore, this viewpoint led to the concept during American colonialism that Protestantism from the U.S. was better than

¹⁷¹ Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines*, 1898-1919 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 3.

¹⁷² Scott W. Sunquist, ed., A Dictionary of Asian Christianity (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 656.

¹⁷³ Peter G. Gowing, Islands Under the Cross: The Story of the Church in the Philippines (Manila: National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 1967), 125.

174 Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines, 1898-1919* (Chicago:

University of Illinois Press, 1986), 154.

¹⁷⁵ Lorenzo Bautista, "Colonization and the Philippine-American War," Anne C. Kwantes, ed., Chapters in Philippine Church History (Colorado: International Academic Publishers, 2002), 141.

Filipino Catholicism in terms of politics, economics, and social justice. Kenton Clymer says:

Methodist commentators wanted the United States to introduce Western civilization of the Anglo-Saxon type to the East, to transform the Filipinos into modern and free people, to bring a new and brighter day to the islands, and to spread the idea of democracy around the world. ¹⁷⁶

Lorenzo Bautista also states that "Homer C. Stuntz of the Methodist mission was in general agreement... that Protestantism must make use of the opportunity which the conquest created to counteract errors in Catholicism..." It seems that the general thinking of Protestant missionaries was to legalize the colonial conquest for the reason of Westernization and Christianization with Protestantism. Related to the American policy of colonialism, especially in the Philippines, many missionaries admitted the necessity of colonial control of the Philippines as:

In short, most of the missionaries accepted the McKinleyan¹⁷⁸ legitimation which claimed that taking the Philippines was an unavoidable duty, since giving the islands to another nation would be bad business and dishonorable for America, while leaving the Filipinos on their own would be tragic for Filipinos themselves. The only option for them was to civilize and Christianize the Filipinos.¹⁷⁹

Despite the official separation of church and state, many American Protestants at that

¹⁷⁷ Lorenzo Bautista, "Colonization and the Philippine-American War," Anne C. Kwantes, ed., *Chapters in Philippine Church History* (Colorado: International Academic Publishers, 2002), 143.

¹⁷⁶ Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines*, 1898-1919 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 156.

¹⁷⁸ William McKinley was 25th president of the United States at that time. He legitimated Philippine colonial control through taking a high Christian attitude. See Lorenzo Bautista, "Colonization and the Philippine-American War," Anne C. Kwantes, ed., *Chapters in Philippine Church History* (Colorado: International Academic Publishers, 2002), 144., and Paul Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 16.

¹⁷⁹ Lorenzo Bautista, "Colonization and the Philippine-American War," Anne C. Kwantes, ed., *Chapters in Philippine Church History* (Colorado: International Academic Publishers, 2002), 145.

time combined "in consciousness the identities created by both nation and church" through colonialism of the Philippines.

Protestantism Encounters Filipinos

Most Protestant missionaries thought the "white man" had to retain control of the Philippines because they believed, as was generally accepted by Western societies' racialist ideology at that time, ¹⁸¹ that non-Westerners were intellectually inferior to Westerners. The large majority of missionaries categorized Filipinos living in different islands as one Filipino ethnicity (i.e., culture and identity). This was the error of overgeneralization, because there were (and are) many different ethnic groups on the Philippine islands. Kenton Clymer states, "although the missionaries differentiated among the various Filipino cultural groups, many could not resist the temptation to generalize about Filipinos and to compare them as a whole with other races." ¹⁸²

Despite generally negative descriptions of Filipinos, there were some reports emphasizing positive images as well. They were seen by some missionaries as dignified, neat, courteous, attractive, and appreciated. However, most Protestant missionaries had an ethnocentric and superior mindset in their encounters with Filipinos. Missionaries' lack of awareness of cultural relativism in the Philippines at that time caused the low

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 143.

¹⁸¹ See Leonard Lieberman, "A History of 'Scientific' Racialism." In, *Race and Ethnicity: The United States and the World*, Second Edition, ed. Raymond Scupin, (Boston: Pearson), 11-33.

¹⁸² Ibid., 72.

¹⁸³ Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines, 1898-1919* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 72-74.

regard for Filipino culture. 184

On the other hand, after the first Protestant missionaries, there was a new generation having an optimistic assessment of Filipino development. Frank Laubach represents the new generation of missionaries in this way: "... They saw more value in indigenous cultures and that was less inclined to be excessively judgmental... saw no limits to Filipino development." Laubach thought Filipinos were fully equal to other people, through still needing some guidance and development. In spite of this optimistic assessment of Filipino development, the belief in the possibility of spiritual and cultural regeneration over a long period of time can also explain why missionaries were also opposed to Filipino independence. ¹⁸⁶

As stated above, most early Protestant missionaries had prejudices against Filipinos and their intellectual capacity to work with missionaries as partners. These missionaries had the same problems with ethnocentrism that the Catholic missionaries and Spanish Crown had previously. This created a situation in which the possibility of cooperation between Protestant missionaries and Filipinos was low. However, missionaries saw that their endeavors to provide Filipinos with vocational and religious education were gradually becoming effective. This recognition eventually opened the way to the possibility of mutual cooperation between Protestant missionaries and Filipinos.

On the one hand, if Christian mission conducted by Protestants was used to

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 256-258.

¹⁸⁴ Lorenzo Bautista, "Colonization and the Philippine-American War," Anne C. Kwantes, ed., *Chapters in Philippine Church History* (Colorado: International Academic Publishers, 2002), 157.

¹⁸⁵ Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines*, 1898-1919 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 89.

accentuate the superiority of the Protestant religion and Western culture by colonizers, it should be called "colonial Christianity and colonial missions." On the other hand, if Christianity was not used to diffuse colonial power with the ethnocentric perspectives of missionaries, but to present the gospel in a local form in order to proclaim how God works among indigenous people and how much Jesus Christ loves them, it should be called "indigenized Christianity." Early Protestantism in the Philippines seems to be the former – interpreting Filipinos as inferior to Western society and culture. Consequently, colonial Protestant Christianization of the Philippines from the U.S. continued relatively in the same track as the colonial Catholicism from Spain.

Protestantism Encounters Catholicism

Protestant missionaries were confronted with a much different religious situation than the one confronted by Magellan and Roman Catholic friars in the 16th century. Folk Catholicism had become not only the religion for the majority, but it had become also a very basic and important part of Filipino culture. Thus, Protestantism had a difficult time fitting into the Filipino Catholic context.

Folk features in Catholicism, which is based on traditional religious practices and concerns, gradually affected Protestantism in the Philippines. For example, if a person somehow chose to be a Protestant Christian, he or she would just change his or her religious identity from Catholic to Protestant. However, the religious behaviors based on Filipino Catholicism, which had been mixed with traditional and pagan beliefs and practices, continued unchanged. As a result, the animistic beliefs and behaviors kept impacting the person's understanding of Protestantism. Thus, the Protestant encounter

with folk Catholicism initiated another form of Christianity, "folk Protestantism." 187

Many Protestant missionaries from conservative denominations totally devalued Catholicism's religious influences on the Philippines, primarily due to the perceived idolatry to the saints and Mary. Others, notably the Methodists, United Brethren Episcopalians, and some Presbyterians, appreciated, in part, the historic role of the Catholic Church in the Philippines. Two examples of this would be that Catholicism prevented the spread of Islam in the main islands of the Philippines, and the Catholic Church brought positive social development, such as education. ¹⁸⁸

A significant difference between Catholic and Protestant missions was the use of the Bible for the practice and teachings of Christianity. Rather than limiting the authority of interpretation of the Bible to the Catholic Church, Protestant missionaries brought the Bible into the Philippines in order to teach Filipinos how to read the Bible for themselves.

While Protestant missions were spreading to the islands, the Catholic Church began to aggressively oppose Protestantism, resulting in the systematic persecution of Protestants by the Catholic Church. The encounter with Protestant Christianity embarrassed the Catholic Church because it pointed out some of its weaknesses (e.g., moral weakness, ecclesial hierarchy, aspects of paganism, etc.) that had been revealed by the Protestant church at that time. As a result, this encounter with Protestantism spurred a

¹⁸⁷ Rodney L. Henry, *Filipino Spirit World* (Manila: OMF, 1971), 15. "Folk Protestantism is a blend of Protestantism at the level of ultimate concerns (salvation, sin, forgiveness, heaven, and hell) and animism (a strong belief in the spirit-world) at the level of everyday concern. Folk Protestantism has a very different look than folk Catholicism. This is based more on a Protestant reaction to Roman Catholicism than on a reaction against animistic practices. Whereas Roman Catholicism is very willing to allow beliefs and practices which do not conflict with the teachings of the church, Protestant missionaries (in general) have not been as permissive."

¹⁸⁸ Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines*, 1898-1919 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 95-96.

reform movement within the Catholic Church itself. This "reformation" movement influenced not only the Catholic Church, but also led many of the Protestant denominations to alter their negative viewpoint of Catholicism in the Philippines as well. 189

Two Different Reactions to Catholicism

Reactions from Protestants to Catholicism in the Philippines developed in two different ways among Episcopalians: pro-Catholicism and anti-Catholicism. An important figure of pro-Catholicism was Fr. John A Staunton, Jr. the founder of *Sagada* Episcopal mission in the mountains of Luzon in 1904. He allowed the use of Catholic rituals and its doctrine in Episcopal services. Like most Episcopalians, Charles Henry Brent, how was a bishop of the Episcopal Church at that time, cited Catholic's contributions to save the Philippines from Islam. He supported Staunton's efforts to use Catholic rituals in the Episcopal Church as a mission partner. Thus, his purpose of missions was not to convert Catholics to the Episcopal Church, but to look for those "who had not been converted by the Roman Catholic Church during the more than three hundred years of Spanish rule." 193

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¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 102-103.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 104.

¹⁹¹ Charles Henry Brent (04/09/1862 - 03/27/1929) was an American Episcopal bishop who served in the Philippines and western New York.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Brent

¹⁹² It seems easier than other denominations to accept Catholic rituals and doctrine for the missional purpose conducted by Episcopal Church, because of its historical lineage with the Catholic Church.

¹⁹³ Arun W. Jones, Christian Missions in the American Empire: Episcopalians in Northern Luzon, the Philippines, 1902~1946 (Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang, 2003), 95. Brent found three different groups of people who were not Christian: the Chinese

An important figure of anti-Catholicism was Rev. Mercer G. Johnston, a rector of the Episcopal cathedral in Manila. He tried to convince Bishop Brent that "Church should emphasize its Protestant aspects." ¹⁹⁴ He criticized the Catholic Church because of its perceived idolatrous practices of praying to Mary and other saints.

In the Protestant debate about Catholicism, "a central concern was whether or not to proselytize among Filipino Catholics." Staunton reached Filipinos who turned from their Catholicism to the Episcopal Church. However, what Staunton observed among Filipino Catholics was that they were very religious and attached to their traditional church. Thus, he says, "the [Protestant] Church should find a way to put new roots down into the [existing] soil instead of chopping at the old ones." It seemed an important attempt to contextualize the gospel into the Filipino Catholic context instead of trying to stamp out or ignore the Catholic Church.

Co-existence of Protestantism with Catholicism

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Manila was the first

Protestant organization in the Philippines to allow Catholics as members; however,

YMCA's ecumenical endeavor encountered substantial resistance from the majority of

Catholics who still opposed Protestantism. 197 However, the Protestant church, by and

community in Manila, the Moros in the southern islands of the Philippines, and grouped of people in mountainous areas and other remote regions of islands who followed the traditional primal religions. His mission was to focus on these groups of people.

¹⁹⁴ Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines*, 1898-1919 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 105.

¹⁹⁵ Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines*, 1898-1919 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 106.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 103.

large, experienced cooperation with the Catholic Church for missions, especially social Christian mission, where the Protestants were able to overcome their anti-Catholic bias. For example, the Baptists in 1925 enjoyed an association with Catholics for medical work, building dormitories for Central Philippine College near Iloilo, and the premier Baptist institution in the islands, through financial support from some Catholics. 198

However, even though there was cooperation between the Protestant and Catholic churches, there were still tensions, conflicts, and misunderstandings between them. For example, Anne C. Kwantes states one of oppositions from Catholic Church while doing Protestant missions, "One of the earliest signs of Roman Catholic opposition to Protestant missions occurred when the priests refused to bury the dead of the Protestants." Those tensions led to the difficult but significant assignment for the Protestant Church to work within the Catholic cultural context, as well as for the Catholic Church to accept Protestantism as another form of Christianity from another colonial power.

Cultural Gods and Resistance within Popular Catholicism

In colonial circumstances, those oppressed by economics and politics, Filipinos found it difficult to reject forms of colonial Christianity. However, they tried to integrate their indigenous practices into the colonial religion. This integration can be interpreted in terms of a subtle mind-set of resisting colonial religious influences. Michael Amaladoss describes this integration as an element of protest, stating:

... [People]... are not free to respond to the gospel in their own way. ... they tolerate some of it without real involvement. They continue their own traditional

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 113.

¹⁹⁹ Anne C. Kwantes, *Presbyterian Missionaries in the Philippines: Conduits of Social Change (1899-1910)* (Quezon, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1989), 112.

rituals.... In this manner they also affirm their own cultural and social identity. Some of these activities may involve a mild, hidden element of protest.²⁰⁰

Thus, the integration of Christianity and traditional rituals can be interpreted as a way of resisting the religious expressions of a colonial power. Popular Catholicism in the Philippines can be interpreted this way as well.

In summary, colonial influences have impacted the culture, religion, language, mindset, etc., in the Philippines because of two spans of colonial experiences from Spain and the United States. Filipinos' reactions to colonialism can be observed in their religious behaviors, in terms of integrating colonial religion with traditional practices. In short, during Christianization by Spanish colonialism, Filipinos developed their own way of accepting and resisting colonialism through popular Catholicism. These practices continued under American Protestantism. Therefore, it is imperative to understand colonial influences and Filipinos' resistance in order to understand popular Catholicism in the Philippines today.

Cultural Gods: Colonial Vestiges

Colonialism by Spain and the U.S. has influenced Filipinos in many ways.

According to Jimmy Belita, the enduring influences of colonialism can be observed everywhere in the Philippines today—in politics, economics, society, culture, and even in Christianity. Belita calls these legacies of colonialism, "cultural gods" that caused a

Michael Amaladoss, S. J., "Toward a New Ecumenism: Churches of the People" in Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation, ed.
 Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 279.
 Jimmy Belita, "Filipino Popular Catholicism: The Struggle Against Cultural Gods," Dialogue & Alliance 5 (4), Winter 1991-1992, 49. In his article, Belita mentions fatalism, passivity, elitism, ritualism, and rationalism are typical of cultural gods in the Philippines

reluctance to resist oppression whether caused by colonialism, indigenous political dictatorships, or economic inequality.

The term "cultural gods" originated from Filipinos' natural environment and historical experience. The Filipinos' life has depended on seasonal changes beyond their control. Typhoons, monsoon rains, volcanoes, and earthquakes have kept people unsettled, since natural disasters are inevitable and uncontrollable regularly occurring events. For centuries, it has been believed that "harmony with nature is a corollary of an animistic religion which believes in the existence of the spirits dwelling in the natural elements and objects." Because of their experience of not being able to do anything to prevent such natural disasters, their religious beliefs and practices are based on fatalism.

Furthermore, colonialism from Spain and the U.S. has had the effect of oppressing their traditional religious creative activities. Consequently, Filipinos accepted colonialism as their fate, from which they could not escape. This colonial fatalism has influenced the Filipinos' life. Jimmy Belita states especially regarding the Filipinos' interpersonal relationships, "the classic Filipino trait of seeking smooth interpersonal relationships which avoid confrontation is concomitant with deep-seated fatalism and passivity." In short, Filipinos try to avoid any problematic issues with other people; thus, they stay in a passive relationship with others.

In addition to fatalism caused by the unavoidable tropical nature and colonial

²⁰³ Ibid.

manifested in social life, religious practices, and political actions. Cultural gods, in his terminology, can be understood as colonial spirits among Filipinos which have influenced Filipinos to be always dependable to others (especially elites or foreigners). Thus, fatalism and passivism have existed with elitism among Filipinos. In religions, colonial spirits have also manifested in practices and rituals.

²⁰² Jimmy Belita, "Filipino Popular Catholicism: The Struggle Against Cultural Gods," *Dialogue & Alliance* 5 (4), Winter 1991-1992, 49.

domination, there are other cultural gods: elitism, ritualism, and rationalism. As a result of these cultural gods, different kinds of Catholicism have emerged: official Catholicism, and popular Catholicism to which most Filipinos ascribe. Official Catholicism is characterized by strict ritual laws, and popular Catholicism is typified by mixing Catholicism with folk and cosmic religion. Thus, ritualism and elitism are, according to Belita, influences of official Catholicism, while Filipino (popular) Catholicism can be interpreted as an active resistant reaction to colonial (official) Catholicism.

Rationalism came to Filipino Christianity with American Protestant missionaries who had distrust of the native rituals and practices related to popular Catholicism. They brought Western religious and educational concepts that emphasized rationalism. Those cultural gods that Filipinos encountered every day affected their lives, behaviors, and religious activities. Opposed to such cultural gods, there was also a resistance movement in many dimensions.

Filipinos' Resistant Spirit

Resistance could be manifested in armed power and military conflict during the U.S. colonial era; however, the resistance idea in Filipino society can be traced back to pre-colonial history. An effective leader in the pre-colonial Philippines was related to the Filipino community with an integrated sense of *loob* (in English, inside) which made their philosophy and life transparent to each other. *Loob* does not mean simply "inside," but it refers to the meaning of transparency of people's relationships. Thus, a leader and people were connected in honesty and mutual respectfulness with the concept of *loob*. However, when Spanish missionaries and officials arrived in the Philippines, they used

military power to control and rule Filipinos without intimacy with Filipinos or transparency of their (i.e., Spaniards') lives. In short, they did not make a *loob*-relationship with Filipinos.

Filipinos had articulated their resistant hearts through the "Passion Play" since the pre-Hispanic era in the Philippines. "The Passion Play became a means to express their resistance to the colonial regime, given that the Spanish banned all other indigenous theater." The "Passion Play" had become a popular ritual since pre-Hispanic times. They were likely theater productions based on ironic and subtle critiques to local political authorities. These kinds of resistant plays were popular in Asian nations. For instance, Mask Dancing in Korea manifested criticism of noble men with ironic and resistant ideas in the *Chosun* Dynasty. Javanese puppet plays in Indonesia also presented resistance to authorities. So, the "Passion Play" among indigenous Filipinos was a natural means to bring out their physical and emotional resistance to corrupt local authorities.

Resistant spirits among Filipinos have been observed since the pre-Hispanic era to the EDSA (Epifanio De Lose Santos Avenue) revolution in 1986. The EDSA revolution, also called the, "People's Power" revolution was a political movement conducted by most Filipinos, which was driven by certain religious perspectives and methodologies that were underlying Filipino folk and primal religious rituals. This revolution has been called "the fiesta" which is the quintessential Filipino social ritual.²⁰⁶ The fiesta was the

²⁰⁴ Literally, the "Passion Play" in the pre-colonial era in the Philippines does not depict the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus, but it was a play Filipinos used to express resistance to authoritarian attitudes of rulers.

²⁰⁵ Kathleen M. Nadeau, *Liberation Theology in the Philippines* (Connecticut: Praeger Press, 2002), 12.

²⁰⁶ Fiesta is a popular Filipino festival to celebrate each *barangay*'s (village's) foundation day with Catholic tradition. Jimmy Belita, "Filipino Popular Catholicism: The Struggle

very place of resistant praxis to the dictatorship in the Philippines. Filipinos could open the gate for the exodus from their colonial passivity, fatalism, and elitism to active expression of human dignity and freedom through their own Filipinized Christianity and religious resistance at the EDSA revolution.

Popular Catholicism and its religious practices, therefore, can be interpreted as an expression of resistant spirits to religious, political, and cultural oppression. Resistant spirits among Filipinos are prevalent everywhere, and dignity and integrity have been found through resistant spirits manifested in popular Catholicism.

Religious Resistance to Cultural Gods

Filipinos Christianity and its religious resistance developed through colonial experiences. Moreover, it emerged in practical ways such as armed power in the early 20th century, and movements for revolution (People's Power) at the end of Marcos' regime. Furthermore, religious resistance emerged in the middle of "human sinfulness and the socio-economic structure" ²⁰⁷ in the Philippines. Thus, religious resistance has worked within the events of everyday life (daily religious practices), within social and economic structures (colonialism and post-colonialism), within situations of oppression (social injustice), and within the experience of poverty and marginalization (economic inequality). ²⁰⁸ Consequently, religious resistance had expressed Christian faith through practicing Christian teachings (truth) with critical reflection on historical and social contexts.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 75.

Against Cultural Gods," *Dialogue & Alliance* 5 (4): Winter 1991-1992, 48.

207 Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 75

It is undeniable that Catholicism in the Philippines contains folkloric practices, as the history of Christianization in the Philippines has made known this process of being syncretized by colonial missionaries. So, it has easily been reproached as an example of syncretistic Christianity. While popular Catholicism interacted with pre-Hispanic Filipino religious contexts, it can be interpreted as a religion of resistance to through its struggles against "cultural gods" of colonialism in the Philippines.

Popular Catholicism seems to be a practical resistance against Filipinos' cultural gods, although there are controversial issues about syncretism. Images, rituals, and myths in Filipino popular Catholicism can be understood as it stands against cultural gods, because Filipino popular Catholicism is a religious experience of mediation and sacrament which are not related to any fatalism, ritualism, or elitism. "The Filipino popular Catholicism is a collective entity which, through the years, has been shaped by its images and symbols as the Filipinos relate to God."²¹⁰ It has been a spontaneous religious response to Spanish Catholicism which caused cultural gods; fatalism, ritualism, and elitism. Filipinos' religious celebrations through popular Catholic images and symbols are for their desires to find out the meaning of human existence and life, and religious hope and faith. Ritual celebration is also the counterpart of cultural gods. Ironically, the strict canonical Catholicism, which is from official Catholicism, has given rise to indigenous practices in popular Catholicism. Ritual celebration, consequently, expands the family unit, strengthens and widens family bonds. In sum, official

Dialogue & Alliance 5 (4): Winter 1991-1992, 55.

²⁰⁹ Previously on this chapter, cultural gods refer to fatalism caused by tropical natural disasters and colonial power, elitism and ritualism caused by official Catholicism to look down on the common Filipinos, and rationalism caused by Protestantism denouncing the practices of popular Catholicism.

210 Jimmy Belita, "Filipino Popular Catholicism: The Struggle Against Cultural Gods,"

Catholicism limited the freedom of religious expressions through religious practices by strict canonical laws; however, popular Catholic's practices through images, rituals, religious celebrations, and myths have provided the inspiration and attitude that subverted the values of the elite's ruling.

However, there is also the danger of seeing popular Catholicism as wholly contextualized Christianity although it has been Filipinized in a way, because of syncretistic fusion between Christianity and folk religious practices, such as devotion to Sto. Niño and Mother Mary as mediators between God and human beings. Although popular Catholicism has contributed to rendering a new paradigm of the counter cultural gods in Filipino society, it could not provide a new paradigm of contextual religiosity with Christianity. Missiologically, popular Catholicism has become syncretistic with folk religious practices which are not based on the biblical foundations and teachings.

In this point, I see that rituals and myths in popular Catholicism can be a new form of "religio-cultural gods," which prevent Filipinos from the freedom in Jesus Christ through new forms of fatalism, passivity, and ritualism in popular Catholicism. The reason for religious resistance movements was to oppose any oppression from colonialism and dictatorship. It is not doubtful that popular Catholicism was helpful in guiding Filipinos in the era of fatalism (colonialism and its leftovers) to express their religious resistance to colonial Christianization; however, religious resistance in the Philippines today needs to be contextualized more, in order to discover authentic Filipinized Christianity through recontextualizing the meaning of being Christians in the era of post-fatalism (post-colonialism and its new challenges).

Conclusion

Throughout the history of Christianity in the Philippines, Filipino Catholicism has been formed by interactions with Filipino pre-colonial (traditional) religious tendency and Spanish Catholicism. However, because of a colonial type of Christianization, Catholic missions could not take a step into the serious procedure of contextualizing Christianity among Filipinos who were relationship-centered people. Without adapting Christianity to Filipino soil (culture, language, customs, etc.), Filipinos were coerced into converting to Catholicism; generally speaking, their conversion to Catholicism was to maintain a good relationship with Spanish colonizers in the early Spanish colonial era. Vincente Rafael states, "To the Spanish demand that converts make their bodies speak the language of God, the Tagalog converts [Filipinos who speak Tagalog] responded by performing token payments designed to appease the figure of authority and deflect the force of hierarchy." 211

Although contextualization of Christianity through proper translations of Christianity into Filipino contexts had not occurred effectively during the colonial era, Filipinized Catholicism emerged as Christianity expressed in Filipino vernacular terms. Gradually, Catholicism became an important part of the culture of the Philippines.

After Spanish withdrawal, Protestantism with U.S. colonialism arrived in the Philippines. Protestant missions during the American colonial era did not communicate seriously with Filipino Catholicism, which had become an important aspect of Filipino culture and religion already. As a result of the ethnocentric perspectives of Protestantism

²¹¹ Vicente L. Rafael, Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), 135.

to understand Filipinos and their religion (popular Catholicism) as inferior, Protestant missions could rarely cooperate with Catholicism for missions.

While popular Catholicism has been seen as a syncretistic form of Christianity by many Protestants, it needs to be also interpreted as a Filipinized Christianity initiated and transplanted by Filipino reactions to colonialism and Catholicism in two ways: resisting colonial power, and accepting Spanish Catholicism. Consequently, during the process of transplanting Filipino Christianity through the process of resisting colonial power and accepting Catholicism, popular images developed of Filipino Christianity. Jose Mario C. Francisco describes the emergence of popular images of Filipino Christianity as,

This process of reception [of Spanish Catholicism] empowered natives not only to appropriate Christianity but to resist colonial power as well. Both reception [of Spanish Catholicism] and resistance [of Spanish colonial power] would shed light on the impulses behind the popular images of Filipino Christianity.²¹²

Therefore, the popular images of Filipino Christianity developed in the process of religious, cultural, and political colonization. After investigating historical understandings of the emergence of popular Catholicism in the Philippines, foundations of popular Catholicism will be studied in next chapter.

²¹² Jose Mario C. Francisco, S.J., "The Philippines," in Peter C. Phan, ed., *Christianities in Asia* (Singapore: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 103.

Chapter 3

The Religious, Cultural, and Theological Foundations of Popular Catholicism

This chapter investigates the development of popular Catholicism in relation to religious, cultural, and theological foundations. First, this chapter will discuss issues related to popular religions in general, and how these apply to the development of popular Catholicism in the Philippines. This will be followed by an examination of the cultural foundations of popular Catholicism. Next, four significant theological topics related to popular Catholicism – truth, salvation, Christology, and deity system, which includes Mariology and Sto. Niño – will be examined in order to investigate the theological foundations of popular Catholicism. Finally, this chapter will present different religious expressions between popular Catholicism and general Protestantism in order to address the places where these two forms of Christianity can form mutual understandings of the reasons for their differences.

Overall, this chapter will provide a landscape of popular Catholicism religiously, culturally, theologically, and phenomenologically in the Philippines.

Understandings of Popular Religions

Proper understandings of popular religions will provide the necessary foundation for understanding the development of popular Catholicism in the Philippines. "One of the reasons why popular devotions are so much loved by the people is the fact that they fulfill legitimate needs of the faithful while the official worship of the Church often seems to

neglect them."²¹³ Popular forms of religious practices have been observed in every place, in every time among every people, because popular devotions and practices have sprouted from the grass-roots level among people.²¹⁴

Religious Category: Metacosmic (Formal) Religions and Cosmic (Folk) Religions

Aloysius Pieris categorizes two kinds of religions; metacosmic religions (i.e., the so-called higher forms of Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, etc), and cosmic religions (i.e., tribal religions, as well as the popular forms of metacosmic religions, e.g., popular Buddhism, popular Hinduism, popular Christianity).²¹⁵ Paul Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tienou also categorize religions into two types: formal religions and folk religions.²¹⁶ Their typologies (Pieris and Hiebert/Shaw/Tienou) seem to have similar definitions for the relationship between formal religion (metacosmic religion) and folk religion (cosmic religion).

Metacosmic religions concern ultimate questions such as life, death, salvation, and eternity, while cosmic religions regard people's daily lived questions such as sickness, healing power, prosperity, wellbeing, and good-luck. It is because metacosmic religions (formal religion) are based on metacosmic soteriologies that reach out to a high level of cosmovision for salvation and truth while cosmic religions (folk religions) are contextualized into people's levels that reach out to divine power to heal the sick, prosper

²¹³ Bernhard Raas, *Popular Devotions: Making Popular Religious Practices More Potent Vehicle of Spiritual Growth* (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1992), 24. ²¹⁴ Ibid.. 13.

²¹⁵ Aloysius Pieris, S.J., "Interreligious Dialogue and Theology of Religions: An Asian Paradigm" in *Horizons* 20/1 (1993), 110.

²¹⁶ Paul Hiebert, Danial Shaw, and Tite Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 73-77.

the poor, and rectify injustice. Thus, people belonging to cosmic religions seem to have no problem crossing the cosmic religious boundaries to get to the metacosmic religious level. As a result, cosmic religious desires and practices can be realized at a metacosmic religious level. In other words, according to Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou, folk religious practices can be easily found in formal religions. Therefore, precisely speaking, formal religions and folk religions cannot be separated completely at the level of people's religious practices. The ultimate questions of formal religion at the metacosmic level and the questions of daily life of folk religion at the cosmic level cannot be divided into different topics²¹⁷ because all these questions are related and interconnected to one another in the past, present and the future. "In complex societies, folk religion often consists of a mixture of formal and animistic beliefs—of high and low religion, or dual religion." Therefore, folk Muslims, folk Buddhists, and folk Christians exist in each formal religion.

Using Pieris' expression to describe the relationship between metacosmic religions and cosmic religions, metacosmic soteriologies can be meaningful to people in cosmic religions "rooted in a particular place and culture." Pieris states as:

... these metacosmic soteriologies are never found in abstract "textual" form but always "contextualized" within the worldview of the cosmic religion of a given

²¹⁷ Everyday questions are all about to connect to the ultimate questions. Because, daily lives' questions such as sickness, suffering from oppression, and others are related to the life and salvation which are the ultimate questions. Biblically speaking, Jesus also tells us, "... whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" in Matthew 18: 18. Separation between the ultimate and the non-ultimate is meaningless in people's lives.

²¹⁸ Paul Hiebert, Danial Shaw, and Tite Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 77.

²¹⁹ Michael Amaladoss, S. J., "Toward a New Ecumenism: Churches of the People" in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 285.

culture, creating a twofold level of religious experience, each level well integrated into the other.²²⁰

Thus, the integration of a popular religion (cosmic religion) with formal religion (metacosmic religion) happens everywhere, and this integration is the process of people's manifestation of their religiosity.

Split-level Christianity

The integration of a popular religion with Christianity happens in many places among many people, and Bulatao calls it, "split-level Christianity." Split-level Christianity is a phenomenon that refers to folk religious practices and features which have become an important part of Christianity in a given context. Split-level Christianity tends to be relegated to only a metacosmic religion; it is viewed as not being able to adequately answer questions regarding the uncertainty of the future; the mystery surrounding sickness, death, wellbeing, etc. Therefore, people who feel that they cannot get any answers from Christianity have returned to their traditional ways and religious practices.

Gailyn Van Rheenen presents five reasons for the popularity of folk religions in the post-modern era: individualism, multiculturalism, redefinition of spirituality, focusing on power and neglecting truth, and the demise of knowledge of God.²²² I think these five reasons can also be helpful for understanding the reason for emerging folk Christianity

²²⁰ Aloysius Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 72. ²²¹ Jaime Bulatao, *Split-Level Christianity* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila, 1992), cited by Paul Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion*, 1999. ²²² Gailyn Van Rheenen, "Theology Evangelizing Folk Religionists" in Monthly Missiological Reflection #23, posted on October 29th, 2002 in http://www.missiology.org/?p=212.

(split-level Christianity). Individualism has initiated personal choice in religious practices for people involved in both folk or formal religious practices. Multiculturalism has influenced people with multi-religious understandings in a global era. Thus, folk Christianity may be understood as a "positive form" of integrated Christianity with other religious features in a multicultural context, although some may label this syncretistic Christianity. The reason for combining Christianity with animistic or other religious features is that people believe that the church is not the only the place to experience the power of spirituality, but people also think it is possible to investigate spirituality through folk religious practices. Connecting to the matter of power and truth in religions, people have been interested in power encounter rather than understandings of truth. Finally, the demise of knowledge of God has brought non-biblical concepts of deity, for example, "God is remote," "there are many gods," and "the God (of Christians) is not the only super powerful being."

In sum, the primary reason for reemerging and existing folk religious features in Christianity is that people are not satisfied with "formal Christianity," ²²³ but they are looking for power and spirituality through folk and traditional elements of other religions then mixing those with Christianity. In other words, formal Christianity could not be an effective religion for people looking for answers to their "everyday questions," ²²⁴ while folk religious practices and beliefs focus more on those everyday concerns.

²²³ I use the terminology of "formal Christianity" here in order to be opposite of Splitlevel Christianity. However, formal Christianity does not refer to biblical model of Christianity either. It refers to more westernized Christianity influenced by Western culture today.

According to Paul Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tienou, everyday questions are "existential questions the people face in their everyday lives," in their book, *Understanding Folk Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 76.

<u>Dualistic Worldview</u> and the Excluded Middle

According to Paul Hiebert, the Western Christian worldview is quite dualistic: religion (sacred) and science (secular). As a result, the Western worldview contains a two-tiered view of reality. The division between "the secularization of science and the mystification of religion" has produced a gap between these two realities: the middle zone. The middle zone questions "the uncertainty of the future, the crises of present life, and the unknowns of the past." The excluded middle is a product made by the two-tiered view of reality which divides the areas of religion (sacred) and science (secular). According to this dualism to interpret the world, sacred and secular have different functions in the world. Thus, in this dualistic worldview (sacred and secular), the excluded middle could not exist, because people in this dualistic worldview think religion and science can provide answers to all of life's questions. Paul Hiebert describes his experience with the middle zone:

As a scientist I had been trained to deal with the empirical world in naturalistic terms. As a theologian I was taught to answer ultimate questions in theistic terms. For me the middle zone did not really exist. Unlike Indian villagers, I had given little thought to spirits of this world, to local ancestors and ghosts, or to the souls of animals. For me these belonged to the realm of fairies, trolls, and other mythical beings. Consequently I had no answers to the questions they raised.²²⁷

²²⁵ Paul G. Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle" in *Missiology: An International Review* vol. X, no. 1 (January, 1982), 43-45.

²²⁶ Ibid., 44.

²²⁷ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 196.

Faith
Miracles
Other worldly problems
Sacred

(Excluded Middle)

Sight and experience
Natural order
This worldly problems
Secular

Table 3-1. A Western Two-Tiered View of Reality²²⁸

As a result of dualism, "the secularization of science and the mystification of religion" emerged.²²⁹ Paul Hiebert explains these two sides as:

Science dealt with the empirical world using mechanistic analogies, leaving religion to handle other-worldly matters, often in terms of organic analogies. Science was based on the certitudes of sense experience, experimentation, and proof. Religion was left with faith in visions, dreams, and inner feelings. Science sought order in natural laws, Religion was brought in to deal with miracles and exceptions to the natural order, but these decreased as scientific knowledge expanded. ²³⁰

Because of this two-tiered view of reality, westernized missionaries could not effectively deal with the "middle zone" questions and issues of daily life experienced by the non-Westerners the missionaries were trying to evangelize and disciple.²³¹ While Christianity could not effectively provide answers to the middle zone questions because of a dualistic worldview which divides religion and science, people would seek other solutions for the middle zone questions through popular religions which consist of folk religious practices and beliefs.

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²²⁸ Paul G. Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle" in *Missiology: An International Review* vol. X, no. 1 (January, 1982), 43.

²²⁹ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 197.

²³⁰ Ibid. ²³¹ Ibid., 197-198.

The emergence of popular religion in Catholicism (popular Catholicism) can also be understood as being able provide answers that official Christianity could not give.

Kosuke Koyama explains official and popular Catholicism in terms of two modes of faith expression.

The faith expresses itself in two modes: the priestly official and the popular. The former is concerned to maintain the right doctrine and liturgy, while the latter seeks the immediate cure from the power of evil that affects physical and spiritual wellbeing.²³²

Thus, according to Koyama, it is not a matter of "right or wrong" between official and popular Catholicism, but the real matter is the function of these two modes of religion. The roles of the official and the popular are different; the popular seeks answers to the middle zone questions.

Explanations for the questions in the excluded middle zone need to be dealt with in the Christian mission. Missionaries should be able to provide answers to those questions with biblical foundations. If not, Hiebert says, "Given no answer, they return to the diviner who gives definite answers, for these are the problems that loom large in their every life."

Within this missiological perspective the reasons for the existence of popular and folk Christian practices, I agree with Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou's opinion: folk Christianity and its religious practices mixed with formal Christianity should not be stamped out, nor should it be accepted uncritically, but it should be transformed to fit a

²³² Kosuke Koyama, "I have Become All Things to All People..." in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 249.

²³³ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 198.

biblical worldview.²³⁴ Consequently, folk Christianity can be interpreted as people's responses to the formal (Westernized) Christianity which could not adequately deal with the issues that come out of the excluded middle zone because of a dualistic worldview that divided religion and science.

Popular Catholicism in the Philippines, in terms of integration of formal (official) Christianity with popular religiosity (popular religious practices) of people, can be recognized as a form of contextualized Christianity in a Filipino context which attempts to meet the needs of the excluded middle zone by presenting cosmic religious practices (folk religious practices) in a metacosmic form of Christianity. In other words, popular Catholicism, which contains syncretistic features in its religious practices, cannot be interpreted as only a syncretistic Christianity; rather, it is a form of people's contextualized Christianity in the Philippines which deals with questions of the excluded middle zone through its religious practices and expressions.

Cultural Foundations of Popular Catholicism in the Philippines

Religions cannot be understood separately from cultures. Aloysius Pieris says:

Culture and religion are overlapping facets of one indivisible soteriology, which is at once a view of life and path of deliverance; it is both a philosophy that is basically a religious vision, and a religion that is a philosophy of life.²³⁵

Culture can be understood as a constructed reality in which people live with a certain interpretive framework for understanding the world around them (sometimes referred to

²³⁴ Paul Hiebert, Danial Shaw, and Tite Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 90-92.

²³⁵ Aloysius Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 52.

as a worldview). ²³⁶ Viewing culture as a constructed (and constructing) reality means recognizing that religious beliefs often play a key role in this process. ²³⁷ Thus, religions in general and Christianity in particular (at least for this study) are affected by, and at the same time affect, the construction of culture. Understanding the impact of culture on religious beliefs and practices, and vice versa, is vitally important to know how Catholicism has become "popular" in the Filipino context.

Culturalization of Catholicism

As argued above, religions affect how people interpret the world around them. That is because religions affect cultures, and simultaneously cultures influence religions. Therefore, cultural religions such as cultural Buddhism, cultural Islam, and cultural Christianity exist as religions and cultures that cannot be separated. This dissertation will refer to this phenomenon of overlapping between religions and cultures as culturalization of religion, and religionization of culture. In this understanding of overlapping between cultures and religions, the study of Catholicism in the Philippines refers to the study of cultural foundations of popular Catholicism and the study of religious foundations of Filipino cultures.

As Michael Amaladoss notes, "The gospel can relate to every culture because it is above all cultures." However, it also should be manifested and rooted in all cultures

²³⁷ Richard Robbins, *Cultural Anthropology: A Problem-Based Approach*, 6th Edition (Independence, KY: Cengage Learning, 2012)

²³⁶ See Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

²³⁸ Michael Amaladoss, "Toward a New Ecumenism" in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 282.

because of its translatability.²³⁹ In the context of the Philippines, the gospel has been closely related to Filipino cultures since the time of Spanish colonization. Thus, the cultures of the Philippines have been transformed by the introduction of Christianity, especially in its Catholic form, and Catholicism in the Philippines has been translated by these local cultures into its popular form since it encountered pre-colonial Filipino traditional religions and cultures.

According to the survey and interview data from Methodists in the Philippines, popular Catholicism is considered a foundational element of Filipino culture, especially in Batangas. Rev. Joel Panganiban, who has been ministering in Batangas for 8 years, explains the relationship between culture and Catholicism in Batangas in this way:

Catholicism has been here in the Philippines more than 400 years. Their theology has become [a part of the] culture in the Philippines, especially in Batangas which is very Catholic religiously. It might be a blessing and also it is not a blessing to be a Catholic nation. It is not easy to distinguish between cultural features and Catholic religious features in popular Catholic practices. It is really mixed.²⁴⁰

In Filipino society, "Catholic Christian" doesn't just refer to a person who belongs to the Roman Catholic Church, but also to being a Christian in a Catholic culture.

Jesus Villamin, who is a Methodist minister in Batangas, says,

It [Catholicism] is not only the religion of Filipinos, but it has become the culture here. Thus, Catholic Christian doesn't mean Catholic Church Christian only, but it can be used to indicate a Protestant Christian also who has Catholic culture.²⁴¹

Therefore, Catholicism refers to both culture and religion in the Philippines because

Lamin Sanneh argues the importance of translatability of the gospel for Christian mission on cultures in his book, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 1.

Joel Panganiban, interview with author, May 1st, 2011. The question was "How can you distinguish between religious features and cultural features in Catholic practices?"
 Jesus Villamin, interview with author, May 8th, 2011. The question was "Can you tell me about your experiences or ideas about Catholicism in the Philippines?"

Catholicism has become culturalized, and Filipino culture has become catholicized. Thus, popular Catholicism has emerged. The overlap and mixture of culture and religion is the ubiquitous nature of popular Catholicism.

Popular Catholicism and Local Christianities

"Official" Christianity, both in its Catholic and mainline Protestant forms, has been inclined to devalue popular Catholicism because of its presumed mixture of traditional and pagan religious beliefs and practices. Reflecting this perspective, many missionaries, mission agencies, and Protestant Christians identify popular Catholicism and its religious practices among Filipinos by the term "popular Christianity," by which they mean Christianity mixed with popular religious features of folklore.

However, since the 1970s, a different perspective on popular Christianity has emerged. Some missiologists and missionaries have come to see popular Christianity as a variant local form by focusing on culture and context. Robert Schreiter puts it this way:

The focus on culture and local place in the study of Christianity which has arisen since the 1970s has permitted a new way of looking at popular forms of Christianity. Popular religion no longer needs to be dismissed as deviations brought on by psychological need or lack of proper evangelization. It can be seen as an authentic way of living out the message of the Gospel.²⁴²

Thus, according to Schreiter, popular Catholicism may be viewed as an authentic way to live out the gospel for people in the Philippines and elsewhere. Vitaliano Gorospe, a Jesuit theologian, supports this position by stating, "there are elements of authentic Christian faith in popular religion just as in most theologically trained and hierarchically

²⁴² Robert J. Schreiter, "Foreword" in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), vii.

faithful [Christians] among us have elements of popular religion in our lives."243

Indeed, religious syncretism with Christianity, which is considered unacceptable by most of the mainline churches, 244 has become interpreted by Mariasusai as "that which implies a systematic attempt to combine, blend and reconcile harmonious or even conflicting religious elements in a new synthesis."²⁴⁵ According to his perspective. syncretism is viewed in a more positive light—as a process of reconciling traditional beliefs with a new religion (in this case, Christianity). Following this newer perspective. and given the cultural diversity found in the Philippines, popular Catholicism need not be understood as a perverted form of Christianity, but rather it can be considered a form of "local Christianities."246

Interestingly, Cristian Parker categorizes popular Catholicism in Chile into three types regarding its relationship with official Catholicism: 1) a type closest to official Catholicism, 2) a type associated with traditional folk Catholicism, and 3) a type closer to

²⁴³ Vitaliano Gorospe, SJ, "A Critical Analysis of the Supposed Dialogue Between Christian Faith and Filipino Popular Religion," paper for the CBCP-ECC National Seminar Workshop on "The Challenge of Inculturating True Faith in Folk Catholicism." Malaybalay, Bukidnon, Nov. 20, 1998., Recited in Celilia T. Median, "Dialogue between Faith and Culture and Popular Devotions," in Filipino Popular Devotions, ed. Leonard N. Mercado (Manila: Logos Publications INC, 2000), 14.

²⁴⁴ This designation includes evangelical Christians.

²⁴⁵ Nagypal Szabolcs, "Risks and Means of Interreligious Dialogue in Community," Website, www.koed.hu/integrity/szabi.pdf, 136, citing Mariasusai DHAVAMONY SJ, "Towards a Theology of Dialogue in Interreligious Ritual Participation," Bulletin (Pro Dialogo) 1990/3. 302.

²⁴⁶ Local Christianities refer to the diversity of Christian forms in local settings in terms of the principle of diversity (locality) and unity (globality) in Christianity. It relates to pilgrim principle and indigenous principle in Christianization. For more understandings of local Christianity, see Robert Schreiter, Constructing Local Theologies (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985), and for pilgrim principle and indigenous principle, see Andrew Walls, "The Gospel as the Prisoner and Liberator of Culture," Evangelical Review of Theology 7:2 (1983), 223-225. This study will deal with these principle in Chapter five.

some new age beliefs.²⁴⁷ Parker's categories seem to take the right track to identify popular religions in the relationship with official religions. However, it is not easy to distinguish absolutely which one is the popular one, which one is the official one, and which one is closer to the official religion in one religious system because religious understandings of official religions and religious practices of popular religions are always intermingled. In other words, popular religions and popular religious practices have not been observed only in a certain area, but they can be found all around the world in different places among different people. Popular Catholicism in the Philippines is one of them.

Theological Foundation One: Truth in Popular Catholicism

Stating again the general pattern of religious tendencies, Filipinos have tended to relegate ultimate concerns such as life, death, the afterlife, and so forth to the Church while relying on their animistic beliefs and practices of traditional religions in order to deal with daily issues such as daily food needs, healing from sickness, restoring relationships with others, etc.²⁴⁸ This religious tendency is not to be ignored, but rather it needs to guide Christian leaders and mission agents working in the Philippines to acknowledge Filipinos' belief system in order to observe and follow what the Holy Spirit has been working in the Filipino religious system. While sharing the truth with other people is an important reason for Christian mission, knowing how Filipinos understand truth is also an imperative to initiate Christian mission in the context of popular

²⁴⁷ Cristian Parker G., "Chile: Identity and Diversity in Urban Popular Catholicism," in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, edited by Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 31-32.
²⁴⁸ Rodney L. Henry, *Filipino Spirit World* (Manila: OMF, 1971), Chapter 1-2.

Catholicism.

The Meaning of Truth

All peoples are interested in "truth," though many different definitions of truth may exist within different religious contexts; however, as Muck and Adeney state, "the answer to the question [what is truth] must come from the Bible" as we believe in God who is Truth itself.

Interestingly, both those who insist that that other religions have truth, and those who believe that there is no other name of truth except Jesus Christ are based on biblical evidence. For example, Genesis 1: 27, Psalm 22: 27, Romans 1: 19-20, Romans 2: 15, Acts 17: 22-34, and Revelation 21: 24-26 are used to show that other religions also could have truth in different forms, while John 14: 6, Acts 4: 12, Ephesians 2: 8, 1 Timothy 2: 5, and 1 John 5: 11 prove that there is no other name of truth except Jesus Christ. 250

Although both groups of people above use biblical evidence to support their assertions, the biblical concept of truth should be related to Jesus Christ, who stated that he was "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Thus, "truth is first and foremost a Christological concept." Therefore, the inevitable answer to "what is truth," both in orthodox Protestantism and Catholicism, is Jesus Christ. Thus, Christology in theology should be the baseline of truth in both Catholicism and Protestantism. However, that does

²⁴⁹ Terry Muck and Frances S. Adeney, *Christianity Encountering World Religions: The Practice of Mission in the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 46.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Suh Tae Yun, "Mission Between Religious Pluralism and the Postmodern Claim of Truth: A Study of Young Korean Protestants' Views of Other Faiths" (Ph.D. Diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2011), 69.

not mean that these two branches of Christianity in the Philippines have the same understandings of the role of Jesus, and the triune God, in their religious lives.

Different Understandings of Truth: Solo Cristo?

The mainline Protestant churches affirm that Jesus is one person of the Triune God, and that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit cannot be separated ontologically. While the Trinity is an important theological foundation for understanding God among mainline Christians, popular Catholic Christians, in addition to the trinity, have emphasized Mary as a mediator between God and humans. Moreover, many times, Mary has been practically thought of as having divine nature because of the conception that Mary is the mother of Jesus. Catholicism has officially insisted, "... all Christians must believe the historical truth of certain events said to have taken place in the life of Mary the mother of Jesus."

Mary seems to be substitute for the Spirit of Jesus Christ and the role of His Spirit in popular Catholic Christian religious lives. One of the lay leaders of the Methodist Church in Batangas says, "Actually they [Catholics] also talk about the Holy Spirit.

However, they don't think of the role of the Holy Spirit in their lives, but [instead] they focus on the role of Mary through their prayers to her." 253

Mary and other saints that Catholics venerate are emphasized as a means to deliver their wishes and hopes to God and to bring back God's favor to them. Henry Facun, a lay leader of Methodist Church in Batangas, also mentions that Mary is like a

²⁵² David L. Edwards, *What is Catholicism? An Anglican Responds to the Official Teaching of the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Mowbrary, 1994), 32.
²⁵³ John Amazona, Interview with Author, May 21st, 2011.

middleperson between God and humans among Catholic Christians.²⁵⁴ Ruby-Nell Estrella, a former Methodist District Superintendent of Batangas province, confirms this, saying, "... I don't believe that she [Mary] is an intercessor between God and human beings as Catholics believe."

In other words, the emphasis on Mary and other saints for the religious life in popular Catholicism indicates a perverted understanding of the truth in the Trinity.

Therefore, Mary and other saints have been emphasized in popular Catholicism instead of the biblical teaching that Jesus Christ is the way, truth, and life. Critically, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit have been substituted by popular religious beliefs and practices, such as Mary veneration. Mary has become an important divine mediator to approach to the Triune God in popular Catholicism in Batangas; therefore, the concept of "solo Cristo" has become inadequate and insufficient to understand the truth of Christianity in popular Catholicism because of popular Catholic practices such as the veneration of Mary.

Theological Foundation Two: Salvation in Popular Catholicism

According to David Bosch, "salvation is indeed a fundamental concern of every religion."²⁵⁶ In Christianity, "salvation is God's action in history, and therefore truth can be known only through participation in this action."²⁵⁷ Thus, salvation, as it is a fundamental concern of Christianity, is closely related to truth that God wants to save humans through His action, and we (Christians) are expected to participate in His action

²⁵⁴ Henry Facun, Interview with Author, May 21st, 2011.

²⁵⁵ Ruby-Nell Estrella, Interview with Author, May 28th, 2011.

²⁵⁶ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2007), 393.

²⁵⁷ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 96.

to liberate (to save) people from sinfulness.

In the Wesleyan tradition, salvation can be understood as a reconstructing process of relationship between humans and God. As sin preexisted humans' sinful actions, ²⁵⁸ we have been disconnected from God. Consequently, "the sinner finds himself under the wrath of God, and this involves a change in relationships" between humanity and God. According to John Wesley, the way to reconstruct and restore our relationship with God is to accept the grace of God through prevenient grace, justifying grace, and sanctifying grace. ²⁶⁰ Thus, in the Wesleyan tradition, salvation is a process as well as a result of restoring the relationship with God.

Speaking in theological themes, salvation is connected to soteriology and eschatology, which means it is realized and manifested today, and the day when Jesus comes. Salvation, in this theological understanding, is not a one-time story, but it is an ongoing process in which we experience the present and the future in God.

Two Concepts of Salvation: Vertical and Horizontal

When people talk about salvation, two categories of salvation can exist: salvation as having eternal life after death, and salvation from oppression and depression in daily life. The former is talking about the spiritual and eternal salvation, and the other is the social and contemporary salvation. Biblically, one of these two concepts of salvation has

²⁵⁸ Joel B. Green, *Salvation* (Missouri: Chalice Press, 2003), 33. "It is important sense that we recognize that sin was there even before we sinned. Our actions do not introduce evil into the world. Sin arrived before we did."

²⁵⁹ Andreas J. Kostenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission (Illinois: Apollos, 2006), 27.

²⁶⁰ Maxie Dunnam, *Going on to Salvation: A Study of Wesleyan Beliefs* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 45

no right to say that one is more important than the other, because these are the same concepts of salvation that Jesus proclaims to people, "... if I go and prepare for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am," and "... to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke." Thus, salvation refers to both of eternal life, and healing and liberation. Salvation should be viewed more holistically because "... salvation is about more than saving the person for a future state of new creation, it is also about the healing of creation as a whole." 263

Donald McGavran mentions that salvation is a vertical relationship.²⁶⁴ According to him, the vertical must not be displaced by the horizontal, which means that social works for people must not be substituted for the biblical requirement of salvation. It is truth that there is no other name, no other action, no other social good work that can replace Jesus' name for the salvation (John 14: 6).

On the contrary, Joel Green argues that Jesus instructed his followers to devote their lives to serving others. ²⁶⁵ Jesus revealed this purpose in his own life in that he would embrace death on behalf of others. In other words, Jesus emphasized and presented horizontal activity among people for salvation, and he showed how to love others through his death. In this way, "Jesus' death affects the liberation inherent in new

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²⁶¹ John 14: 3, NIV.

²⁶² Isaiah 58: 6, NIV.

²⁶³ Tim Dakin, *Discipleship: Marked for Mission*, recited by Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross ed., *Mission in the 21st Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 178.

²⁶⁴ Donald A. McGavran, "Salvation Today," in Ralph Winter, ed., *The Evangelical Response to Bangkok* (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1073), 31. Recited by David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2007), 398-399.

²⁶⁵ Joel B. Green, Salvation (Missouri: Chalice Press, 2003), 111.

exodus hope and at the same time that it calls upon Jesus' followers to incarnate an ethic of service to others." Thus, salvation demands of us that we participate in liberation activities, which means service to others and for their sake. In this point, Joel Green's view can be understood as a horizontal salvation.

Putting McGavran's and Green's emphases on salvation together, salvation can be understood as a process and a result of restoration of vertical relationship with God and horizontal relationship with other people simultaneously.

Understandings of Salvation and Rituals in Popular Catholicism

Catholicism was not brought into the Philippines from the grass-roots level, but it came from the upper echelon of the Filipino society through a "top down" approach because this was the colonial way to spread the Christianity. As a result, social salvation (social action for justice) was not emphasized by colonial Catholicism, because Catholicism was only for Spaniards and the high-ranking indigenous people (socially and politically powerful Filipinos) at that time. In other words, a horizontal understanding of salvation, which needs to be based on the relationship with others, was not revealed in Catholic missions in the colonial era.²⁶⁷

Furthermore, the afterlife as an equal opportunity to everyone could not be granted in traditional belief among Filipinos, but it followed the social structures (social rankings) of earthly life. About the relationship between afterlife and the present, Rodney L. Henry writes:

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ In order to clarity relation system among Filipino, see the concept of *Utang na loob*, *hiya*, and *pagkikipagkapwa* again in Chapter two.

These people [Filipinos] had a belief in an afterlife. This life to come was supposed to be of the same sort as the present life, with the dead being taken to *kaluwalhatian* [glory]. The position of people in the afterlife was not based on the morality of a person's actions while living. It was based on the same socioeconomic situation which a person occupied while alive on earth. So poverty and slavery were the worst situations on earth because that would be the person's lot in the afterlife.²⁶⁸

Thus, socio-economic achievements were considered as an imperative element to attain a good position in an afterlife. As a result, this traditional understanding of the afterlife corrupted a vertical understanding of salvation, which is based on relationship with God.

This lack of understandings of horizontal and vertical salvation has caused religious practices and rituals in popular Catholicism to become an attempt to realize their hopes and desires for salvation in a holistic viewpoint. Rituals of popular Catholicism are not only connected to physical needs and health, but also to the spiritual needs because popular Catholicism is concerned with all human life such as health, wealth, materialism, spiritualism, and every need of daily lives whether it is for physical or spiritual life. In other words, popular Catholicism has been synthesized with the sensitiveness of cosmos. That's why Michael Amaladoss says, "popular Catholicism has a holistic view of salvation."

At any rate, there is no doubt that Filipinos are religious people. They are looking for religious power and help for their daily lives. Religious practices and rituals such as touching and praying to statues of saints, praying to Mary and Sto. Niño, touching Black Nazarene with a handkerchief,²⁷⁰ rosary praying, etc. come from their hope and wish that

²⁶⁸ Rodney L. Henry, *Filipino Spirit World* (Manila: OMF Publishers, 1971), 9.
²⁶⁹ Michael Amaladoss, S. J., "Toward a New Ecumenism: Churches of the People" in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 290.
²⁷⁰ Ruby-Nell Estrella, Interview with Author, May 28th, 2011. "Black Nazarene is

they would be blessed physically and spiritually through these religious practices.

Touching Sto Niño and Black Nazarene is the primary way of petitioning for salvation (healing) from sickness.

In short, the hope of salvation from life difficulties such as social oppression, financial depression, physical and mental illness, etc. has been manifested in those religious practices and rituals of popular Catholicism. Therefore, religious practices and rituals of popular Catholicism present the necessity of the social gospel, which can rebuild the relationship with others for physical needs, and evangelism, and which can restore the relationship with God for eternal life, as these two views combine to form a holistic understanding of salvation in Christianity.

"They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."²⁷¹ This statement of Jesus indicates an important aspect of Christian mission in the Philippines because one of the purposes of Christian mission is to proclaim and fulfill the salvation of social needs as well as salvation in evangelization.

Theological Foundation Three: Christology in Popular Catholicism

A theological and historical theme, the Incarnation of God in Jesus, has formed basic understandings of Christology in Christian theology. A theme that Jesus has become Christ (Messiah) is based on the fact that Jesus is a man and God at the same time. The mysterious coexistence of two natures (a man and God) in Jesus Christ is a

believed as it has a power to heal the sick. There is an activity about the black Nazarene in Manila area on January 9th. There are many Filipinos coming out to the street without shoes, and practicing their religious traditions; touching the black Nazarene with a faith that it can heal the sick. They also use a handkerchief to touch it and bring it back to the sick who cannot come out because of illness."

²⁷¹ Matthew 14: 16, NIV.

theological proclamation as well as a faithful confirmation that God has become a man to save humans. Thus, Jesus, as a true man and the true God, has humanity and divinity in his Christ-ship.

Incarnational Nature of Jesus Christ: Man and God

"The real issue in this aspect of Christology is how possible is it for both humanity and deity to co-exist in Jesus Christ." Christology is a mysterious but yet vital understanding of the incarnation: God became human. As Arsenio Dominguez says, the understanding of the unity of humanity and deity in Christ is only possible by faith in him. Therefore, Christology is based on the faith in the Jesus of humanity and in the Christ of divinity. In other words, Christology is a significant factor of human's faith in the "Christ-ship" of Jesus.

By and large, the question of divinity dwelling with humanity in Jesus Christ has always been issued within Christianity. The apostle Paul asserts in his letter to the Colossians that the divine nature dwells in Christ bodily, stating, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." In early church history, Irenaeus grasps this unity of humanity and divinity in Jesus Christ most clearly, saying, "The Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son the visible of the Father." Jesus Christ experienced human pain during his time on the earth because he was a man, and he presented divine power during his ministries and resurrection because he is also God.

²⁷² Arsenio Dominguez, *Theological Themes for the Philippines Church* (Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1989), 3.

²⁷³ Ibid., 4.

²⁷⁴ Colossians 2: 9, NIV.

²⁷⁵ Iranaeus, Adversus Haereses, 11.28.6. in Dominguez, 1989, 5-6.

The four gospels especially call on our faith and allegiance to Jesus' Lordship through highlighting his public ministry, as he was a man and God at the same time. In this mystery of divine and human unity in Jesus, I agree with this statement, "this knowledge of Jesus as both man and God cannot be fully grasped by our finite understanding but only by faith."276

In this point, I see the common ground between the Catholic and Protestant Churches. Catholicism and Protestantism have the same foundation that Jesus is the savior and he has become the eternal King by being a man and God through the Incarnation. By this wondrous incarnation, Jesus Christ completed human redemption. Thus, incarnation is the only way to know the nature of Christ.²⁷⁷

Christ as the Image of God

The use of images plays a special role in Catholicism. Popular Catholicism has an especially deep attachment to images of Jesus, Mary, and saints. Possessing Christian images is sometimes representative of being sincere Christians. However, it (the use of images) also seems to be a popular religious feature.

The Bible states that Christ is the image of God as, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."278 When Jesus Christ is mentioned as the image of God, it refers to Jesus as the representation of God. As Colossians says, "He is

²⁷⁶ Arsenio Dominguez, *Theological Themes for the Philippines Church* (Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1989), 7. ²⁷⁷ Ibid., 8.

²⁷⁸ 2 Corinthians 4: 4, NIV.

the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."²⁷⁹ Then, a question may come up: how can one be an image of the invisible? In other words, how can Jesus be the image of the God whom we cannot see? Can the invisible be the visible? Colossians 1: 15 seems to be a contradiction, if image only means a resemblance or copy of something. Thus, the question is: "How can one image or be a copy of that which is not seen?"²⁸⁰

The meaning of image is not merely a shadow of the real thing, as Hebrews 10:1 describes the Law as the shadow of good things. The Law represented the Old Covenant of God with Israel, but Jesus does not only represent the covenant of God with his people, but is also the image of God, which means he is the reality of God. This uses a theological inference that the image of God is the reality of God because the word "image" means reality.²⁸¹ Christ, the image of the invisible God, is "the illumination of its inner core and essence."²⁸² Thus, Christ as the image of the invisible God means that to see and know Christ is to see and know the Father, as Jesus told Philip, "anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."²⁸³ Therefore, Jesus reveals and illuminates the essence of the Father to humans through his existence. That is the incarnation: the invisible God becomes a visible man.

People in Filipino popular Catholicism utilize many Christian images, symbols, and statues everywhere to represent their faith in the Church. The images of popular Catholicism have been used in order to manifest divine invisibility for human's

²⁷⁹ Colossians 1: 15, NIV.

²⁸⁰ Arsenio Dominguez, *Theological Themes for the Philippines Church* (Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1989), 11.

²⁸¹ In Greek, "eikon" can be interpreted to "image" and "reality".

²⁸² H. Kleinknecht, "Theological dictionary of the New Testament," 388-389, in *Dominguez*, 1989, 209.

²⁸³ John 14: 9, NIV.

understandings through visible icons, pictures, statues, and symbols. The idea of visualization of divine power and blessing has become an important religious feature in popular Catholicism.

In understandings of Christ as the image of the invisible God through incarnation, Jesus Christ could be understood as a pivotal symbolization of divinity in popular Catholicism; however, images and statues of other saints (Mary, Sto Niño, etc) have taken their place as important characters of religious symbolism instead of Jesus Christ. There might be a misunderstanding of equality of divinity and humanity in Christ in popular Catholicism.

Divinity and Humanity of Christ in Popular Catholicism

The understanding of Jesus as Christ (Messiah) is a core message of evangelization in Christianity, because it refers to God's incarnation illuminating divinity and humanity in Jesus Christ. As stated earlier, the humanness and divineness of Jesus Christ are in balance, in that he is like us, and that he is God simultaneously. However, popular Catholicism tends to overemphasize Jesus' divinity rather than seeing divinity and humanity in balance. There is a historical reason why they interpret Jesus as more divinity than humanity.

According to Galilea, one of religious features of popular Catholicism is the dehumanized Jesus, which strongly emphasizes Jesus' divinity, Christ as God.²⁸⁴ That is because of historical experiences of heresy during Christianization in the Iberian Peninsula. Conducting Christian mission in Iberian Peninsula, many Iberians turned from

²⁸⁴ Segundo Galilea, *The Challenge of Popular Religiosity* (Quezon, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 1988), 50.

their traditional religions to Christianity. But it was "the way of Arianism" which denied Jesus' divinity. Thus, many Iberians, at the beginning of the Christianization in the Iberian Peninsula, had an idea that Jesus was just a man who became God's son by His choice later. So, Jesus became inferior to God, the Father. In order to overcome this heretical idea of Arianism, Iberian Christianity started emphasizing Jesus' divinity fervently rather than mentioning Jesus' humanity together with his divinity. Contrary to the understanding of Jesus in Arianism, Iberian Christianity came to focus on Jesus' divinity only gradually. Ironically, another heretical idea about Jesus' nature (His divinity only) in Iberian Christianity came to Latin America and the Philippines by way of Spanish Christian mission.

According to Orlando Espin, Christianity, which spread in Latin America and the Philippines by Spain in the 15th and 16th Centuries, was not Roman Catholicism, but it was Western Christianity in its Iberian form, because "Roman Catholicism, as we know and describe it today, did not exist before the Council of Trent (1545-63)." Because of Iberian Christian influences, the humanity of Jesus Christ had been ignored in Latin America and the Philippines.

The dehumanization of Jesus has put popular Catholicism in a certain vacuum between God and people when people needed a mediator. They needed to feel close enough to God's compassion, goodness, and intervention through Jesus Christ; however,

²⁸⁵ Arianism was a 4th century heresy named after Arius (c.250-336), a priest in Alexandria, who taught that the Son of God was not God but rather a created being with a definite origin in time. In Arius's words, "there was [a time] when he was not." Arius denied the full deity of the preexistent Son of God who became incarnate ("the Word (Jesus Christ) became flesh" John 1:14 - NKJV)., (http://orthodoxwiki.org/Arianism) ²⁸⁶ Orlando O. Espin, The Faith of the People: Theological Reflections on Popular Catholicism (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 117.

they could not experience them through him because he has become the God who shares no humanity with them. The vacuum had been replaced by a large devotion to saints and the Virgin Mary. ²⁸⁷ Consequently, Jesus is seen as the symbol of divine power and salvation, but hardly as a model to follow in day-by-day imitation. ²⁸⁸ Consequently, the reason for having symbols of the Virgin Mary and other saints is because of "popular Christology," ²⁸⁹ which believes that Jesus has less humanity in the Catholic Church.

Theological Foundation Four: Deity System in Popular Catholicism

Mostly, Methodist Christians in Batangas criticize popular Catholic religious practices as idolatry because of statues and images of Mary, Sto. Niño, and other saints. However, the boundary between the expression of faith in God and idolatrous practices in religious traditions is many times indistinguishable. Through investigating the understanding of God, Mariology, and Sto. Niño in popular Catholicism, foundational elements of the deity system in popular Catholicism are more evident.

Between God and Idolatry

The story of idolatry in Exodus 32 is one that Methodist pastors in Batangas mostly use to describe and denounce popular Catholicism's idolatry.²⁹⁰ The story of the Israelites indicates that they (Israelites) didn't make another god instead of the God who brought them out of Egypt, but they tried to change God into what they wanted; to have a

²⁸⁷ Segundo Galilea, *The Challenge of Popular Religiosity* (Quezon, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 1988), 50-51.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. 64

²⁸⁹ Popular Christology refers to the concept of Christ in popular Catholicism.

²⁹⁰ Seventeen Batangas Pastors and Workers, Group Discussion with Author, May 22nd, 2011.

tangible god by shaping Him in a form of a golden calf, the old traditional image of one of the gods in Egypt. Still, they could not get rid of the influences of their life of slavery in Egypt although they were set free by God.

Yahweh, the name of God among ancient Hebrews, became the God of the Israelites through the covenant between Yahweh and the people. Yahweh prohibited "His people" having and making any other gods for them in shapes or images; "I am Yahweh your God... you shall not have any other gods besides me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in the universes (Exodus 20:2)." However, idolatrous challenges to the faith in Yahweh related to religious behaviors and social injustice kept continually coming to the Israelites. Vinoth Ramachandra describes the challenge of idolatry:

The great temptation Israel faced, and frequently succumbed to, was to think of Yahweh in terms of a nature deity and to worship him in the manner of these surrounding religious cults. ... When the gifts of Yahweh (e.g. the land, the sanctuary, the Sabbath) became substitutes for Yahweh himself, so that people deluded themselves into thinking that Yahweh was always with them no matter how they treated the weak and the vulnerable, or what they did in their business practices and courts of law, then Yahweh's judgment on the nation consisted in the withdrawal of those gifts. ²⁹¹

Consequently, idolatry can be understood as losing the original meaning of the relationship with God (faith in God), which needs to be manifested in believers' lives through social justice. Idolatry is an ungodly idea and artificial practice to validate people's thinking and behavior through looking for or creating a new concept of God, whom they simply manipulate through religious rituals. Thus, ritual obligations develop.

Many Methodist Christians in Batangas have mentioned the issues of idolatry in

²⁹¹ Vinoth Ramachandra, *Gods That Fail: Modern Idolatry and Christian Mission* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 38.

popular Catholicism. Alfredo Malalo, a pastor for a new mission extension in Batangas province, says, "... Especially in Batangas, people staying in the Catholic Church [popular Catholicism] keep practicing folk religious features such as idolatry."²⁹² About this idolatry, John Amazona, a lay leader of Full Grace United Methodist Church in Batangas, says, "All statues and images in popular Catholicism are symbols of idolatry."²⁹³ Eugene Pamplona, another lay leader of Full Grace Church, describes the issue of idolatry as:

Statues of saints should be just symbols to remind people that they had a good faith in Christ, but they have become objects to worship and to pray to today in the Philippines. It indicates that Christianity also may become idolatry through having images of gods, statues of saints, or symbols of deity. I think it is really a significant issue in Filipino Christianity. The issue is how to break down [stop] practices of idolatry among Filipino Christians in popular Catholicism.²⁹⁴

As most of Batangas Methodist Christians came (converted) from popular Catholicism, their understandings of idolatry in popular Catholicism are practical and experiential. Considering popular devotions in regard to saints, Bernhard Raas states, "they are nothing else than signposts to God. If they were to obscure God or even take His place, veneration would turn into idolatry."

In popular Catholicism influenced by the traditional deity system during the pre-Spanish era, God has been removed from worldly affairs; He only takes on ultimate concerns for human beings.²⁹⁶ While He is away from worldly affairs, people need intermediaries who can directly connect to God for humans' sake. As stated previously,

²⁹² Alfredo Malalo, Interview with Author, May 2nd 2011.

²⁹³ John Amazona, Interview with Author, May 21st 2011.

²⁹⁴ Eugene Pamplona, Interview with Author, May 21st, 2011. See Appendix B.

²⁹⁵ Bernhard Raas, Popular Devotions: Making Popular Religious Practices More Potent Vehicle of Spiritual Growth (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1992), 17.

²⁹⁶ F. Landa Jocano, *Folk Christianity* (Quezon, the Philippines: Trinity Research Institute, 1981), 22.

Jesus Christ is considered to be only God, thus he cannot be an intermediary for people's sake. Thus, people have asked the images of saints for favors instead of praying to God directly, as saints are their intermediaries between people and God. There is no direct connection between people and God, but the people need a way to reach God, so they do it through saints. Therefore, veneration of saints began among Filipinos, and this practice has still continues in popular Catholicism. Ritual obligations, similar to those of the Israelites in Exodus, have developed in popular Catholicism. They (popular Catholics) are trapped between faith in God at cognitive level and religious idolatry at practical level because of this understanding of God in their deity system.

Mariology: A Female Deity in Popular Catholicism

Catholic Mariology has been the most debatable topic among Catholic and Protestant theologians. The Reformation proclaimed *Solus Christus*, as "for orthodox Protestants, Christ and Christ alone is the Savior and Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5)."²⁹⁷ However, for the Roman Catholics, Mary has been accepted as their common mother for unity and love.²⁹⁸ *Theotokos* (God-bearer, Mother of God) has been a common concept about Mary since the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451.²⁹⁹ Aside from theological debates of Mariology, popular Catholics in the Philippines have exalted Mary in practical ways. There are several reasons for that.

²⁹⁷ Elliot Miller and Kenneth R. Samples, *The Cult of the Virgin: Catholic Mariology and the Apparitions of Mary* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), 12.

²⁹⁸ "Pope Issues Encyclical on the Virgin Mary as Prelude to Marian Year," *Orange County Register* (from the *New York Times* wire service), March 16th, 1987, sec A. Cited Ibid.. 13.

²⁹⁹ Elliot Miller and Kenneth R. Samples, *The Cult of the Virgin: Catholic Mariology and the Apparitions of Mary* (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1992), 19-20.

Popular religiosity has a strong feminine influence. 300 It is not only because women are more religious than men, but also because faith transmission through family instruction, catechesis or other means is performed chiefly by women. I have seen women in Batangas conduct religious activities in popular Catholic traditions. For example, "Pasiyon"301 has been traditionally been conducted and scheduled by women in Batangas. They have usually organized Catholic meetings in their barangay (village) for religious activities. According to my observation, the role of women is more significant than men in social life, and maternal relationships among family members seems to be stronger than paternal relationships in the Philippines. Moreover, many wives are more active in providing family income than husbands. Thus, their opinions about family matters are more influential than the opinions of their husbands. A strong feminine influence in Filipino societal structures, in family and community, has also caused the sentimental and traditional nature of popular religiosity.

According to these social and cultural realities among Filipino families, respect for the Mother Mary seems understandable in the Philippines' context. Mary symbolizes a maternal and female deity in the popular Catholic context. In popular Catholic notions, "Jesus did not simply spring full-grown from Mary's rib. Crying, gasping, fragile, and dependent, this child came from her womb. She who bathed him, nursed him and taught him his first steps testifies to his humanity."302 One of the reasons for Mary's substitution as a mediator between God and people is "the idealization of woman as mother, as a

³⁰⁰ Segundo Galilea, *The Challenge of Popular Religiosity* (Quezon, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 1988), 20.

³⁰¹ It is a Catholic traditional activity to read the story of Jesus during lament.

³⁰² CSP Bob Moran, A Closer Look at Catholicism (Texas: Word Books, 1986), 34.

counterbalance to machismo."³⁰³ Popular Catholicism, as in the Philippines, has asserted the role of the maternal in religion.

Giving petition and praying to Mary is one of ways to express their desires to be sensitive and attentive to intimacy with divine manifestation. And this desire comes from a craving for wellbeing, fairness, and justice for their lives through popular religiosity. Pieris says, "... in many Asian culture[s] there is a divine manifestation [often in female form] which is concerned with retribution or restitution already here on earth rather than in some post-mortem state of existence." Mariology, practiced in popular Catholicism in the Philippines, could be understood as a manifestation of their desire for healthy, wealthy, and just lives in their contexts.

The faith of popular Catholic Christians is not based on fatalism; it is rooted in and committed to the search for personal and communal wellbeing here and now with religious sensitivity. The religious sensitivity in popular Catholicism has developed into the maternal deity concept with Mariology. Furthermore, in popular religiosity people are eager to express their oppression caused by economic depression, political discrimination, and social marginalization, through at least symbolic religious practices in a maternal religious system, while "the metacosmic religion (including Christianity) are more inextricably entrenched in patriarchalism."

³⁰³ Segundo Galilea, *The Challenge of Popular Religiosity* (Quezon, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 1988), 65.

³⁰⁴ Aloysius Pieris, S.J., "Interreligious Dialogue and Theology of Religions: An Asian Paradigm" in *Horizons* 20/1 (1993), 109.

³⁰⁵ Aloysius Pieris, S.J., "Interreligious Dialogue and Theology of Religions: An Asian Paradigm" in *Horizons* 20/1 (1993), 109.

Sto. Niño: A Child Deity in Popular Catholicism

Among many saints in Filipino Catholicism, "Sto. Niño"³⁰⁶ is the most popular one. The image of Sto. Niño can be found everywhere in the Philippines. "From lowly squatter hunts to big bungalows and first class condominiums; from small market stalls to big department stores; in both private and government offices; ... we find the ubiquitous Sto. Niño."³⁰⁷

Sto. Niño, in the Philippines, originated with Spanish missionaries and navigators in 16th century. The image of Sto. Niño at Cebu's San Agustin Church has been known as the first one Magellan gave Queen Humabon for her baptismal gift. The concept of veneration of Sto. Niño was not opposed to Filipino's religious attitude at that time, because Filipinos already had some (visible and tangible) objects to venerate in their religious lives before Spanish missionaries arrived in the Philippines. Later, the symbol of traditional religious practices was easily substituted for Sto. Niño. Catholicism and devotion to Sto. Niño had spread throughout the Philippines, 309 and Sto. Niño has become a prominent figure in Filipino Catholicism.

Originally, Sto. Niño was known as a deity of the "rain-god, war protector, sailor's mate, fisherman's guardian, healer, and rice-god." Among these roles, Sto. Niño has been emphasized as a god of rain and water. Thus, when there is drought,

³⁰⁶ It can be written, Santo Ninyo also.

³⁰⁷ Sto. Niño: A Closer Look (Manila, Philippines, 1989), 1

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 4.

³⁰⁹ Stating previously, it was Iberian Christianity (a kind of Western Christianity) which spread over the Philippines instead of Catholicism at the beginning of Christian mission. See Orlando O. Espin, *The Faith of the People: Theological Reflections on Popular Catholicism* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 117.

³¹⁰ F. Landa Jocano, *Folk Christianity* (Quezon, the Philippines: Trinity Research Institute, 1981), 26.

Filipinos have practiced a certain ritual to Sto. Niño; they bathe the statue with water. If there were floods, many Filipinos thought it came from the anger of Sto. Niño. For example, many popular Catholic Filipinos thought the 1972 flood of Central Luzon was caused by the theft of centuries-old Sto. Niño which had been located in the Tondo church.³¹¹

"Literally, Sto. Niño means Holy Child." Many people even among popular Catholic Christians are confused about the meaning of "holy child," because they could not find any biblical relation between Jesus Christ and the Sto. Niño. Thus, the identity of Sto. Niño is unclear to many devotees. Because of this unclear identity, Sto. Niño is often treated as an actual child, whether a boy or a girl. Sometimes, the Sto. Niño has been threatened by devotees if the demands of devotees were not met. Culturally, children are considered as the gift of God, and at the same time they are also supposed to be trained to make them obey adults. Landa Jocano writes:

... the child is conceived as the gift of God. It is always the center of attention. It is bathed, fondled, caressed, and so on, for not to take care of the infant is to commit a grievous sin. Its socialization includes, however, threats with physical harm, frightening with *aswang* [Filipinos' folk concept of an evil spirit], and other forms of coercion – all involving pressures designed to make the child obey.³¹⁴

Treatment of Sto. Niño in popular Catholic practice follows the way children are treated in the Philippines. Thus, sometimes it is treated attentively; sometimes it is treated with threats when it does not fulfill people's desires.

Because of the childlike characteristics of the Sto. Niño, it seems to be not so

³¹¹ Sto. Niño: A Closer Look (Manila, Philippines, 1989), 10-14.

³¹² Ibid., 5.

³¹³ Ibid., 7.

³¹⁴ F. Landa Jocano, *Folk Christianity* (Quezon, the Philippines: Trinity Research Institute, 1981), 29.

much an object for veneration, but a means for people to ask for favors for daily needs. In other words, devotion to Sto. Niño is not the result of faithful life in Christianity, but it is a means of manipulating deity for people's needs. One of the folk and magical religious features in people's religious life is their attempts to manipulate spirits and deities through religious practices to evoke natural or supernatural responses. Religious practices regarding Sto. Niño in popular Catholicism seem to be magical actions and superstitions, believing that the child deity would be listening to people's demands and wishes rather than other saints. Thus, the motivation of having Sto. Niño almost everywhere is to manipulate divine power for people's daily needs through certain devotional practices. "That Sto. Niño has pagan roots makes it clear that devotion to the Sto. Niño is Christo-paganism."

Religious Expressions in Popular Catholicism

Religious expressions in popular Catholicism are different from Protestant religious expressions. The study of religious expressions in popular Catholicism cannot be based on theological investigations only, but it should be also investigated in terms of active Christian missions and pastoral ministries. In other words, because of dynamic aspects of religious expressions in popular Catholicism, the understanding of religious expressions in popular Catholicism should not simply be analytical or dogmatic, but it needs to be pastoral and active. Celilia T. Medina argues:

One challenge in the understanding of popular religious expressions is inherent in

³¹⁵ Eunice Irwin, "Popular and Folk Religion," (lecture, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, October 11th, 2011). She used a diagram made by Eunice Irwin and Joe Dongell in 1996, in order to explain the difference between "faith," and "magic." ³¹⁶ Sto. Niño: A Closer Look (Manila, Philippines, 1989), 17.

the nature of our religious expression itself it is dynamic. Through time, many changes have taken place as customs or traditions are handed down from generation to the next. It is because of this that research and critical analysis on "popular religion" needs to be carried out so that our definitions and concepts can be sharpened not only as tools of analysis but for pastoral practice and action.³¹⁷

<u>Difference of Religious Expressions in Popular Catholicism and Protestantism</u>

The difference of religious expressions in Catholicism and Protestantism is the method of expression. Overall, Roman Catholic Christians are familiar with pictures, statues, amulets, rosaries, etc., which are more likely to be manifested in visible and tangible symbols, while Protestant Christians emphasize "the Word" in which Jesus Christ revealed himself 2,000 years ago. In other words, the incarnational Word through Jesus Christ is a focus of Protestant religious expression. Therefore, Jesus Christ as the incarnational Word should be proclaimed through preaching in Protestantism rather than having statues and symbols.

In popular Catholicism in the Philippines, people are inclined to believe in the power of religious practices through statues and symbols which are a non-verbal expressions, or "manifestation." On the contrary, Protestant Christians have emphasized verbal expressions of religiosity, or "proclamation." Manifestation and proclamation can be understood as different methodologies of expressing people's religiosity. However, these different expressions of religiosity are not to conflict with each other. David Tracy argues:

³¹⁷ Celilia T. Medina, "Dialogue Between Faith and Culture and Popular Devotions," in *Filipino Popular Devotions: The Interior Dialogue Between Traditional Religion and Christianity*, ed. Leonardo N. Mercado, 15 (Manila: Logos Publications, 2000).

³¹⁸ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), 202-218.

The very posting of either manifestation or proclamation, I will suggest, implies its genuine other in the Christian consciousness. Each needs the other. The particular dialectic peculiar to either manifestation or proclamation does clarify the emphasis on either participation or nonparticipation to a degree of radicality where each is tempted to exclusivity – and yet that exclusivity must be resisted.³¹⁹

Previously, this chapter investigated Aloysius Pieris' categories of two kinds of religions: metacosmic religions and cosmic religions, which are based on different belief systems. If we would divide religions into two different categories, they would be "elite" religions, and "popular" religions. Elite religions refer to World Religions which can send missionaries to other cultural places, while popular religions mean the religions among tribal people, local people, ethnic groups, etc. Thus, popular religions are more localized while elite religions are more globalized.

Popular Catholicism can be interpreted as a popular form of world Christianity.

The impact of colonial missions and local religious reactions was that Roman

Catholicism became a popularized and localized version of Catholicism in the

Philippines. That means elite (world) religion can be manifested as in popular forms of religion. Michael Amaladoss explores the relationship between popular and elite religions as two symbolic forms of one religion.

I think that popular and elite religions should be seen as two symbolic forms of one religion, two moments on one continuum of expression. They cannot be understood one without the other, even if they have specific characteristics and can be looked at separately. But the separate focus should not assume a dichotomy. They are different expressions at different levels of the same meaning. We need not attach value connotations to them.³²¹

Therefore, elite and popular forms of the same religious tradition may exist. Moreover,

³¹⁹ Ibid., 205.

³²⁰ Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory, ed., *Elite and Popular Religion* (New York: Boydell and Brewer, 2006).

³²¹ Michael Amaladoss, *Making All Things New: Dialogue, Pluralism & Evangelization in Asia* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990), 24.

these different forms (elite and popular) of the same religious tradition must be understood in light of one another as different expressions of religiosity.

The following section will explore the different religious expressions of popular Catholicism and Protestantism through the concepts of "manifestation," and "proclamation." The religious expression of Protestantism may also be representative of Methodist Christianity and its religious expression in Batangas.

Overseeing Religious Expressions in Popular Catholicism and Protestantism

"The slow growth of Protestantism in 20th century was due to the missionaries' failure to connect deeply with some critical elements of the indigenous culture." This statement is indicative of the lack of cultural and biblical engagement with the indigenous culture for the Protestant Christian mission. The Protestant missionaries have undervalued the Filipinos' loyalty and devotion to popular Catholicism. "Consequently, conversion to Protestant Christianity only superficially dealt with popular religiosity, being totally insensitive to the prevailing forms of indigenous Catholic spirituality." ³²⁴

There are differences between the spirituality of Protestant missionaries and popular Catholicism in this way:

The new Christian spirituality introduced by Protestant mission stressed the individual and personal character of the faith. It established conceptual ground by

324 Ibid.

³²² Paul Ricoeur, *The Journal of the Blaisdell Institute* 12 in winter 1978, has mentioned the terminology of "manifestation" and "proclamation" in order to present the method of religious expressions. And David Tracy reemphasizes and reutilizes these terms to evaluate religious imagination to explain religious expressions through manifestation and proclamation, in his book, *The Analogical Imagination*, 1981.

Timoteo D. Gener, "The Catholic Imagination and Popular Religion in Lowland Philippines: Missiological Significance of David Tracy's Theory of Religious Imaginations," *Mission Studies* 22 (1), 2005: 27.

which to understand the implications of the faith in both piety and conduct, and in so doing promoted a more cognitive faith. This contrasted with the more ritualistic, symbolic, cyclic, sacramental, animistic, and community-based spirituality formed by the amalgam of Catholic and indigenous religions of the Filipinos.³²⁵

Among diverse opinions about popular Catholicism in the Philippines, Jose de Mesa views folk Catholicism as "basically positive" and says "... it is a Filipino experience of Catholicism" through two lenses: 1) this form of faith, at least, is handed down from generation to generation through its values, traditions, and culture, 2) and, it also helped prevent the destruction of the indigenous culture during the Spaniard ruling period and American colonialism. ³²⁶ Thus, popular Catholicism, although many times it has been reproached due to syncretism with folklore, is an indigenous expression of the official Catholicism which arrived the Philippines with colonialism.

Filipinos' religiosity has been affected at a direct-experiential level through image, ritual, and meditation since the pre-colonial era, in contrast to Western theology which is oriented towards the cognitive dimension of the faith. This highlights a very important fact that Filipinos have developed their religious expressions in visible, tangible, and experiential ways within Catholicism. This religious tendency of Filipinos has affected and matched with popular Catholic expressions, thus popular Catholicism in the Philippines has developed important religious expressions through statues, images, pictures, objects, etc.

On the contrary, Protestantism has not been expressed through any tangible objects, but it emphasizes "words," namely the proclamation of the gospel. In a

³²⁵ Ibid., 27-28.

³²⁶ Jose De Mesa, "Holy Week and Popular Devotions," in Rene Javellana, ed. *Religion and the Filipino: Essay in Honor of Vitaliano Gorospe* (Quezon, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila, 1994), 221.

comparison of popular Catholicism and Protestantism, Leonardo Mercado says,

All people have [different] thought... Some thought is expressed in life forms, life-expressions... in ritual, in myth, in legend, in symbols. They are less verbal. They are not formulated in the sense of verbal formulas. They are expressed in the forms of gestures and language of the body... The other is called reflective thought. Through has entered into the level of formalism that distinguishes clear categories and is highly mathematical in format. When you think of cultures expressing themselves on these two different ways, they are different not in terms of total absence but in terms of degree. 327

Overall, popular Catholicism has focused on ritual, images, statues, symbols, etc. for its religious expression, while Protestantism has emphasized verbal proclamation of words as an important religious expression. These different religious expressions have been located "between vital and reflexive thoughts in religio-cultural life viewed interculturally." ³²⁸

Manifestation as Religious Expression of Popular Catholicism

Religious practices represent what people believe. In every religion, people practice certain religious rituals through religious traditions, sacred books, spiritual experiences, and so forth in order to express their desires, and their sincere devotion to their religions. In popular Catholicism, people practice religious rituals, practices, liturgies, etc. in order to demonstrate their belief, and in order to experience religious fulfillment. Thus, Jimmy Belita says,

Filipino folk Catholicism is a religious experience that inherits the meditation and sacramentalism of Catholicism in general; it is also an experience that sums in itself the story of a people from the animistic world of the pre-Hispanic times and

Imaginations," Mission Studies 22 (1), 2005: 38.

 ³²⁷ Leonardo Mercado, ed., Filipino Popular Devotions: The Interior Dialogue Between Traditional Religion and Christianity (Manila: Logos Publications, 2000), 61.
 328 Timoteo D. Gener in his article, "The Catholic Imagination and Popular Religion in Lowland Philippines: Missiological Significance of David Tracy's Theory of Religious

Spanish baroque Catholicism, to post-colonial period of social upheaval culminating in the EDSA Revolution of 1986. 329

Most religious practices in popular Catholicism are inclined to use symbols, images, and statues. Benigno Beltran empirically researched ways that Filipinos express and experience their religiosity through studying their Christology. He says, "Filipino religious experience generally moves in the direction of vision, image, ritual, reflection, and meditation in contrast to western Christology which is oriented towards the cognitive dimension of the faith."³³⁰ In short, Filipino Catholicism has been affected by direct-experiential level through tangible symbols, statues, and images.

David Tracy defines the terminology of "manifestation" in order to explain religious expressions. He writes, "... when the dialectic of intensification of particularity releasing itself to a radical sense of participation predominates, the religious expression will be named manifestation." According to Tracy, "religions with a mystical-priestly-metaphysical-aesthetic emphasis" are the religions of manifestation, while "religions with a prophetic-ethical-historical emphasis" can be considered as religions of "proclamation."

Popular Catholicism in Batangas seems to be a religion of manifestation because of the mystical and metaphysical emphasis in religious practices, while Protestantism

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³²⁹ Jimmy Belita, "Images and Imagination: Some Aspects of Filipino Popular Catholicism," *Religious Studies Journal* vol. 6. no. 2, December, 1987: 1.

³³⁰ Timoteo D. Gener in his article, "The Catholic Imagination and Popular Religion in Lowland Philippines: Missiological Significance of David Tracy's Theory of Religious Imaginations," Mission Studies 22 (1), 2005: 29, citing Benigno Beltran, The Christology of the Inarticulate: An Inquiry into the Filipino Understanding of Jesus Christ (Manila: Divine Word Publication, 1987), 6.

³³¹ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), 203.

³³² Ibid., 203.

(Methodism in Batangas) seems to be a religion of proclamation focusing on propheticethical-historical emphasis and proclaiming (preaching) the words of God.

According to my observations during my missionary work, popular Catholics in Batangas have certain religious practices and rituals in order to present their hopes and desires through daily religious practices, as well as expectations of manifested answers as the response to their requests (prayers) through those practices and rituals. Praying to Mary and talking to Sto. Niño, thus, are ways to express their religiosity and to manifest their expectations for the answers to their requests. Manifestation might be the clearest and simplest form of religious expression. There is no certain liturgical order to practice religious expression through Mary and Sto. Niño, but it occurs "pre-verbally." They think these statues are mediators between human beings and divine power. These practices are the main reason that this set of religious practices is referred to as popular Catholicism in the Philippines. Again, these popular religious practices and rituals can be understood as symbols and images of people's desires.

Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest say, "Their [Filipinos] popular rituals are a response to everyday problems in the struggle for more abundant life or for life itself." The cultural and social demands of Filipinos, which could not be solved during the colonial regimes by Spaniards and Americans, should be expressed through certain forms of religious practices and religious rituals, and combined with the expression of their cultural/social/physical demands popular Catholicism has developed through everyday

³³³ Religious expressions and practices in popular Catholicism could be understood as a pre-verbal expression, while Protestant religious expressions could be understood as a verbal way to express.

³³⁴ Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest, ed., *Popular Catholicism in a World Church:* Seven Case Studies in Inculturation (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 2

devotion to the saints, Mother Mary, Sto. Niño, etc.

Religiously, "rituals are linked to people's efforts to find solutions to their everyday problems." Thus, manifestation of their religious expressions through popular religious practices in popular Catholicism is the only way they (Filipinos) could develop in terms of religious integration and syncretistic composition with the colonial religion (Catholicism) and their primitive and primal religious practices which existed before Christianity in the Philippines. Thus, the popular Catholic symbols and statues such as Mother Mary, Sto. Niño, amulets, rosary, etc. have been understood by Filipinos as mediators between their cultural/physical/religious demands and divine power, for effective communication. Popular Catholic Christians think "... the symbols communicate much more than what words can ever express," and in some ways, it seems to be an authentic attempt to communicate with God through the religious expression of manifestation.

Proclamation as Religious Expression of Protestantism

Compared to manifestation as a popular Catholic expression, "proclamation" is the primary means of Protestants' religious expressions. The relationship between "manifestation" and "proclamation" is like the relationship between sacrament and word: the emphasis upon sacrament, which is a distinctive of Catholic and Orthodox Christianity and the emphasis upon word which is a distinctive of Protestant

³³⁵ Ibid., 11.

³³⁶ Michael Amaladoss, "Toward a New Ecumenism" in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 292.

Christianity.337

Timoteo D. Gener interprets Tracy's dichotomization of two different religious expressions by saying:

He [Tracy] then clarifies this dialectical reality of manifestation and proclamation in its relation to the central theological claim of Christianity that Jesus Christ is the decisive event of God's self-manifestation insisting that Jesus Christ as Word of God (God's self-manifestation) is not just Word in the form of disclosive *Logos* but also Word in the form of Proclamation (*Kerygma*). It is this Christ who is also present to the community and the individual Christian in who principal forms: word (proclamation) and sacrament (those disclosive signs which render present what they signify). ³³⁸

According to David Tracy, it is possible to name them preverbal (pre-linguistic) for the mystical-metaphysical, and verbal (linguistic) for the ethical-political.

The way of expressing proclamation has various forms because of different eras, places, and contexts. Furthermore, different forms of proclamation in words include different genres: narrative, prophecy, hymns, prescription, proverb, parable, and so forth which all are intended to invite people into real understandings of what the paradigmatic proclamation means for the individual and communal conscience in historical life. 339

Integration Between Manifestation and Proclamation

Protestant missions were not effective at all the first time because of the lack of understandings of indigenous religious cultures. "Proclamation" arrived in the area of "manifestation," and the encounter with each other (manifestation and proclamation) did

³³⁹ Ibid., 210.

³³⁷ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), 203-205.

³³⁸ Timoteo D. Gener, "The Catholic Imagination and Popular Religion in Lowland Philippines: Missiological Significance of David Tracy's Theory of Religious Imaginations," *Mission Studies* 22 (1), 2005: 34.

not bring religious harmony or religious dialogue, rather it initiated religious ignorance and conflict with the other. Consequently, Protestant missions in the context of popular Catholicism focused on religious conversion from popular Christianity to Protestant Christianity.

Religious expression based on proclamation (Protestantism) is not able to exist without manifestation (Catholicism) as Tracy says; each needs the other to fully understand Christianity. **Aerygma*, as prophetic word, comes as a form of proclamation in order to disconfirm any complacency in participation, to decode any encoded myths, and to make Christianity a prophetic religion, **Au while Logos*, as the Word manifested in incarnational form, comes as a form of manifestation to specify and formulate religious rituals and practices as holy sacraments. Hermeneutically speaking, "Word as both Logos* and Kerygma* parallels Word as disclosure-manifestation and proclamation-disruption respectively." **342*

As manifestation and proclamation represent *Logos* and *Kerygma*, these two types of religious expression need to be connected to fulfill the religious expression in Christianity. Thus, understanding the necessity of integration between *Logos* and *Kerygma* is the key to recontextualize Christianity in the Philippines.

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³⁴⁰ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), 205.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 209.

³⁴² Timoteo D. Gener, "The Catholic Imagination and Popular Religion in Lowland Philippines: Missiological Significance of David Tracy's Theory of Religious Imaginations," *Mission Studies* 22 (1), 2005: 42.

Conclusion

Popular religions and popular devotions, which are the cosmic level of religious practices in metacosmic religions, can be understood as religious phenomena which embrace the excluded middle zone located between the sacred (religion) and secular (science). Popular Catholicism and its religious practices among people in the Philippines also express people's desires by using parts of Catholicism (religion) for their wellbeing, security, health, and prosperity.

Popular Catholicism and its religious activities have become an important part of Filipino culture through the culturalization of Catholicism, as an interviewee says, "we cannot say it [Filipino culture] is a wholly biblical culture, but it is just traditional practices and traditional ways in [Filipino popular] Christian forms."³⁴³ Culturalization of religions also includes religionization of culture, which means that a certain culture has been influenced by a religion. Thus, the overlap between culture and religion occurs, and one form of these of overlapping realities is popular Catholicism in the Philippines.

Through theological themes (truth, salvation, Christology, and deity system), this chapter has looked over the theological features of popular Catholicism. First, the understandings of truth in popular Catholicism and mainline Protestantism seem to have the same baseline, the triune God. Undoubtedly, the christocentric proclamation of Iberian Catholicism arrived in the Philippines. However, this christocentric proclamation did not necessitate explicit orthodox trinitarian thought. Thus, in addition to the Trinity of God, popular Catholicism has added popular devotions to saints, especially to Mary.

³⁴³ Ruby-Nell Estrella, Interview with Author, May 28th, 2011. See Appendix B.

³⁴⁴ Orlando O. Espin, *The Faith of the People: Theological Reflections on Popular Catholicism* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 45.

Second, salvation as one important theological theme is understood as the process restoration of the vertical relationship between humans and God and horizontal relationship among people. However, in the process of Christianization in the Philippines, colonial Christianity could not effectively provide the horizontal relational restoration among people because of the colonial influence on Christianization.³⁴⁵ As a result of colonial Christian mission, the social gospel (i.e. horizontal salvation for today) has not been emphasized as much as personal evangelism (i.e. vertical salvation for tomorrow) in popular Catholicism. Third, in Christology, the overemphasis on the divinity of Jesus has led popular Catholic Christians to find other mediators to be connected to God, instead of Jesus Christ. The understanding of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ has been perverted because the natures of Jesus Christ as a true man and the true God were considered unbalanced by Iberian Catholicism. Fourth, as a result of understandings of truth, salvation, and Christology in popular Catholicism, different deity systems compared to the mainline Protestant Church have occurred. Together with the triune God, popular Catholicism has mediators between God and humans, such as Mary, Sto. Niño, and other saints. They (saints in popular Catholicism) could be a reason to see popular Catholicism as Christo-paganism by other Christians.

Popular Catholicism has developed a form of religious expression, manifestation, which is emphasizing a non-verbal (visible) religious expression. Popular Catholics, thus, use statues, symbols, and images in order to express their religiosity. On the contrary, religious expression in Protestantism relies primarily on proclamation which emphasizes verbal expression. These two different expressions in Christianity (i.e. popular

³⁴⁵ Colonial influence in Christianization refers to the hierarchical method to spread the gospel, from top to down in Filipino social echelon.

Catholicism and Protestantism) need to be understood as two ways of expressing people's religiosity in one religion, Christianity. Therefore, these two expressions are not separated, but they need to be understood as complementary for recontextualizing Christianity in the Philippines.

The next chapter will investigate what Methodist Christians in Batangas, who were in popular Catholicism previously, think of popular Catholic religious practices and devotions as major parts of the Filipino Catholic culture as well as socio-religious behaviors.

Chapter 4

Methodists' Understandings of Popular Catholicism And Their Missional Implications in Batangas

Now that we have established the scholarly and theological foundations of popular Catholicism in the Philippines, we can explore Batangas Methodist Christians' understandings of popular Catholicism, and their missional implications. While exploring these understandings of popular Catholicism and their missional implications, the statistical data I collected through a variety of surveys will be presented. Then, we will study the religious identity of Methodist Christians in Batangas, in order to investigate how popular Catholicism has affected Methodist Christians through religious and cultural influences. This study will facilitate a working understanding of the "why" and "how" of the ways Methodist Christians react to (and interact with) popular Catholic beliefs and its religious practices.

After studying Methodists' identity, this chapter moves to the investigation of Methodists' understandings of popular Catholic belief systems on the topics of truth, salvation, and Deity covered in the previous chapter. Then, we studies Methodists' understandings of popular Catholic religious practices (e.g. praying to Mary, touching Sto. Niño, and participating in *Pasiyon*) which were also dealt with in the previous chapter. Moreover, Methodists' understandings of the missional implications related to their interactions with popular Catholicism will be presented in order to suggest a missional methodology for Christian mission in Batangas.

By and large, this chapter consists of surveys and interviews with Methodist Christians in order to provide Methodists' understandings of popular Catholicism, its cultural and religious impacts, and missional implications for the missions in Batangas.

General Statistics of Survey

Genders, Ages

	Male	Female	10s	20s	30s	40s	50+	Total
Batangas Total	49 (36.3%)	86 (63.7%)	40 (29.6%)	24 (17.8%)	20 (14.8%)	35 (25.9%)	16 (11.9%)	135
Pastors	8 (61.5%)	5 (38.5%)	N/A	1 (7.7%)	2 (15.4%)	7 (53.8%)	3 (23.1%)	13
10 +346	16 (38.1%)	26 (61.9%)	11 (24.4%)	6 (13.3%)	9 (20.0%)	13 (28.9%)	6 (13.3%)	45
10 -347	19 (28.3%)	48 (71.7%)	23 (31.9%)	15 (20.8%)	9 (12.5%)	14 (19.4%)	6 (8.3%)	67
St. Mark ³⁴⁸	4 (19.0%)	17 (81.0%)	9 (42.9%)	2 (9.5%)	N/A	6 (28.6%)	4 (19.0%)	21

Table 4-1. Genders and Ages of the Surveyed

This general statistics of these surveys indicates that the number of female Methodist Christians (63.7%, 86 out of 135) is higher than male Methodist Christians (36.3%, 49 of 135). 10s are the most prevalent members among Batangas Methodists. Interestingly, 50+ group presents lowest numbers among Batangas Methodists (11.9%, 16 of 135).

³⁴⁶ 10+ refers to people who have stayed in Methodist Church more than 10 years.

³⁴⁷ 10- refers to People who have stayed in Methodist Church less than 10 years.

³⁴⁸ St. Mark United Methodist Church located in Metro Manila has been doing mission in Batangas through Lakeview UMC in Halang, Batangas.

Length of being a Methodist Christian

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+ Methodists	10- Methodists	St. Mark UMC
From Birth	5 (3.6%)	4 (28.6%)	14 (31.1%)	N/A	14 (58.3%)
More than 20 years	14 (10.2%)	3 (21.4%)	9 (20.0%)	N/A	2 (8.3%)
10-20 years	27 (19.8%)	4 (28.6%)	22 (48.9%)	N/A	3 (12.5%)
5-10 years	43 (31.6%)	2 (14.3%)	N/A	34 (47.2%)	3 (12.5%)
Less than 5 years	47 (34.5%)	1 (7.1%)	N/A	38 (52.8%)	2 (8.3%)
Total	136	14	45	72	24

Table 4-2. Length of Being a Methodist Christian

Most of Batangas Methodist Christians were in the Catholic Church before they became Methodists. Two groups (5-10 years and less than 5 years) make up more than a half of the Methodist Christians in Batangas. That means Methodist missions in Batangas has been recently activated within the last 10 years. On the contrary, St. Mark UMC, which is a church in Manila, doing Methodist missions in Batangas province, indicates that 58.3% of active mission agents (14 of 24) in Batangas have been Methodist Christians since birth.

Overall, the survey statistics (age, gender, length in Methodist Church) indicate that Batangas is in the early stage of Methodist missions.

Methodists' Identity in Popular Catholic Context

Religiously, people in popular Catholicism have a Catholic identity, as they say, "I never chose to be a Catholic, but God brought me into the Catholic Church. So, I will stay in the Catholic Church forever." 349

In this Catholic religious context, what does mean to have Methodist identity? Do they have fully Methodist identity religiously? Does their identity affect their cultural identity which is based on popular Catholicism?

According to the surveys and interviews, many Methodist Christians are confused about their religious identity, because although Methodists are different from Catholics in terms of religious practices and theological understandings, they are still influenced by the popular religious culture on which their social lives are largely based. Methodist Christians in Batangas tend to respond to the cultural influences of popular Catholicism in two ways regarding their religious identity.

On the one hand, many Methodist Christians in Batangas identify themselves as Protestant Christians who are different from popular Catholic Christians. Among Batangas Methodist Christians, 50% of them (69 of 138) say they (Methodists) are different from popular Catholic Christians. Interestingly, 78.6% of pastors and church workers (11 out of 14) say "we are different from them" while only 3 pastors and workers say, "we are all Christians in God." The majority of 10+ Methodists (75.6%, 34 of 45) also said, "we are different," while only 24.4% of them said, "we are the same." However, the majority of 10- Methodists (70.8%, 51 out of 71) said, "we are the same in

³⁴⁹ Rizza Amazona, Interview with Author, June 12th 2011. She is a Methodist. She cited what her mother talked to her when she tried to introduce Protestantism and the Methodist Church.

God," while 29.2% said, "we are different

Question: Do	you think you	are different fr	rom popular	Catholic Christians?

	Batangas Total	Pastors and Workers	10+ Methodist	10- Methodist	St. Mark UMC
We are different.	69 (50%)	11 (78.6%)	34 (75.6%)	21 (29.2%)	7 (29.2%)
We are all Christians believing in God.	68 (49.2%)	3 (21.4%)	11 (24.4%)	51 (70.8%)	<u>15 (62.5%)</u>
I don't know.	1 (0.8%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	2 (8.3%)
Total	138	14	45	71	24

Table 4-3. Religious Identity with Popular Catholicism

As the survey presents, there are differences between them (10+ and 10-). The different level of understandings and experiences of the Methodist Church might cause these this difference among them. The religious identity of Methodist Christians, therefore, is influenced by the different level of interaction with popular Catholicism which is a cultural identity of Filipinos.

On the other hand, while 75.6% of the 10+ Methodist Christians said, "We are different from Catholics," only 29.2% of St. Mark U.M.C. members said, "We are different." This gap of religious identity between 10+ Methodists in Batangas and mission agents from Manila implies that there might be different concepts or expectations of doing Methodist mission between 10+ Methodist Christians in Batangas and mission agents from Manila. Simply speaking, this survey presents that the purpose of Methodist missions to Batangas from the Manila Church members is not to convert popular

Catholics to Methodist, but it seems beyond. 350

Interestingly, according to the survey, 10- Methodist members in Batangas and mission agents from St. Mark UMC have a certain similarity of understandings of being a Methodist in the context of popular Catholicism.

"Religions have grown through their interaction with other cultures and religions." Christianity in the Philippines also has interacted with local cultures, people, and religious systems. Thus, popular Catholicism has become the religious, social, and cultural identity in Filipinos' lives. Identity, itself, tends to exclude otherness; in other words, it tends to dichotomize differences. This tendency seems to be based on a fear of syncretism. However, people in Batangas, as well as other Asian people, have a concept of "both-and" not "either-or" in an identity issue. That means communal identity is more important than personal identity. Thus, although one of their family members is a Methodist Christian, the other family members accept him or her as one communal member of popular Catholicism with the shared name of "Christian," while the Methodists are still confused about whether he or she shares the same identity or not. That is the reason for the results of these identity surveys; we are different (50%) and we are the same (49.2%).

Identity issues regarding Methodism and popular Catholicism is not necessarily about replacing or reforming the old identity with a new one, but it is an issue of "adding

³⁵⁰ Conversion does not seem to be a reason for Methodist missions in Batangas only, but the purpose of Methodist missions in Batangas needs to go beyond the conversional purpose. It will be to rebuild the authentic Christianity through Methodist missions. More investigation will follow in Chapter Five and Six.

³⁵¹ Michael Amaladoss, "From Syncretism to Harmony," *Institute of Dialogue With Cultures and Religions*, Website,

http://www.idcrdialogue.com/admins/Seminars/syncretism-harmony_59.doc

a new identity" to the old one. Being a Methodist, therefore, is not to abandon Filipino Catholic cultural identity, but it is to find and add a new identity (Methodist) to the Filipino Catholic identity. Thus, the answer of 49.2% "Yes," and 50% "No" to the identity question represents an identity overlapped between Catholicism and Methodist Protestant culture in individual Methodist Christians.

Michael Amaladoss says in his article, "what is basic to Christian identity is the relationship to God manifested in Jesus. The symbols and rituals in which this relationship finds expressions do not really matter." In this understanding of Christian identity, we will study how and what Methodist Christians think of popular Catholicism and its religious practices

Methodists' Understandings of Popular Catholic Beliefs

The data on Methodist understandings of popular Catholicism came from surveys and interviews with Methodist Christians in Batangas, Philippines. Interestingly, all of the Methodist Christians I interviewed and surveyed have popular Catholic backgrounds; thus, their understanding of popular Catholicism is largely informed by their previous experiences with it.³⁵³

³⁵² Ibid

³⁵³ Both of 10+ (people who have been in Methodist Church more than 10 years) group of people and 10- (people who have been in Methodist Church less than 10 years) group of people say they were Catholic Christians before they came to Methodist. See the the table 4-1 and 4-2.

Methodists' Understandings of Truth in Popular Catholicism

Methodist workers³⁵⁴ in Batangas think of truth as being connected with biblical teachings. Thus, their perspectives on popular Catholicism regarding truth are based on their understanding of the truth of the Bible. As a result, they think popular Catholicism is not based, primarily at least, on true biblical teachings. According to this view, while popular Catholic Christians believe in God, they don't have a strong biblical foundation to their belief and faith in God, but rather base their faith on a combination of popular Catholic religious practices and Filipino cultural traditions; thus, Methodist workers think popular Catholic Christians' faith is a perversion of biblical teachings, which are truth in God.³⁵⁵ Thus, for these Methodist workers in Batangas, popular Catholicism seems only traditional, not biblical, and therefore cannot be the representative of truth.³⁵⁶ Rev. Jesus Villamin in Batangas explains this perspective well:

Although Catholicism was inculturated in the Philippines, biblical teachings of Christianity could not be inculturated by Catholicism effectively. Thus, the truth in Christianity could not embed into Filipinos' lives. As the Bible says, truth set us free; however, inculturated Catholicism couldn't provide the freedom based on the truth in God. Filipino Catholicism became a religious culture only, in order to influence Filipinos' lives through Catholic religious traditions. The lack of biblical teachings and biblical foundation cannot be the representative of truth. Thus, Catholicism in the Philippines cannot be the representative of truth.

Although Methodist Christians say the Catholic Church has largely substituted Mary for the role of the Holy Spirit as an important mediator between God and people, most Methodist Christians who responded to the survey still acknowledge that the Holy

³⁵⁴ Methodist workers refer to pastors, deaconesses, and lay leaders of Methodist Church. Ruby-Nell Estrella, Interview with Author, May 28th, 2011. The question was "Do you think there is truth in popular Catholicism?"

³⁵⁶ Dario Sugan, Interview with Author, May 29th, 2011. The question was "Do you think Catholicism is the representative of truth?"

³⁵⁷ Jesus Villamin, Interview with Author, June 11th, 2011. The question was "Do you think Catholicism is the representative of truth in the Philippines?"

Spirit is at work in the Catholic Church. 358 According to the survey question, "Do you think there is the work of the Holy Spirit in the Catholic Church?" 118 of 136 Methodists (86.7%) responded in the affirmative.

	Ouestion: Do	vou think there	e is the work of t	he Holy Spirit i	n the popular Catholic	cism?
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	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+359	10-	St. Mark UMC
Yes	118 (86.7%)	12 (85.7%)	34 (75.6%)	66 (94.3%)	22 (91.7%)
No	13 (13.2%)	2 (14.3%)	11 (24.4%)	4 (5.7%)	2 (8.3%)
I don't know	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	136	14	45	70	24

Table 4-4. Popular Catholicism and the Work of the Holy Spirit

The Methodists, all of whom came from popular Catholic backgrounds, admit that God is at work through the Holy Spirit in the Catholic Church. This provides a basis for ecumenical dialogue and cooperation between Methodists and Catholics for Christian mission among the people of Batangas. Methodists in Batangas don't assume that the Catholic Church is a totally different religion, or a pagan form of Christianity, although there are folk and popular religious features that differ from the mainline Protestant Church. This is especially true for those who have been Methodists for less than ten years, 94.3% of whom agreed that the Holy Spirit is at work in popular Catholicism, compared to 75.6% of those who have been Methodists more than 10 years.

³⁵⁸ Batangas Pastors, Group Discussion with Author, May 22nd, 2011.

³⁵⁹ "10+" refers to Methodist Christians who have been in Methodist Church more than 10 years, while "10-" refers to Methodists who have been less than 10 years in Methodist Church.

Most of the Methodists I interviewed (and surveyed) present that the truth claims about Christology and the Trinity differ between Methodist Christians and people in popular Catholicism. I think this theological difference between them in regard to truth is a significant reason for continuing Christian mission in the context of popular Catholicism. These mission efforts exist so that people may share the truth of Jesus Christ with those who participate in popular religious practices and devotions, and for those who haven't read the Bible themselves yet.

Methodists' Understandings of Salvation by Baptism

One of the issues regarding salvation in popular Catholicism is "salvation through baptism," in which people believe that if they were baptized in the Catholic Church, they would attain eternal life. Thus, infant baptism is an important ritual not only for the baby, but also for all family members and the community. Theologically, "salvation by baptism" seems to be somewhat ambiguous among Methodist Christians in Batangas.

According to the survey, more than a half of the Methodist Christians either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the idea of the salvific nature of baptism, while less than 30 percent "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed." Furthermore, while six of thirteen pastors agreed with salvation through baptism, more than 80% of those who have been Methodists less than ten years agreed with this theological concept.

Question: What do you think of "Salvation through baptism" which Catholics emphasize?

	Batangas Total	Pastors and Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Strongly Agree	37 (27.4%)	3 (23.1%)	11 (24.4%)	22 (31.0%)	3 (13.0%)
Agree	57 (42.2%)	3 (23.1%)	13 (31.1%)	38 (53.5%)	10 (43.5%)
Disagree	28 (20.7%)	5 (38.4%)	12 (26.7%)	9 (12.7%)	7 (30.5%)
Strongly Disagree	13 (9.6%)	2 (15.4%)	8 (17.8%)	2 (2.8%)	3 (13.0%)
Total	135	13	45	71	23

Table 4-5. Salvation by Baptism

The response to this question by Methodist Christians seems to underscore the fact that certain Catholic theological understandings of salvation are also found in these Protestant churches. Moreover, "salvation by baptism" is also an important cultural practice that unites family members and communities. All of this seems to indicate that most of the Methodist Christians in Batangas believe baptism is necessary for salvation as well as they believe in "forgiveness" of sin through divine providence of God.

While many of the Methodists Christians may still hold to the Catholic teaching on the salvific nature of infant baptism, most Batangas Methodist pastors believe that the concept of "salvation by baptism" is false. One pastor says, "baptism is important, but it is not only the means of salvation. Salvation is from the faith in Jesus Christ, and baptism is one of manifestations of salvation." A former D.S. (District Superintendent) of North-West District in Metro Manila in United Methodist Church, ³⁶¹ Rev. Ruby-Nell

³⁶⁰ Tim Fella, Interview with Author, May 2nd, 2011.

³⁶¹ The Batangas Province is belonging to this district, thus a former D.S. was in charge

Estrella also says about the concept of "salvation by baptism," that "salvation is to accept Christ as the savior by faith. He atoned for our sins. Thus, it is not affiliated by baptism or penance, but it is related to the grace from God, and faith from us."³⁶²

Methodists' Understandings of God in Popular Catholicism

According to surveys and interviews, most Methodist Christians in Batangas think of God as the same God worshipped in both the Methodist Church and Catholic Church.

116 out of 136 (85.3%) Methodist Christians say that the God of the Methodist Church and the Catholic Church is the same God.

Question: Do you think the God in popular Catholicism is the same God Methodists believe in?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Yes	116 (85.3%)	12 (85.7%)	34 (75.6%)	66 (91.6%)	21 (87.5%)
No	14 (10.3%)	2 (14.3%)	8 (17.8%)	3 (4.2%)	1 (4.2%)
I don't know	6 (4.4%)	N/A	3 (6.65%)	3 (4.2%)	2 (8.3%)
Total	136	14	45	72	24

Table 4-6. Deity in Popular Catholicism

It implies that the God in both Methodist and Catholic Church is understood as the Creator and the savior based on what the Bible says. However, the concept of lower gods and saints in popular Catholicism is not acceptable among Methodist Christians. One of

of Batangas province. As a senior pastor of St. Mark UMC, she is conducting Batangas mission with her church members.

³⁶² Ruby-Nell Estrella, Interview with Author, May 28th, 2011.

Methodist Christian in Batangas said, "we don't need middlemen in order to approach God. We can approach God through our prayers. So, having middlemen is not right." 363

People in popular Catholicism have looked for the images of saints on whom they rely for their daily lives and needs. Thus, many images of saints appear in popular Catholicism. Among the many saints, Mary and Sto. Niño have become the most popular among Filipinos as important and practical figures to connect to God. They can be found almost everywhere in the Philippines, and many practices and rituals connected to Mary and Sto. Niño also have developed in popular Catholicism. Consequently, praying to Mary based on Mariology in Catholic theology and the devotion to Sto. Niño in popular Catholicism have become important religious behaviors and practices in the Philippines. Moreover, these devotions have supported popular Catholic's deity system and structure in the popular Catholic context.

Methodists' Understandings of Popular Catholic Religious Practices

Popular Catholicism and its religious practices cannot be interpreted as a religion or religious behaviors only, but they should be also analyzed culturally because religion (Catholicism) and culture are deeply intertwined in the Philippines. Interviews and surveys about popular Catholicism and its practices in Batangas were not only about Methodists' religious understandings or reaction to popular Catholicism, but they also sought to assess cultural understandings of popular Catholicism and to investigate cultural reactions of Methodist Christians to popular Catholicism.

Batangueno (Batangas people) are identified closely with Catholic traditions.

³⁶³ Henry Facun, Interview with Author, May 21st, 2011.

According to the interviews with Methodist pastors in Batangas, they think *Batangueno* traditionally participate in Catholic religious practices.³⁶⁴ Some pastors insist that the reason for the Methodist mission is to rebuild the biblical foundation in Filipino Christianity.³⁶⁵ Although it seems to be ethnocentric perspective for Methodist Christians to suggest changing Catholic religious tradition through Methodist missions, what Methodist pastors observe and interpret in the traditions of popular Catholicism is that the popular Catholic tradition has become engrained in Filipino culture whether people are faithfully practicing Catholics or not. Rev. Ruby-Nell Estrella who was a district superintendent in Batangas said:

They [popular Catholic practices] have become a part of everyday culture because of the historical influence from the Spanish colonial regime. For example, *fiesta* [village festival] has become a Filipino custom, which was originally about celebrating a Patron Saint. When each village has *fiesta*, even Methodist Christians celebrates the fiesta although it was originally designed for the Catholic religious tradition. ... They have become so fundamental to Filipino culture that even Protestants celebrate the town *fiesta*. ³⁶⁶

In sum, Catholic traditional influences have affected Filipinos' lives whether Catholics or Protestants. How then, do Methodists in Batangas think of popular Catholic religious practices?

Acceptance of Popular Catholic Practices

According to the survey, 59.9% (82 out of 136) of Methodist Christians in

³⁶⁴ Seventeen Batangas Pastors and Workers, Group Discussion with Author, May 22nd, 2011. "They [Catholics] are more traditional rather than knowing what Christian life should be."

³⁶⁵ Seventeen Batangas Pastors and Workers, Group Discussion with Author, May 22nd, 2011. "... Catholic practices have been our tradition; however, if they have gone away from biblical foundation, we need to rebuild the biblical foundation in Filipino Christianity through the Methodist mission."

³⁶⁶ Ruby-Nell Estrella, Interview with Author, 28 May 2011.

Batangas do not agree to accept the Catholics' religious expression and practices (e.g. praying through Mary and Sto. Niño) as a part of Filipino culture. However, interestingly, Methodist Christians who have been in the Methodist Church for less than 10 years show different opinions about accepting Catholic's practices. The survey present that only 43.0% (31 of 72) of 10- Methodist Christians say "no" to the question whether they could accept Catholic practices as a Filipino religious life, while 86.4% of 10+ Methodists says "no," not to accept Catholic's religious practices. See table 4-7, below.

Question: Can you accept popular Catholic's practices such as veneration of Mary and Sto. Niño as one of Filipino religious lives?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Yes	25 (18.2%)	1 (7.1%)	N/A	20 (27.8%)	2 (8.3%)
Partially yes	30 (21.9%)	N/A	6 (13.6%)	21 (29.2%)	4 (16.7%)
No	82 (59.9%)	13 (92.9%)	38 (86.4%)	31 (43.0%)	18 (75.0%)
Total	136	14	44	72	24

Table 4-7. Acceptance of Popular Catholic Practices

Overall, the response of "yes" and "partially yes" among Methodist Christians (55 of 136) in Batangas indicates that popular Catholic's practices, such as devotion to Mary and Sto. Niño, have been an important part of Filipinos' religious life and culture influenced by popular Catholicism. Mostly, it is 10- Methodist Christians, who came from Catholicism, that are still influenced by the religious culture of popular Catholic practices and devotions, while 86.4% (38 of 44) of 10+ Methodist Christians do not accept popular Catholic's practices as a fundamental part of Filipino religious life.

Mary and Sto. Niño in Popular Catholic Practices

According to the surveys, the 22.0% of Methodist Christians in Batangas admit to the necessity of praying to Mary and Sto. Niño to access God and Jesus. However, there are different perspectives to answer this question between 10+ and 10- of Methodist Christians. See table below.

Question: Do you think it is necessary in a way to pray to Mother Mary and Sto. Niño to access God and Jesus?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Yes	26 (22.0%)	0 (0%)	3 (7.1%)	21 (34.4%)	0 (0%)
No	92 (78.0%)	13 (100%)	39 (92.9%)	40 (65.6%)	18 (100%)
Total	118	13	42	61	18

Table 4-8. Necessity of Praying to Mary and Sto. Niño

39 out of 42 (92.9%) 10+ Methodist Christians say, "no" to the necessity of praying to Mary or Sto. Niño, while 40 of 61 (65.6%) 10- Methodist Christians say, "no" to the same question. Overall, 26 of 118 (22.0%) of Methodist Christians in Batangas think it is necessary to pray to Mary and Sto. Niño to access God and Jesus. It indicates the popular Catholic culture still influences Batangas Methodist Christians by encouraging them to pray to saints as intermediaries to access God. If the table 4-7 is more about a cultural question related to the veneration of Mary and Sto. Niño, this survey (table 4-8) is more of a religious question. This survey indicates that all of the mission agents from Manila (St. Mark UMC) reject Mary and Sto. Niño as intermediaries between people and God.

These two surveys (Table 4-7 and Table 4-8) show that the veneration of Mary and Sto. Niño as important religious and cultural practices among popular Catholics have prevailed among Filipinos precisely because of the popular Catholic culture. According to these two surveys, Methodist Christians in Batangas are also affected by this cultural influence. However, most Batangas Methodist pastors object to the veneration of Mary and praying to Sto. Niño because biblical proof cannot be found. Joel Panganiban who is a Methodist pastor in Batangas said, "... the practices related to Mariology can be observed at the people's level, not the clerical level. Most of the lay people who don't know the Bible also don't know the meaning of Mariology. They put Mary on the same level as God, and that is not biblical." According to his observation, Catholic clergies seem to not consider devotion to Mary as a significant biblical practice in Catholicism; it only seems to be a common religious practice among popular Catholic lay-Christians. However, praying and devotion to saints and Mary have become important aspects of Catholic practice and ritual for both elite and popular Catholic Christians in Batangas.

One Methodist Christian points out the confession of Catholic Christians to Mary. The confession starts as "Mary, the mother of God," and he says, it brings a wrong concept about Mary, that she is higher than God.³⁶⁸ According to him, Mary was a chosen person by God for His soteriological purpose. She does not have any divine nature, but she is a model for good Christians following God's plan.

Sto. Niño is not a biblical figure in Christianity either. Methodist Christians in Batangas say it is a simple superstition that people believe that Sto. Niño has a power to

³⁶⁷ Joel Panganiban, Interview with Author, May 1st, 2011.

³⁶⁸ Olive Ibarra, Interview with Author, April 30th, 2011.

heal the sick.³⁶⁹ This superstitious atmosphere about the veneration of saints has spread among many Filipinos. There are many stories going around among Filipinos about what happened to those who abandoned saints' statues after they converted to Protestantism. John Amazona, who converted to the Methodist Church for 10 years ago, says:

There is a story. A Protestant family who converted from the Catholic Church destroyed all statues and symbols of idolatry. Then, they became very sick until they died. When people listen to this kind of story, they become afraid of giving up these statues.³⁷⁰

Because of spiritual fear caused by traditional folk religious practices and popular devotions in Catholicism, Filipinos want to stay where they are. Moreover, these kinds of stories about statues and malicious actions from statues have functioned in Filipinos' religious life as they keep practicing traditional Catholic practices to the Sto. Niño, Mother Mary, and other saints.

One Methodist Christian also presents a colonial reason to have Sto. Niño in a certain style in Filipino Catholic Christianity, saying:

Historically, Sto. Niño arrived in the Philippines with Spanish colonialism. If you see Sto. Niño, most of Sto. Niño statues have white skin, fat body, and cute face. I think it is really apart from a real Filipino and our lives. Why should Sto. Niño be white and fat? I think Sto. Niño is a symbol of colonial spirit.³⁷¹

Methodist pastors in Batangas also say that the devotion to Sto. Niño came from Spanish colonialism with political power, as it is white, fat, and cute mostly. Consequently, Sto. Niño has become a significant Catholic character in popular Catholicism by colonial Catholic mission. Popular Catholics have served these kinds of pagan practices in the name of traditional practices that had formed in Spanish colonialism. Therefore,

³⁶⁹ John Amazona, Eugene Pamplona, and Henry Facun, Interview with Author, May 21st, 2011.

^{21&}lt;sup>st</sup>, 2011.

370 John Amazona, Interview with Author, May 21st, 2011.

³⁷¹ Eugene Pamplona, Interview with Author, May 21st, 2011.

Methodist pastors think colonialism still remains in the Philippines through popular Catholic forms and religious practices.³⁷²

Overall, Sto. Niño has become an important medium in popular Catholicism, and it contains obvious folk religious features and colonial remnants, particularly the concept of an intermediary between God and people.

"Pasiyon" 373 in Popular Catholicism

Apart from devotions and practices to the saints, through their statues (e.g. Mary and Sto. Niño), there is another traditional practice in which Catholic Christians participate mostly during lament season. That is "Pasiyon." According to the survey, there are Methodist Christians who have participated in Pasiyon after they converted to the Methodist Church. Participation in Pasiyon after being a Methodist Christian is about 23.0% (16 out of 113) among Batangas Methodist Christians.

Question: Have you attended *Pasiyon* after being a Methodist Christian?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Yes	16 (23.0%)	3 (25.0%)	3 (7.1%)	19 (31.1%)	3 (17.6%)
No	87 (77.0%)	9 (75.0%)	39 (92.9%)	42 (68.9%)	14 (82.4%)
Total	113	12	42	61	17

Table 4-9. Attendance of *Pasiyon* after being a Methodist

³⁷² Seventeen Batangas Pastors agreed to the existence of colonial influences in the Philippines through popular Catholic practices. Group Discussion with Author, May 22nd, 2011.

³⁷³ Pasiyon is a traditional Catholic activity in which participants read the story of Jesus during a season of lament.

As this survey shows, even pastors and mission agents (St. Mark UMC) from Manila have participated in *Pasiyon* as a religious practice although it is a Catholic tradition. Not surprisingly, 10- Methodist Christians have the highest percentage of participation (19 of 61, 31.1%). I assume that it (*Pasiyon*) might be conceived as different from devotions and practices to Mary, Sto. Niño, and other saints, because it has no image or statues of any saint, but it is a traditional practice in Catholicism, which reminds people of Jesus' Story with the cross and His statue during the lament.

Interestingly, one Batangas Methodist pastor shared a story that helps contextualize the *Pasiyon* as it has even been observed in Manila. He said, "... There is an example how evangelical churches contextualize the gospel in a Catholic context. *Pasiyon* is a famous religious practice among Catholic Christians, and some of evangelical churches revise it to fit a more Protestant understanding." He did not mention "how," but the important point here is "what" Protestant evangelical churches think of traditional Catholic religious practices. This story illustrates the fact that it Protestants have not completely abandoned all traditional Catholic religious practices, but they have tried to revise some of them in order to contextualize the gospel for their missional purpose.

Cultural Understandings of Catholic Symbols

According to the survey, Methodist lay Christians in Batangas have more open minds to popular Catholic symbols and statues than Methodist pastors. The survey shows that 47.9% (56 of 117) Methodists (lay people and pastors) say popular Catholic symbols

³⁷⁴ Alredo Malalo, He shared it when I had a group discussion with seventeen Batangas Pastors. May 22nd, 2011.

are strongly unacceptable while others say they are acceptable culturally (12.8%), acceptable culturally and religiously (14.5%), and acceptable religiously as practices particular to Catholics (24.8%). Thus, more than a half of Batangas Methodist Christians accept popular Catholic objects to varying degrees including: culturally, religioculturally, and as Catholics' religious practices while almost a half of them say all of these are unacceptable. It indicates an important fact, that Methodist Christians are not entirely opposed to popular Catholic symbols and objects. Especially, 10- Methodists of whom only 38.7% (24 of 62) reject popular Catholic objects while the other 10-s accept them culturally or religiously.

Question: Do you think it is acceptable "culturally" to have symbols/pictures/amulets/statues around living circumstances (home, car, work, place)?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Only culturally acceptable	15 (12.8%)	2 (15.2%)	9 (21.4%)	4 (6.5%)	2 (11.1%)
Culturally and religiously acceptable	17 (14.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.4%)	14 (22.5%)	2 (11.1%)
Religiously acceptable as their religious practices	29 (24.8%)	2 (15.4%)	8 (19.1%)	20 (32.3%)	3 (16.7%)
Strongly unacceptable	<u>56 (47.9%)</u>	9 (69.2%)	24 (57.1%)	24 (38.7%)	11 (61.1%)
Total	117	13	42	62	18

Table 4-10. Culturally Acceptance of Popular Catholic Symbols

While popular Catholic objects such as symbols, pictures, amulets, and statues are acceptable and understandable among more than a half of Batangas Methodists as forms of culture and religion, their (Methodists') "feelings" about those objects are a little bit different from their "understandings." Interestingly, there is an apparent gap between 10+ Methodists and 10– Methodists. 70.7% (29 out of 41) of 10+ Methodists tend to say "No" to the question, "do you feel comfortable around statues/amulets/pictures/symbols" (70.7%, 29 of 41), while only 40.3% (25 of 62) of 10– Methodists say "No" to the same question. This result indicates that the influence of Methodist Christianity has caused Batangas Methodist Christians to slowly change their religious culture from popular Catholicism to Protestantism.

Different from table 4-10 (many Methodist Christians accept Catholic objects as a part of Filipino cultures), table 4-11 presents that many of them also feel uncomfortable about those religious objects around them at the same time. Let us see the table 4-11 below.

Question: Do you feel comfortable around statues/amulets/pictures/symbols?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Yes	35 (29.4%)	4 (30.8%)	8 (19.5%)	22 (35.5%)	1 (5.6%)
No	62 (52.1%)	8 (61.5%)	29 (70.7%)	25 (40.3%)	12 (66.7%)
I don't know	7 (5.9%)	1 (7.7%)	N/A	5 (8.1%)	2 (11.1%)
Culturally acceptable	15 (12.6%)	0 (0%)	4 (9.8%)	10 (16.1%)	3 (16.7%)
Total	119	13	41	62	18

Table 4-11. Comfortableness of Popular Catholic Symbols

Popular Catholic objects are common Filipino religious and cultural symbols, which are indicative of Filipinos' socio-religious context. According to Methodist Christians in Batangas, people in Batangas are practicing their religious traditions without profound understandings of biblical teachings and concepts. Rev. Noel Mansida who is a local Methodist pastor in Batangas said, "[When I was a Catholic], there was no Bible in my home. I didn't know the truth at that time. ... Practically, I just used to follow what other Catholic Christians did; for example, I touched statues of saints, Mary, and Sto. Niño for healing and blessings without understanding what the Bible says." 375

Now that popular Catholic objects and practices have become a part of Filipino religious culture, Batangas Methodist Christians may accept them simply as a Filipino culture; however, most Methodist Christians feel uncomfortable with Catholic objects around them because of a particular biblical understanding brought by Methodist Christianity.

Popular Catholic Practices and Methodist Membership

A gap between two groups, pastors and lay Methodists, can be observed when they encounter a question about whether they accept Catholic Christians as their church members although they (Catholics) haven't given up their Catholic religious practices. While pastors agree to accept them at a rate of only 46.2% (6 of 13), 10 + Methodists accept them at a rate of 61.0% (25 of 41) and 77.4% (48 of 62) of 10- Methodists agree to accept them although Catholics haven't abandoned Catholic practices. Among the mission agents from St. Mark UMC in Manila, 77.8% (14 out of 18) also accept them.

³⁷⁵ Noel Mansida, Interview with Author, 2 May 2011.

This result indicates that lay people in the Methodist Church have more open minds than Methodist pastors to popular Catholic practices and granting Methodist membership to popular Catholic Christians.

Question: Can you accept them (Popular Catholic Christians) as your church members if they come to your church (Methodist) without giving up Catholic religious practices?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Yes	81 (67.5%)	6 (46.2%)	<u>25 (61.0%)</u>	48 (77.4%)	<u>14 (77.8%)</u>
No	27 (22.5%)	7 (53.8)	14 (34.1%)	5 (8.1%)	3 (16.7%)
I don't know	12 (10.0%)	N/A	2 (4.9%)	9 (14.5%)	1 (5.5%)
Total	120	13	41	62	18

Table 4-12. Membership of Popular Catholic Christians in Methodist Church

Interestingly, there is a different perspective between 10+ and 10- Methodist
Christians on how they perceive popular Catholic practices. Most 10+ Methodists
(81.6%, 31 out of 38) say they will ask their new church members from popular
Catholicism to give up traditional Catholic practices after becoming Methodist members,
while only a little over half of 10- Methodist (52.5%, 32 out of 61) holds to the same
standard. In other words, 47.5% of 10- group will not ask newcomers from popular
Catholicism to give up their previous religious practices after they become Methodist
members. It also indicates that there are different levels of the openness to popular
Catholic practices among lay Methodists. Table 4-13 indicates the difference between
groups of 10+ and 10-.

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Yes, I will	74 (65.5%)	10 (90.9%)	31 (81.6%)	32 (52.5%)	14 (77.8%)
No, I won't	39 (34.5%)	1 (9.1%)	7 (18.4%)	29 (47.5%)	4 (22.2%)
Total	113	11	38	61	18

Question: If yes, will you ask them to give up popular Catholic practices?

Table 4-13. Membership of Methodist Church and Popular Catholic Practices

Overall, it is undeniable that popular Catholic objects and practices have become a part of Filipino culture, especially in Batangas province, which is very religiously devoted to Catholicism. Culturally, popular Catholic symbols and practices seem to be acceptable among Methodist Christians in Batangas; however, religiously they feel uncomfortable with those popular Catholic objects and practices.

However, although there are different levels of the openness to popular Catholic practices, Methodist Christians indicate that they are inclusive to popular Catholic people, by showing a willingness to involve them in the Methodist Church whether or not they (popular Catholics) give up their religious objects and practices. This study presents that the 10+ group and 10- group have different levels of tolerance toward popular Catholic practices.

Common religious practices and devotions in popular Catholicism are practical religious expressions to reach out for divine intervention in their daily lives. Of course, as we have looked over these religious practices and expressions, there are non-biblical features in those devotions. However, religious adherents to popular devotions and practices are expressing their religious piety through their own religious cultures (i.e.

popular Catholicism) which has been influenced by Spanish colonial Catholicism.

Furthermore, their practices and devotions could be religiously interpreted as one of their (popular Catholic's) theological understandings of localized (i.e. Filipinized) Christianity, and as a religious reaction to their daily societal, cultural, political, and economic situations.

Methodists' Understandings of Missional Implications for Batangas Mission

This section explores missional implications for Methodist missions through surveys and interviews. First, Methodist Christians identify how they understand who popular Catholic Christians are. Then, it moves to the purpose of the mission, and the meaning of the mission in the perspectives of Methodist Christians in Batangas.

Who are popular Catholic Christians to Methodist Christians?

Previously mentioned in this chapter, most of the Methodist Christians face confusion when identifying them in the popular Catholic context. A hybridity of their cultural and religious identities has emerged in the popular Catholic context. ³⁷⁶ In other words, culturally, Methodist Christians are also involved in the popular Catholic context. Simultaneously, they also have Protestant religious features, even within the popular Catholic context. Thus, Methodist Christians cannot accept religious practices of popular Catholicism religiously, but at the same time, they understand the cultural reasons for common religious practices in popular Catholicism. ³⁷⁷

In this dissonance (religiously disagreeing with their religious practices, while

³⁷⁶ See Table 4-3.

³⁷⁷ See Tables 4-7, 4-8, 4-9, 4-10, and 4-11.

simultaneously understanding the cultural aspects of popular Catholicism), most

Methodist Christians recognize popular Catholic Christians are people whom they need
to bring true faith in Christ. All category groups (pastors, 10+, 10-, and mission agents
from Manila) seem to agree that Methodist Christians need to help popular Catholic
people enhance their faith in Christ.

Question: Do you think popular Catholic Christians are people whom we (Methodist Christians) need to help to foster true faith in Christ?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Yes	110 (81.5%)	13 (92.9%)	35 (83.3%)	<u>59 (81.9%)</u>	23 (95.8%)
No	25 (18.5%)	1 (7.1%)	7 (16.7%)	13 (18.1%)	1 (4.2%)
Total	135	14	42	72	24

Table 4-14. Helping Popular Catholics for Faith in Christ

81.5% (110 out of 135) of Batangas Methodist Christians agree about helping popular Catholic Christians to come to true faith in Christ.

However, in the next question, Methodist ministers and lay people show different understandings of popular Catholic Christians in terms of Christian mission. Seven of nine pastors (77.8%) say Catholic Christians are partners in the mission, while only the 10 of 32 (31.3%) in the group of 10+, and only 17 of 71 (23.9%) in the 10- group share the same sentiment. It indicates that Methodist pastors are more willing than lay-people to cooperate with Catholic Christians as mission partners.

Question: What do you think of popular Catholic Christians in terms of Christian mission?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Partners (co- workers) for the mission	34 (33.0%)	<u>7 (77.8%)</u>	10 (31.3%)	<u>17 (23.9%)</u>	4 (40.0%)
Another Christian paralleled with a Methodist Christians	45 (43.7%)	2 (22.2%)	13 (40.6%)	30 (42.3%)	5 (50.0%)
I don't know	24 (23.3%)	N/A	9 (28.15)	24 (33.8%)	1 (10.0%)
Total	103	9	32	71	10

Table 4-15. Popular Catholics as Mission Partner

Moreover, when the same question was presented with more nuanced options, the different understandings between the ministers and lay members regarding popular Catholic Christians as potential missions partners became clearer. These answers illumined the specific differences in understanding they had about the actual state of popular Christians as either pagan Christians, Filipinized (contextualized) Christians, or Mission partners. Let's see the table 4-16.

Question: What do you think of popular Catholic Christians?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Pagan people in Catholic Faith	9 (8.9%)	1 (4.3%)	5 (17.3%)	7 (11.1%)	4 (44.4%)
Filipinized Christians following the Catholic Faith	64 (63.4%)	3 (42.9%)	<u>17 (58.6%)</u>	<u>39 (61.9%)</u>	3 (33.3%)
Mission Partners	28 (27.7%)	3 (42.9%)	7 (24.1%)	17 (27.0%)	2 (22.2%)
Total	101	7	29	63	9

Table 4-16. Who Catholics Are

Overall, most of Methodist pastors/workers and lay Methodist Christians recognize popular Catholics as mission partners as well as Filipinized Christians in Catholic faith. In these understandings of popular Catholic Christians, other questions can be raised, such as "What is the purpose of Christian mission in Batangas?" and "What, specifically, does Christian mission mean to Methodist Christians?"

Understandings of Purpose of Christian Mission

As most Methodist Christians in Batangas were previously popular Catholic Christians, I think they can provide a hawk-eye perspective of the purpose of Christian mission in the popular Catholic context. First of all, when faced with a question of personal willingness to share the gospel, 125 of 136 (91.9%) Batangas Methodist

Christians agreed to the necessity of sharing the gospel with Catholics.

Question: Are you willing to share the gospel with popular Catholics?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Yes	125 (91.9%)	14 (100%)	42 (93.35)	65 (90.3%)	24 (100%)
No	2 (1.5%)	N/A	2 (4.4%)	N/A	N/A
I don't know	9 (6.6%)	N/A	1 (2.2%)	7 (9.7%)	N/A
Total	136	14	45	72	24

Table 4-17. Sharing the Gospel

Most Methodists are willing to share the gospel with Catholics by methodologically emphasizing the role of Bible studies.

Interestingly, when faced with a question to choose between conversion and enhancing their faith, many Methodists choose the latter.

Question: What is the purpose of sharing the gospel?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Conversion	11 (9.9%)	3 (23.1%)	7 (16.7%)	9 (14.5%)	4 (22.2%
Enhancing their faith	100 (90.1%)	10 (76.9%)	35 (83.3%)	53 (85.5%)	14 (77.8%)
Total	111	13	42	62	18

Table 4-18. Purpose of Christian Mission

It is interesting that Methodist Christians do not emphasize the conversion of popular Catholic Christians to Methodist churches. Interviews with Batangas pastors also indicate

that the purpose of Christian mission is to help Catholics in their faith in Christ, rather than bring them from the Catholic Church to the Methodist Church. Rev. Dario Sugan, who is a senior pastor of Redeemed UMC in Batangas, said:

My point [in Christian mission] is to preach Jesus to them [popular Catholic people]. It is not a matter whether they come to Methodist Church or remain Catholic. My concern is to share the gospel of salvation. I believe there is no religion, no denomination that provides the salvation, but only the gospel of Jesus Christ can provide us that salvation. Thus, I want to share the gospel of salvation, which comes from Jesus Christ.³⁷⁸

His point is that Christian mission in Batangas is about sharing the gospel of salvation with popular Catholic Christians. Ruby-Nell Estrella, a former District Superintendent in the Northwest Metro Manila District, to which the Batangas province belongs, also said, "... I want them to come to the Lord. However, they don't need to be Methodists, but to be real Christians following what Jesus taught."³⁷⁹

Therefore, the purpose of the Christian mission in Batangas is surely to share the gospel and biblical teachings with popular Catholic Christians. In other words, Methodist Christians do not see Christian mission as having a conversional purpose, but to help people foster their faith in Christ through evangelism. So, according to their understanding of the purpose of Christian mission, the numerical counting of Methodist Christians in Methodist churches in Batangas cannot be a criterion whether their missions are successful or not. Instead, (re-)evangelization of popular Catholic Christians with biblical teachings is the purpose of Christian mission. Together with evangelism, they suggest giving our hands to those who are in need of social assistance.

³⁷⁸ Dario Sugan, Interview with Author, May 29th 2011.

³⁷⁹ Ruby-Nell Estrella, Interview with Author, May 28th 2011.

Understandings of Meaning of Christian Mission

The purpose of Christian mission has been manifested as evangelism to foster and enhance popular Catholic people's faith in Jesus Christ. Additionally, Batangas Methodist Christians have suggested social action to help people in need, by using Christ's love, as another reason for Christian mission. Interestingly, while Batangas Methodist Christians choose evangelism instead of conversion as the purpose of Christian mission, they also selected social action as one of the important reasons for Christian mission. See the survey below.

Question: What does Christian mission mean in Batangas?³⁸⁰

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
To convert Catholics to Methodist Church	14 (9.9%)	1 (6.7%)	3 (6.4%)	5 (6.9%)	1 (4.0%)
To enhance faith in Christ in our daily lives	63 (44.4%)	<u>9 (60.0%)</u>	17 (36.2%)	34 (47.2%)	10 (40.0%)
To help people in need with Christ' love	60 (42.3%)	<u>5 (33.3%)</u>	27 (57.4%)	27 (37.6%)	14 (56.0%)
I don't know	5 (3.5%)	N/A	N/A	6 (8.3%)	N/A
Total	142	15	47	72	25

Table 4-19. Meaning of Christian Mission

 $^{^{380}}$ Total number of the surveyed is higher than other surveys, because some of them choose multiple answers to this question.

In the multiple choices posited to answer the question concerning the meaning of Christian mission, more than a half of Batangas Methodist Christians choose the second and third one: "to enhance faith in Christ in people's daily lives," and "to help people in need with Christ's love." Only the 9.9% choose conversion from Catholic to Methodist as the meaning of Christian mission. "Enhancing faith in Christ in people's daily lives" can be understood as daily evangelism, and "helping people in need with Christ's love" can be interpreted as a Christian action. Thus, the result of this survey presents that Batangas Methodist Christians have a balance between evangelism and social action in Christian mission.

This survey presents that there is a gap between Batangas Methodist workers and 10+ Methodist Christians in their understanding of the meaning of Christian mission. Apparently, Batangas Methodist workers (pastors and deaconesses) emphasize evangelism as the primary Christian mission, while more than a half of 10+ Methodist Christians in Batangas prefer to help people in need with Christ's love. Thus, this survey presents different understandings of Christian mission between two major groups in the Methodist Church. However, I do not see that this difference has caused any missional misunderstanding between them, because evangelism and social action should not be divided; rather, they should be united as the holistic meaning of Christian mission.

Cooperation for Christian Mission

Mostly, the Methodists' understandings of popular Catholic Christians are that they are people who need help in enhancing their faith in Christ through evangelism.³⁸¹

³⁸¹ See Table 4-14.

Furthermore, Batangas Methodist Christians think of popular Catholics as mission partners for social action.³⁸² Thus, most Methodist Christians think of popular Catholic Christians as Filipinzed Christians, whose faith has been shaped by historical, social, and cultural impacts.³⁸³ After asking Batangas Methodist Christians' opinions about the purpose and the meaning of Christian mission, the survey asked them about their willingness to cooperate with popular Catholic Christians. Obviously, most of the Methodist Christians indicate a willingness to cooperate with them. See the survey below.

Question: Are you willing to cooperate with popular Catholic Christians for Christian mission in Batangas?

	Batangas Total	Pastors & Workers	10+	10-	St. Mark UMC
Yes	102 (76.7%)	10 (71.4%)	33 (78.6%)	55 (77.5%)	22 (91.7%)
No	18 (13.5%)	4 (28.6%)	5 (11.9%)	7 (9.9%)	2 (8.3%)
I don't know	13 (9.8%)	N/A	4 (9.5%)	9 (12.6%)	N/A
Total	133	14	42	71	24

Table 4-20. Cooperation with Popular Catholic Christians

Overall, 102 of 133 (76.7%) Methodist Christians say they would cooperate with popular Catholic Christians for Christian mission.

There can be different understandings of what cooperation is among people, and methodologically it is not easy to define what cooperation actually means for the Methodist missions in the popular Catholic context; however, it is obvious that Batangas

³⁸² See Table 4-15.

³⁸³ See Table 4-16.

Methodist Christians do not think of Catholic Christians as a group of pagan Christians, or as a group that the Methodist Church should re-Christianize with Protestant Christianity. This survey presents a high possibility of cooperation with popular Catholics for the recontextualization of Christianity in Batangas.

Conclusion

Most Methodist Christians in Batangas were previously popular Catholic Christians before they became Methodists. Their understandings and opinions on popular Catholicism, therefore, are not entirely from a cognitive level, but from their practical experiences culturally and religiously. Conflicts can be found in their religious identity as Methodists. Likewise, the cultural influence of popular Catholicism has affected their understandings of popular Catholic practices.

Catholicism between 10+ people and 10- people. The 10- people seem more ecumenical than 10+ people, because they seem to have open minds to popular Catholicism as it (popular Catholicism) is their culture and/or their religious heritage. Anyway, two reasons for differences between 10+ and 10- should be addressed. First, it can be a generational issue. Most of 10- people are from the younger generation, while 10+ people are older. It could be interpreted that the younger people have a more ecumenical perspective and approach than the older generation. Second, it can also be a theological and discipline issue between them. They (10- and 10+) have different levels of theological understanding of the Methodist Church and of popular Catholicism. 10+ people have done bible studies with their pastors for more than 10 years while 10- people

have studied the bible in the Methodist Church for less than 10 years. This indicates that the level of discipleship and theological education has given Methodist Christians different perspectives on popular Catholicism. In sum, the younger generation does not recognize the difference between the Methodist Church and popular Catholicism because of insufficient biblical and theological discipline. Thus, they show themselves as more ecumenical to popular Catholicism than the older generation. However, while they learn and study of the differences between the Methodist Church and popular Catholicism through biblical and theological education (discipleship), they gradually become more evangelical.

Although there are different perspectives on popular Catholicism among 10+ and 10- people, both of them share similar understandings of the missional implications of Christian mission, and its purpose and meaning: enhancing Christian faith in people's lives through biblical teachings (evangelism), and helping people who are in need with Christ's love (social action).

Based on these Methodists' understandings of popular Catholicism, its religious practices, and missional implications, the next chapter will investigate the meaning of recontextualization of Christianity through Methodist mission in Batangas.

Chapter 5

Recontextualization of Christianity in the Popular Catholic Context, Batangas

Previous chapters argued, Christian mission in Batangas should not mean evangelizing popular Catholics by using "Protestant teachings" or "Protestant tradition." What Christian mission in Batangas really means, according to surveys and interviews, is the re-evangelizing, revitalizing and the restoration of faith in Christ within the popular Catholic context. In order to restore Christian faith, the gospel constantly needs to communicate with popular Catholicism, which has become the main religious culture in Batangas. In other words, Christian mission in Batangas, conducted by the Methodist Church and other Protestants, should be based on constant dialogue and conversation with popular Catholicism in order to recontextualize the gospel within an "already-Christianized context."

Stephen Bevans presents the model of communication and conversation for constructing a local theology: the synthetic model of contextual theology. The synthetic model is characterized by its methodological attitude, openness, and dialogue. The process of constructing contextual theology in Batangas should be in conjunction with open dialogue between Christian teachings and popular Catholic culture. Bevans argues that the synthetic model may help to understand the culture through dialogue, saying, "The synthetic model really makes an effort to make theologizing an exercise in true conversation and dialogue with the other so that one's own and one's culture's

³⁸⁴ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology: Faith and Cultures* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 88-102.

identity can emerge in the process."³⁸⁵ Missions in Batangas need to also contain the same process to identify popular Catholic culture through dialogue and conversation, and to develop a theology for Christian mission.

In order to suggest a dialogical and cooperative model of Christian mission in the already-Christianized areas, this chapter presents another paradigm of Christian mission: recontextualization based on dialogue and conversation with Christianized culture (e.g. popular Catholicism in Batangas). For this purpose, this chapter suggests the conceptual theory and methodology of the "deculturation of Christianity" as a pre-requisite for the "recontextualization of Christianity" in order to present the possibility of reshaping Christian community without any dominant and colonial cultural influences from outside, but with the meaning of the gospel itself in the current Batangas context. After discussing the deculturation of Christianity, this chapter discusses the concept of recontextualization of the gospel in order to highlight the meaning of being missionized, gospelized, and Christianized again through Methodist missions in Batangas, Philippines.

This study of deculturation and recontextualization will initiate Batangas missions into a dialogical and cooperative model of Christian mission which Chapter Six will further investigate.

Deculturation of Christianity

If Christianity has already become the culture in certain areas, the process of deculturation is about finding and separating the "religious meaning of being a Christian" from the "cultural meanings of being a Christian." So, deculturation is not to be applied

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 94.

everywhere, but experimentally, it would be applied to Batangas in which a popular Catholic form of Christianity has become part of the mainstream culture, in order to find the meaning of being a Christian religiously, not culturally.

Deculturation

Sociologically, the terminology of deculturation has been used as one of four distinct varieties to provide a typology of the acculturative process of culturation: assimilation, integration, rejection, and deculturation. "Deculturation results when members of non-dominant cultures become alienated from the dominant culture as well as from their own minority society." Thus, it fails to acculturate dominant culture; and, the indigenous culture is simultaneously lost. Deculturation, therefore, has frequently occurred during the era of colonialism to indigenous people who could not get into the new dominant culture provided by colonizers, or lost their own traditional culture because they were prevented from retaining their own culture and customs by the colonizers. Realizing this, deculturation seems to have a very passive and negative meaning when explaining how and why people are deculturated from the dominant and indigenous cultures.

While deculturation has been used as a sociological term to explain the process of the demolition of cultural identity, I would like to use "deculturation" as a new term in missiology in order to express the pre-condition of recontextualization of Christianity in

³⁸⁶ J.W. Berry, "Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation," in *Acculturation: Theory*, *Models, and Some New Findings*, ed., Amado M. Padilla (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), 9-25, cited in Jose A Del Pilar and Jocelynda O. Udasco, "Deculturation: Its Lack of Validity," *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* vol. 10, no. 2 (2004): 170.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

Batangas. Catholicism and its religious practices have become a part of Filipino culture, because, as previous chapters investigated, Catholicism has been inculturated into Filipinos' lives through colonialism. Thus, Catholicism has been both a religion and dominant culture at the same time. In the religious and cultural situation of Batangas, deculturation is a conceptual idea to decode Filipino Christianity from its cultural garments, which were formed by colonialism.

Deculturation is an idea inspired by Kenosis in Greek. The concept of Kenosis is the "paradigm of Gospel-culture encounter, just as the mystery of incarnation involved." So, as Kenosis refers to "self-emptiness" of divine power for the purpose of bringing the good news to people, "we [missionaries, Protestant Christians, official Catholics, Methodists] too must empty ourselves of our cosmovisions and cultural prejudices as well as of our attitude of superiority and domination." Thus, deculturation is to humbly reflect on our own beliefs and practices in order to apply the meaning of the gospel to local contexts.

Paul E. Pierson argues that disinculturation is one of the important aspects for the renewal and revival of Christianity.³⁹¹ He says, "... disinculturation is the need for Christians to discover their primary identity, not as members of a particular cultural

³⁸⁸ Michael Amaladoss, "Toward a New Ecumenism" in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 288.

³⁸⁹ Adding is author's interpretation about "we."

³⁹⁰ Michael Amaladoss, "Toward a New Ecumenism" in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 288.

³⁹¹ Paul E. Pierson, "Renewal, Revival, and Contextualization," in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft (California: William Carey Library, 2005), 449-451.

group, but as citizens of the Kingdom of God."³⁹² Deculturation should also be the process of transforming identity from being a particular cultural Christian to a universal Christian. Christian mission conducted by Methodist Christians and churches to the popular Catholic Christians in Batangas, therefore, must be the means of introducing the concept of deculturation to popular Catholics in order to reform, revitalize, and recontextualize the Filipinized Church, which has been localized into the Filipino context amidst the tension between the "indigenizing and pilgrim principles,"³⁹³ which refers to "localized Christianity" with an indigenizing principle and "globalized Christianity" with a pilgrim principle.

Deculturation, as an important process of distinguishing the gospel from cultural garments, is not a countercultural aspect of Christian mission, but it is similar to having a revolving viewpoint in order to see a specific regional Christianity (e.g. Batangas, Philippines) from the perspective that the gospel revolves around culture. It is not a concept of the parallel relationship between gospel and culture, but it is a concept where they revolve around each other. In the context of popular Catholicism in Batangas, Filipino culture may seem to stay, while the meaning of the gospel revolves around it. Or vice versa, popular Catholic culture may seem to spin around the gospel at a certain distance without any religious cultural reformation. Either view demands that the meaning of the gospel cannot be embedded into the culture by the process of

³⁹² Ibid., 450.

³⁹³ The indigenizing principle is to indigenize the gospel in a receiver's culture, so new Christians feel at home in the church. The pilgrim principle is to transform people who become Christians, into what God wants them to be in global Christianity. Cf. Andrew Walls, "The Gospel as the Prisoner and Liberator of Culture," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 7:2 (1983), 223-225. This study will investigate these principles in next section with missiological understandings.

inculturation, but it revolves around the culture because of culturalized Christianity (popular Catholicism) as it is the cushion and bumper between the gospel and culture. See the figure below.

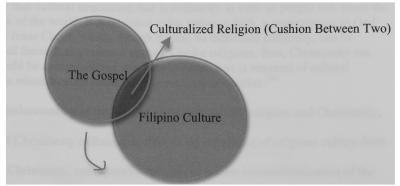


Figure 5-1. Revolving Relation between The Gospel and Culture in the Philippines

Because of the revolving relationship between the gospel and culture, there has been no tension or conflict between Batangas religious culture (popular Catholicism) and the meaning of the gospel, which should be an ongoing process of encounter between the two, in order to reform, renew, revive, and revitalize the gospel in a local culture. Figure 5-1 shows the way Christianity has been integrated into Filipino culture, and thus become a form of culturalized Christianity. It refers to the religionization of Christianity in a Filipino cultural setting. Charles Kraft says, "A religion is a set of cultural forms in terms of which a faith is expressed." Thus, culturalized Christianity (Figure 5-1) means that Christianity (the gospel) has become a religion in a set of Filipino cultures; specifically, it has become popular Catholicism. In this interface between culture, religion, and Christianity, Christianity needs to recontextualize itself in order to restore the meaning of the gospel in order to distinguish itself from the influences of culturalization and

³⁹⁴ Charles H. Kraft, "Is Christianity a Religion Or a Faith?" in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft (California: William Carey Library, 2005), 87.

religionization. Charles Kraft argues that Christianity should be more than a cultural religion, saying:

... True biblical Christianity neither is nor was intended to be a religion in the sense of that cultural structuring that is ordinarily in view as people talk about the religions of the world. It is intended to be, rather, a faith, a commitment to God through Jesus Christ, which, though it must be expressed culturally, can be expressed through any cultural system. Unlike religions, then, Christianity can and should be contextualized, not simply adapted as is required of cultural religions when they are taken from one society to another.³⁹⁵

In this understanding of the interface between culture, religion, and Christianity, deculturation of Christianity in Batangas, thus, is the separation of religious culture from Batangas local Christianity, conceptually, in order to initiate recontextualization of the gospel in Batangas.

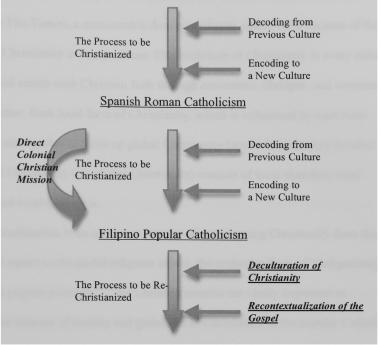
While popular Catholicism is a form of Filipino Christianity embodied by Filipino cultural features, the Word of God in every Christian community is always "to be liberated from its cultural embodiment, interpreted in the living context of people and reexpressed in their cultural idiom in their life and celebration" in order for the gospel to be authentic to current contexts. Deculturation of Christianity for the recontextualization of the gospel is to liberate the meaning of being Christians from cultural embodiment.

Overall, deculturation of Christianity is an important prerequisite of recontextualization of the gospel in the context of popular Catholicism in order to reshape the Christian Community in Batangas. The figure below is a summary of both the terms of deculturation and recontextualization in order to explain the process of re-Christianization in the context of the Philippines.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 97.

³⁹⁶ Michael Amaladoss, "Toward a New Ecumenism" in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 294.

Early Christianity



Filipinized Christianity

Figure 5-2. Deculturation and Recontextualization of Christianity in the Philippines

In short, the "deculturation" of Christianity is the removal of the cultural features from cultural Catholicism (Filipino popular Catholicism), and the "recontextualization" of the Gospel is the reformulation, reshaping, and revitalization of Filipinized Christianity through recovering the meaning of being Christianized.

Indigenizing Principle and Pilgrim Principle

... If we believe that Christians from other cultures can enrich our faith or help us correct our mistakes, we are in effect saying that Christianity is not permanently

wedded to any human culture. Put another way, the acceptance of difference means that the Christian faith can be at home in any culture. Consequently Christianity has as many centers as the number of cultures of its adherents.³⁹⁷

According to Tite Tienou, a monocentric dominant church cannot exist because of the multitude of Christianity in every culture. This multitude of Christianity in every culture helps build and enrich each Christian faith through encounters, dialogue, and cooperation with one another. Each local form of Christianity, which is influenced by each local culture, can join together to build up global Christianity (world Christianity). In other words, world Christianity (i.e. global Christianity) consists of local churches, local theologies, and local Christians.

As deculturation is an important process of transforming Christianity from the local cultural aspect to the global religious aspect, the understandings of "indigenizing principle and pilgrim principle" for Christian mission are vitally important to understand the balance of locality and globalism of Christianity in the popular Catholic context. Thus, the understandings of popular Catholicism in Batangas necessitate the understandings of indigenizing and pilgrim principles, in terms of global Christianity.

First of all, what popular Catholicism and its Christians present is that popular Catholicism has contained the inculturated gospel into their cultures (indigenizing principle), while remaining loyal to its (the gospel's) universal significance (pilgrim

³⁹⁷ Tite Tienou, "Forming Indigenous Theologies," 248-259, cited in Charles E. Van Engen, "Critical Theologizing: Knowing God in Multiple Global and Local Contexts," James R. Krabill, Walter Sawatsky, and Charles E. Van Engen, eds., *Evangelical, Ecumenical, and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2006), 95.

³⁹⁸ The indigenizing principle emphasizes diversity of Christianity for local communities, while the pilgrim principle emphasizes unity of Christianity for global Christian community. Cf. Andrew Walls, "The Gospel as the Prisoner and Liberator of Culture," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 7:2 (1983), 223-225.

principle).³⁹⁹ It seems that popular Catholicism itself is the result of the tension between the indigenizing and pilgrim principles in a balance of particularity and uniformity of Christianity in their local contexts. In other words, popular Catholicism has been localized (indigenized) in the Filipino context while it also has been a part of the global Christian community.

Second, however, the process of re-Christianization in a popular Catholic context needs to deculturate the gospel from popularization (assimilation) of Christianity, and reconstruct a Filipinized and recontextualized Christianity in the current Batangas context. Therefore, deculturation of the gospel in the popular Catholic context means asking Filipino Christians to get rid of the particularities of their popular religious culture mixed and identified with the Filipino folk religious features and the colonial spirits, which people tend to think of as, ultimately, holding their fate. As a result, deculturation refers to the pilgrim principle to get rid of colonial and folk religious features, as well as referring to the indigenizing principle to enter into Filipinized Christianity through recontextualization.

In short, indigenizing and pilgrim principles indicate Filipino popular Catholicism needs to be deculturated from colonial and folk religious features, and simultaneously to be recontextualized by the gospel.

³⁹⁹ Michael Amaladoss, "Toward a New Ecumenism" in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 294.

⁴⁰⁰ Colonial spirits refer to fatalism, passivity, elitism, ritualism and rationalism. For more detail, see "cultural gods" in Chapter Two.

Recontextualization of Christianity

Recontextualization of Christianity is a revival of the meaning of being Christianized in the context of Christianity that has become a culture in itself, like popular Catholicism in the Philippines.

Recontextualization comes from synthesizing "re"(again) and "contextualization." As contextualization, in terms of Christian mission, is the ongoing process to vitalize the gospel into a certain context, recontextualization is to revitalize the meaning of the gospel through investigating and studying the process and result of contextualization, in order to adjust the process of contextualization in different generations and different contexts because of the passage of time. E. Van Engen says, "… there will be a need to recontextualize the gospel of Jesus Christ among multiple generations of believers in differing contexts."

Christianity in the Philippines was contextualized by colonialism, which resulted in Popular Catholicism. However, a controversy exists regarding whether popular Catholicism in the Philippines is a result of good contextualization⁴⁰² or just religious syncretism. In some ways, the concept of recontextualization assumes that Christianity in the Philippines had been already contextualized. Therefore, in terms of recontextualization, popular Catholicism needs to be examined and checked by Christian mission in order to bring the meaning of the gospel into Filipinos' current lives and cultures, again.

⁴⁰¹ Charles E. Van Engen, "Critical Theologizing: Knowing God in Muliple Global/Local Contexts," Evangelicals, Ecumenical, and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation, ed. James R. Krabill, Walter Sawatsky, and Charles E. Van Engen (Maryknow, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2006), 94.

⁴⁰² A good contextualization refers to what Paul G. Hiebert says in his article, "Critical Contextualization." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (3) 1987.

Paul G. Hiebert presents, "meta-theology," for "a transcultural framework that guides us in doing theology in different human contexts,"403 in order to examine and check syncretism in Christianity. He suggests three criteria for meta-theology: A Biblical foundation, the Work of the Holy Spirit, and Cooperation with other cultural Christians. 404 These three standards also may apply to examining popular Catholicism in Batangas, Philippines, to see whether it is a syncretism of Christianity or not. First, religious practices in popular Catholicism need to be examined for whether they have biblical foundations or not. One of main reasons that Filipino Methodist Christians think of popular Catholicism as a form pagan Christianity is the religious practices put forth in Chapter Four. Sto. Niño, Mother Mary, and other saints have become important religious figures in popular Catholicism. The problem with those figures, and the veneration of them, is that those figures are not based upon a biblical foundation; moreover, religious practices regarding the veneration of them have not come from any biblical teachings. Second, as the survey presents, most Methodist Christians believe that the work of the Holy Spirit is manifested in popular Catholicism. 405 However, popular Catholicism is intermingled with non-biblical religious practices and ideas. How the Holy Spirit works in non-biblical practices and ideas in popular Catholicism is beyond this research. However, it is an interesting observation that most Batangas Methodist Christians think the works of the Holy Spirit are alive in popular Catholicism. Third, although cooperation with popular Catholicism is difficult, it can be an important task for Methodist Christians.

⁴⁰³ Paul G. Hiebert, "Syncretism and Social Paradigms," Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents, ed. Gailyn Van Rheenen (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 2006), 41.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 44.

⁴⁰⁵ See table 4-4 in chapter four.

Jesus Villamin, one of the interviewees, presents one reason why it is difficult to cooperate with popular Catholicism: popular Catholicism is very primordial in Batangas, which emphasizes the unity of bloodline through remaining in the popular Catholic tradition. He continues, "... they [People in Batangas] don't like to change their religious traditions because the change means disconnectedness with their family and tradition." In this religious tendency to stay in popular Catholic traditions, cooperation should not be meant to change their (popular Catholics') popular Catholic traditions before joining Christian mission, but it means to examine their faith in popular Catholicism through the process of recontextualizing the gospel.

Overall, on the criteria of meta-theology for interacting with local theology, recontextualization needs to emphasize biblical foundations in order to reform religious practices in popular Catholicism, reintroduce the works of Holy Spirit to popular Catholicism, and cooperate with popular Catholicism to authenticate Christian mission.

Rationale for Recontextualization

Paul Pierson looks for a reason for recontextualization to restore the appropriateness of the gospel in changing generations, saying:

Even churches that were appropriate to both culture and Bible in their beginnings, [and some churches were not,] tend to get out of synchronization with either or both as they move from generation to generation. After a few generations, therefore, they are in need of both spiritual and social renewal to restore appropriateness. 407

According to Pierson, recontextualization is intended to bring a revival of Christianity in

⁴⁰⁶ Jesus Villamin, Interview with Author. June 11th, 2011.

⁴⁰⁷ Paul E. Pierson, "Renewal, Revival, and Contextualization," in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft (California: William Carey Library, 2005), 437.

a current Christian context. Historically, recontextualization has been an important feature of the revival movement of Christianity. Therefore, recontextualization of Christianity in Batangas, Philippines is not to bring popular Catholic Christians into Methodist Church through conversion, but in order to bring the spiritual and social revitalization of the gospel among Filipinos through a Christian renewal movement.

Lieven Boeve states that recontextualization is an important task to figure out Christian identity in the era of pluralism and post-modernism, saying, "the Christian faith can only survive by recontextualization, since the credibility thereof is always contextual." In the era of religious plurality and a multitude of other faiths, Christian faith should be contextual. Moreover, expressions in which people have attempted to practice legitimate Christian faith need to be contextual in order to have effective communication between faith and culture, which is the reason and the method of Christian mission. In Batangas, religious expressions are different between popular Catholic Christians and Methodist Christians (as seen in Chapter Three). That means understandings of Filipino Christianity should be recontextualized for current Batangas social, cultural, and religious contexts for effective communication between Christian faith and popular Catholic culture. Moreover, Christian identity as a popular Catholic Christian in Batangas, in the post-modern era, should not be obtained by birth anymore, but it should be made by the individual choosing to be a Christian. So, recontextualization is for the renewal of Christian identity in changing contexts.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 441.

⁴⁰⁹ Lieven Boeve, *God Interrupts History: Theology in a Time of Upheaval* (NY: The Continuum International Publishing Company, 2007), 3.

"Recontextualization is... an ongoing task that can never reach completion." The purpose of recontextualization is not to end Christian mission after all territories of the earth accept Christianity, but it is to constantly renew the meaning of the gospel in every place and time to make the Word of God alive in every context. That's why, as Lamin Sanneh argues, Christianity and the gospel should be translatable in every context. In order to apply the meaning of the gospel into every culture in every time, recontextualization should be an "ongoing dialogue between faith and culture." Therefore, dialogue in recontextualization is not counter-cultural, but it is more like intercultural and transcultural within Christian faith. In Batangas, the ongoing dialogue between faith and culture should be observed in the relationship between Methodist faith and popular Catholic culture, because they need to be partners of dialogue for recontextualizing the gospel for their current contexts. And that should be a reason for recontextualization in Batangas.

Relational Mission: Beyond Contextualization in 21st Century

One of purposes of Christian mission is communicating with non-Christians, their cultures, and their religions to present the gospel into their non-Christian contexts. Thus, contextualization of the gospel has become an important task to share the gospel effectively. Observing, studying, and analyzing people's cultures and contexts have

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Lamin Sanneh emphasizes translatability of Christianity for Christian mission in his book, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989).

⁴¹² Celilia T. Medina, "Dialogue Between Faith and Culture and Popular Devotions," in *Filipino Popular Devotions: The Interior Dialogue Between Traditional Religion and Christianity*, ed. Leonardo N. Mercado, 13 (Manila: Logos Publications, 2000).

become vital works in order to effectively bring the gospel to them. In some ways, the gospel has encountered cultures, and in the process of encountering cultures has become syncretistic or contextualized. Whether the process of encountering the gospel and culture has been called contextualization, enculturation, or indigenization, the purpose of missions was to communicate with cultures.

The communicational purpose of Christian mission has developed in what is known as communication theory, or "source-message-receptor" (S-M-R).⁴¹³ Eugene Nida adapted a theory of communication from Claude E. Shannon to utilize it for missiology.⁴¹⁴ It is clear that this model of S-M-R helped develop the concept of contextualization, "as well as making a vital contribution to Bible translation."⁴¹⁵ This communicational model for Christian mission was relatively "product-oriented." In other words, this model is more focused on the result than the process itself.

In the modern era, a model for Christian mission based on a theory of communication has been effective to bring the gospel into local cultural contexts. As a matter of fact, the gravity of Christianity already moved into the so-called third world. 416

⁴¹³ Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960).

⁴¹⁴ Claude E. Shannon, *Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana: Univ. of Ilinois Press, 1949), recited in Daniel Shaw, "Beyond Contextualization: Toward a Twenty-first-Century Model for Enabling Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, vol. 34, no. 4. (October, 2010), 209.

⁴¹⁵ Daniel Shaw, "Beyond Contextualization: Toward a Twenty-first-Century Model for Enabling Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, vol. 34, no. 4. (October, 2010), 209.

⁴¹⁶ Christianity is not western religion anymore, but it has become a major religion of non-western world, e.g., Africa, Asia, and South America. Lamin Sanneh argues that the gravity of Christianity already left from Western world, and there are many pillars of world Christianity in which we need to consider localization of Christianity through indigenization, in his book, *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Consequently, the result of Christian mission, conducted under the aforementioned theory of communication, seemed successful. However, a new model of Christian mission is required in the 21st Century in order to reemphasize the areas of being Christianized. In other words, the product-oriented mission needs to be changed for the Christianized areas in the post-modern era. For example, Batangas, as an area of strong Catholic tradition, was successfully Christianized by Catholicism. In the perspective of product-oriented mission, mission in the Batangas has been successful and complete; however, Christian mission is not that simple in the 21st Century.

For a new model of Christian mission, Daniel Shaw presents the "processoriented model," which is related to the relevance theory of communication developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson. 417 This model emphasizes relationships with globalization as well as localization. That is to say, while the product-oriented mission focused on the localization of Christianity through contextualization, the process-oriented mission emphasizes both the localization and globalization of Christianity through building relationships between bearers and receptors of the gospel. The process-oriented model, thus, offers "a fresh understanding of the gospel, with its potential to transform both those who bear the message and those who hear it."418 Consequently, "the new model for mission accents a both/and approach rather than an either/or perspective."419 See a comparison in the table 5-1.

⁴¹⁷ Daniel Shaw, "Beyond Contextualization: Toward a Twenty-first-Century Model for Enabling Mission," in International Bulletin of Missionary Research, vol. 34, no. 4. (October, 2010), 210. 418 Ibid., 214.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 212.

Table 5-1. Contrasting Models of Mission⁴²⁰

Charles Van Engen also argues, "we need to go beyond the initial emphases of contextualization as communication to develop ways in which we may recontextualize the gospel in always new local and global contexts." 421

If Christian mission conducted by the Methodist Church in Batangas were based on the product-oriented mission, it would have to be measured by the numbers of converts from popular Catholicism in order to know whether or not it was successful. In regards to this point, we need to remind ourselves that focusing only on conversion is a unilateral form of Christian mission that is only concerned with moving people from popular Catholicism into the Methodist Church, thus making it the only purpose of Christian mission. However, conversion is not the main purpose of Protestant mission,

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 ⁴²⁰ Daniel Shaw, "Beyond Contextualization: Toward a Twenty-first-Century Model for Enabling Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, vol. 34, no. 4.
 (October, 2010), 211.
 ⁴²¹ Charles E. Van Engen, "Critical Theologizing: Knowing God in Multiple Global and

⁴²¹ Charles E. Van Engen, "Critical Theologizing: Knowing God in Multiple Global and Local Context," James R. Krabill, Walter Sawatsky, and Charles E. Van Engen, ed., *Evangelical, Ecumenical, and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2006), 89.

according to Batangas Methodist Christians. ⁴²² Product-oriented mission conducted by Spanish friars and American missionaries through colonial forms of Christian mission, as this study investigated in Chapter Two, cannot continue in the 21st Century. What missionaries doing Christian mission in the "already-Christianized areas" should regard is that Christian mission means to recontextualize the gospel through building relationships with the existing gospel in a local context in order to revive the meaning of the gospel in the places where the gospel has become only just a part of the culture through contextualization. Thus, relational missions based on the process-oriented mission, as suggested by Daniel Shaw and Charles Van Engen, can be offered as one of the missiological models for Batangas in 21st Century.

Centripetal Principle and Centrifugal Principle: Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

Richard Baukham argues two different missiological models (principles) based on the biblical foundation of missions, the "centripetal principle" and "centrifugal principle" of Christian mission. 423 The centripetal principle is from a missional paradigm of the Old Testament except the book of Jonah. Generally, this principle presents the idea that one has to come to the center, such as the church, to be Christians. For example, Israel was God's selected nation and was the center where one could be considered the people of God in the Old Testament. Thus, people who want to be the people of God in the Old Testament era should come to Israel, or be like the Israelites. On the contrary, the

⁴²² For more details, see chapter four, subtitled, "Methodists' Understandings of Missional Implication for Batangas Mission," consisted with surveys and interviews with Batangas Methodist Christians.

⁴²³ Richard Baukham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 72.

centrifugal principle is based on the New Testament missional paradigm, especially based on Jesus' Great Commission, "going out" to the nations to preach the gospel. Thus, the centrifugal principle is the missional paradigm for getting out of the Judaic boundaries of missions, while the centripetal principle in the Old Testament stays in Judaism.

Seemingly, the centripetal principle of Christian mission is more like a method with an ethnocentric perspective, while the centrifugal principle refers to cultural relativism for Christian mission, if the anthropological terminology can be used.

Applying the "centripetal and centrifugal principles" to Christian mission, the missions conducted by Methodist Christians in Batangas needs to be balanced between the two, in terms of "ethnocentrism and cultural relativism," in order to approach popular Catholic Christians. The viewpoint of Methodist Christians regarding the practices of popular Catholicism can be based on either ethnocentrism or cultural relativism. As Chapter Four has investigated, 42% of Methodists in Batangas feel comfortable and think statues, amulets, pictures, and symbols found in popular Catholicism are acceptable, while 5.9% aren't sure and 52.1% of them say "no" to popular Catholic religious practices. The 42% refer to a cultural relativist approach to popular Catholic cultures, while the 52.1% refer to an ethnocentric perspective of the Methodist Church when interpreting popular Catholic culture.

As mentioned previously, the centripetal principle may be anthropologically understood as a concept of ethnocentrism, while the centrifugal principle could be

⁴²⁴ I apply the concept of centripetal and centrifugal force for Christian mission into anthropological terminology, ethnocentrism and cultural relativism which present the attitudes to interpret other cultures and other people's behaviors.

⁴²⁵ Table 4-11, "Do you feel comfortable to be around statues/amulets/pictures/symbols of popular Catholicism?" See chapter four.

matched with cultural relativism. Moreover, the centripetal principle can be understood as being gospel-centered, in which Methodist Christians should present the gospel as the purpose of missions in the popular Catholic context. On the contrary, the centrifugal principle is inclined towards the culture-centeredness of Christian mission, because it emphasizes contextualization of the gospel as an important methodology for the mission.

Importantly, either principle without the other is not appropriate for the mission in Batangas, because the balance between the ethnocentric (gospel-centeredness) and the cultural relativistic (culture-centeredness) perspectives among Methodist Christians in Batangas is significantly important in order for re-Christianization the people through dialogue with popular Catholic Christians. Methodist Christians need to present the nonnegotiable essence of the gospel through the centripetal principle that states that popular Catholic Christians should seek the truth through Methodist missions. Also, Methodist Christians need to bring the meaning of the gospel to popular Catholic Christians through the centrifugal principle, because the non-negotiable essence of the gospel also needs to be reachable by people through their particular cultural interpretation and understandings. Therefore, the centrifugal principle is a more practical model than centripetal principle, while the centripetal principle does, theoretically, provide the reason and meaning of Christian mission.

I agree with what Batangas Methodist Christians suggest for Christian mission in Batangas: conducting Bible Studies for popular Catholic Christians and providing a social gospel for enhancing the meaning of the gospel in Batangas context. 426 I think that

⁴²⁶ Interviews and survey, table 4-19 in chapter four. Chapter six will deal with this issue (individual evangelism and social gospel) profoundly in order to present a missional model for Batangas.

Bible Studies should be based on the centripetal principle in order to provide the meaning of the gospel, while the social gospel in Batangas needs to be based on the centrifugal principle to bring the meaning of the gospel into Filipinos' actual lives. Therefore, the balance between these two principles is imperative in order to provide missiological foundations for Christian mission in the popular Catholic context.

Recontextualization of the gospel, thus, refers to checking the balance between these two principles, since overemphasizing one of these two principles tends to oversimplify and pervert the meaning of Christian mission as either only ethnocentric (Methodists are right, and popular Catholics are wrong) or only cultural relativistic (both are right, thus, Christian mission is unnecessary in a popular Catholic context).

Interreligious Dialogue with Popular Catholicism

Recontextualization of Christianity is not for only popular Catholic Christians, but also it is for Methodist Christians living in the context of popular Catholicism. Hence, recontextualization requires dialogue between Methodist Christians in Batangas and popular Catholic Christians in order to properly recontextualize the gospel in their social, cultural, and religious contexts. The dialogical approach between two groups can be followed by using a form of "interreligious dialogue," although the two groups share the same religious origin and faith in God.

Mariasusai Dhavamony defines the interreligious dialogue as:

The interreligious dialogue is a coming together of two persons or groups of different religious traditions, as religiously committed persons with the view of enriching, deepening and broadening their religious life through mutual understanding of one another's convictions and through witnessing. 427

⁴²⁷ Mariasusai Dhavamony, "Towards a Theology of Dialogue in Interreligious Ritual

"Dialogue is an attempt to communicate, to explain, to enlighten, to understand." It is not a unilateral methodology for Christian mission, but should be bilateral to highlight mutual participation for enhancing the understandings of one another. So, in order to have successful in dialogue, openness based on love and empathy is important because "the dialogue partner does not merely communicate his religious message but he is his message."

Interreligious dialogue with popular Catholicism is imperative for the recontextualization of the gospel, because dialogue is not only used to learn about someone's truth (popular Catholicism), but also to learn about us (Methodist Church). The Methodist Church needs to learn from popular Catholic traditions through dialogue with popular Catholics as well as learn from its own Methodist traditions. Popular Catholic Christians also need to learn from Methodist evangelical Christian mission with reflecting on what they really believe. This dialogical process is a process of the recontextualization of Christianity.

Interreligious dialogue should not mean religious relativism based on religious syncretism, nor does it mean that anything can be truth in any religion, which ultimately means nothing can be truth in any religion. That is why David Tracy argues that dialogue among religions is a theological necessity. ⁴³¹ The dialogue with popular Catholicism is also a theological necessity in order for missionaries, mission agents, and pastors to

Participation," Pro Dialogo / Bulletin Catholic Pontifical, (October, 2010), 290-291.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 291.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 292.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 293.

⁴³¹ David Tracy, *Dialogue With The Other: The Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 95.

define the meaning of the Christian mission in popular Catholic contexts. Significantly, theological dialogue does not need to be dogmatic, but it needs to be practical for local popular Catholic Christians. The religious practices and activities related to people's theologies and understandings of religious rituals addressed in Chapter Three, bolster the claim that interreligious dialogue with popular Catholicism is really dialogue with people's understandings of Christianity in order to continue to process of recontextualization.

Dialogue with popular Catholicism will be investigated in Chapter Six in order to address dialogical and cooperative missions with popular Catholicism.

Conclusion

Christian mission refers to approaching people with the gospel. In order to approach people, mission agents need to continually interpret and interact with the culture of that area. Thus, studying culture for Christian mission is significant to bring the gospel effectively in a given local culture. The interaction with a local culture is called contextualization of the gospel.

Christian mission in the Philippines also refers to going to the people with understandings of Batangas culture. However, in the historical viewpoint and missiological interpretation through surveys and interviews, the Philippines has already been Christianized by Catholicism, specifically a form of popular Catholicism.

Contextualization of Christianity in the Philippines occurred during the Spanish colonial era when the Spanish brought Catholicism. What I see for the Methodist mission in the Philippines is the necessity of recontextualization of Christianity through ongoing

communication, dialogue, and interaction with popular Catholicism. Popular Catholicism refers to culturalized Christianity in the Philippines. Christianity has become a culture in the Philippines, and Filipino culture itself has been Christianized. In an attempt to get rid of the culturalization of Christianity for the purpose recontextualizing the gospel in Batangas, Philippines, it is necessary to utilize the conceptual idea of "deculturation," which refers to bringing the local culturalized form of Christianity (popular Catholicism in indigenous principle) into the form of global Christianity (pilgrim principle). After deculturation of Christianity, Methodist missions should attempt to recontextualize Christianity, which emphasizes efforts to find out the meaning of being a Christian from culturalized Christianity, in order to strike a balance between the localization and globalization of Christianity. Popular Catholicism has been localized in terms of product-oriented mission which is the contextualized Christianity; however, recontextualization of Christianity is an attempt to balance "localized" and "globalized" Christianity through process-oriented missions.

Dialogue between popular Catholicism and the Methodist Church needs to be a form of interreligious dialogue in order to help both groups understand each other. This dialogue between the two can also be a form of dialogue between culture (popular Catholicism) and Christianity (Methodist Church). The gospel and culture should continually communicate with each other in order to contextualize and recontextualize the gospel in the culture. Thus, the Methodist Church needs to dialogue with popular Catholicism for missional cooperation in Batangas.

The next chapter will suggest dialogical and cooperative mission with popular Catholicism as a methodological suggestion for recontextualizing Christianity.

Chapter 6

Dialogical and Cooperative Mission with Popular Catholicism In Batangas, Philippines

This study has previously investigated popular Catholicism and its religious practices from both the scholarly literature and the Batangas Methodist Christians' perspectives. Historical studies have been presented in Chapter Two in order to understand the rise of popularized "Catholicism" in the Filipino context, to sketch a history of Protestant missions, and to discuss the historical relationship between popular Catholicism and Protestantism. Then, Chapter Three explored the formations of popular Catholicism from the perspective of the people's theology, culture and religious expression utilizing the scholarly literature. Chapter Four provided a study of Methodists' understandings of popular Catholicism and missional implications for Batangas. Then, in Chapter Five, the deculturation and recontextualization of Christianity were suggested as a way of decoding and encoding Christianity for the current Batangas context, which was influenced by colonial history and popular religiosity with the intention of providing a way to revitalize the meaning of the gospel. Finally, in this chapter, cooperative and dialogical Christian mission is to be suggested as a model of Christian mission conducted by Methodist Church in Batangas.

Toward Dialogue and Cooperation

Regarding how popular Catholicism is viewed by those in the Protestant church,

Thomas Bamat notes:

Despite a great deal of ecclesial talk about the necessity of "inculturation" and more positive evaluations of popular Catholicism in recent church documents, some in the church continue to view much of it as plain ignorance or deeply flawed "syncretism," if not outright idolatry.⁴³²

As a Methodist missionary in Batangas, I had chosen to ignore popular Catholicism because I thought it would be a kind of pseudo-Christianity, which was far from authentic Christian faith. Likewise, I interpreted its religious practices as idolatrous because I couldn't find any biblical foundation in them. Thus, my main purpose for Christian mission as a Methodist minister was to convert popular Catholic Christians to the Methodist Church in order for them to be true Christians. While many methods were used, all were ineffective.

Through my missionary experiences in Batangas and the interviews and surveys for this study, I have come to acknowledge why the mission of conversion-centeredness was not successful during my time in Batangas.

First, because popular Catholicism is not only their religion but also the main culture of Filipinos, people in Batangas are afraid of being marginalized from the culture to which most of their families and friends belong. For example, one pastor in Batangas says, "there are still many cemeteries refusing burial to Protestant Christians. They only want to keep Catholic people in cemeteries. It is also a significant issue because the funeral refusal at the site of the cemetery makes Protestant Christians afraid of being separated from their family who are Catholic, even in death." Reluctant conversion to

⁴³² Thomas Bamat, "Popular Catholicism: Global Paradox and Promise," *America* vol. 180, no. 19, May 29, 1999, 8.

⁴³³ Alfredo Malalo, Group Discussion with Methodist pastors and workers in Batangas. May 22nd, 2011.

the Protestant Church is not only for religious reasons, but also because they want to stay within the mainstream culture. Since popular Catholicism informs the culture among Filipinos, conversion to the Methodist Church means that they must leave their popular Catholic culture for the minority Protestant culture.

Second, due to the cultural reasons above, Batangas Methodist Christians suggest conducting Bible studies for popular Catholic Christians in order to provide the truth based on biblical foundations, instead of aiming for conversion to the Methodist Church. In addition, many Methodist Christians emphasize the social gospel which may be a means of cooperation or reunion with Catholic Christianity. Thus, most Methodist Christians whom I interviewed in Batangas understand the purpose of Christian mission, as laid out in Chapter Four, is "to enhance faith in Christ in our daily lives," and "to help people in need with Christ's love," hot to convert them to the Methodist Church. Overall, Christian mission in the context of popular Catholicism means to cooperate in order to enhance faith in Christ and to help people in need "from the perspective of dialogue, which aims at a deeper conversion of the followers of all religions [popular Catholic Christians and Methodist Christians] to God." 435

As this dissertation began by introducing the purpose of the study in the Chapter One, endeavors to have dialogue and conversation in theological discussions and

⁴³⁵ Ovey N. Mohammed, "Catholicism in Dialogue with World Religions: The Value of Self-Denial," *Toronto Journal of Theology 20*, no.1 (2004): 33.

⁴³⁴ See table 4-19. "What does Christian Mission mean in Batangas?" Among all who were surveyed, the responses were as follows: conversion, 9.9%; enhancing faith in Christ in our daily lives (Bible studies), 44.4%; and helping people in need with Christ's love (social gospel), 42.3%. Interestingly, Pastors are emphasizing more on Bible studies (60.0% for enhancing faith through Christian mission, 33.3% for helping people in need) while laypersons support them in balance (42.9% for enhancing faith, 45.4% for social gospel for need).

⁴³⁵ Ovey N. Mohammed, "Catholicism in Dialogue with World Religions: The Value of

missiological cooperation with popular Catholicism have rarely existed. The reason for not having profound dialogue and cooperation between the two for Christian mission is that Methodists have devaluated popular Catholicism because of pagan features in it.

Although popular Catholicism is not well contextualized with Christian meanings, it cannot be viewed only as pagan Christianity. What I see in the current relationship between two Christianities is that the relationship should not be one of "discontinuity and mutual exclusion," but it should be a relationship of "continuity and dialogue."

Therefore, this chapter suggests dialogue and cooperation between the Methodist Church (mission agents) and popular Catholicism (cultural and religious context of missions) for the recontextualization of Christianity in Batangas, Philippines.

Suggestion: Dialogical and Cooperative Mission

Religious dialogue in the Christian perspective is not simply to understand different religions, but it needs to be missional, evangelistic, and biblical approaches in order to introduce and share the gospel. Therefore, the purpose of religious dialogue in the Christian perspective is to evangelize, and as Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest say, "... dialogue is key to authentic evangelization."

The dialogue between the Methodist Church and popular Catholicism is also for Christian mission and evangelism, and Christian mission and evangelism, in a popular Catholic context, should be based on mutual understanding and respect between the Methodist Church and popular Catholicism. The reason for mutual understanding and

⁴³⁶ Lieven Boeve, *God Interrupts History: Theology in a Time of Upheaval* (NY: The Continuum International Publishing Company, 2007), 7.

⁴³⁷ Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest, ed., *Popular Catholicism in a World Church:* Seven Case Studies in Inculturation (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 16.

respect is that Christian mission and evangelism in the context of popular Catholicism is not about reconstructing neo-Christendom through sweeping away popular Catholicism, but to enhance the meaning of the gospel in people's lives. Thus, Thomas Bamat says, "The goal [of Methodist mission] should be not the purification of popular Catholicism but rather its enhancement [with Christian teachings]." For this goal of Christian mission in Batangas, missionaries and evangelists need to be ready for dialogue with popular Catholicism. However, all conversation does not mean authentic dialogue. In order for dialogue with popular Catholicism to be authentic, there are necessary criteria to guide missionaries and evangelists.

For authentic religious dialogue with other faiths for evangelism, Suh-Tae Yun asserts, in his recent doctoral dissertation, the necessity of biblical foundations,

Trinitarian missiology, dialogical method, evangelical purpose, and practical openness to one another. 439

Adding to Yun's disclosures, this study brings an additional dialogical method for Christian mission in the Popular Catholic context: evangelical cooperation with Popular Catholic Christians. It is for the enhancement of Christian faith in the popular Catholic context and is not to change the religious context in Batangas, but to collaborate with the popular Catholic context to revive the meaning of the gospel among popular Catholic

⁴³⁸ Thomas Bamat, "Popular Catholicism: Global Paradox and Promise," *America* vol. 180, no. 19, May 29, 1999, 8.

⁴³⁹ Suh Tae Yun, "Mission Between Religious Pluralism and the Postmodern Claim of Truth: A Study of Young Korean Protestants' Views of Other Faiths" (Ph.D. Diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2011), 190-217. He presents six disclosures of interreligious dialogical evangelism as "interreligious dialogical evangelism is biblical, interreligious dialogical evangelism and Trinitarian missiology, interreligious dialogical evangelism is evangelism is evangelism is evangelism is claiming the Christian truth in the Trinity, interreligious dialogical evangelism is practical."

Christians. It is the concept of recontextualization of Christianity with popular Catholic Christians through evangelical cooperation and dialogue.

Methodologically, there may be three kinds of Christian dialogue in a Catholic religious context: casual conversation, official visitation, and theological discussion. First, a casual conversation may discuss of religious life, such as regular prayer, reading the Bible, going to church for worship services, etc. It will alleviate the tension, which might be standing between a popular Catholic Christian and a Methodist Christian. Second, official visitation to popular Catholic Christians may bring out the similarities of Catholicism and Protestantism, such as the Lordship of Jesus Christ, Creation by God, and the authority of the Bible. This process helps to find common areas between the two "Christians." Third, there might be many theological discussions between the Protestants and Catholics. For instance, Catholics include the apocrypha, while Protestants do not. Soteriologically, as Chapter Three investigated, salvation has been received by baptism according to Catholicism, and although it may be lost by mortal sin, it can be regained by penance. However, in Protestantism, salvation is the result of divine grace and unmerited favor from God to those who believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Also, as this research presents and argues in Chapter Three, Christology and Mariology can be topics of theological dialogue and discussions. These theological issues are certainly an important part of religious dialogue in the Philippines.

All three kinds of dialogue should be based on the purpose of evangelical cooperation for Christian mission. For the case of dialogue with other religions or doctrinally different Christianities, like the Protestant and Catholic Churches, E. Stanley Jones' examples of "round table," and "question hour," both of which Jones conducted

and practiced for his mission in India, could be a suggestion as practical dialogical methods. The purpose of the question hour and round table was "not to win [an] argument, but to win men." Dialogue with Popular Catholic Christians needs to be like that, because Christian mission in the context of popular Catholicism is not to win people from popular Catholicism to the Methodist Church, but to win people for the kingdom of God through enhancing their faith in Jesus Christ.

Dialogue and Cooperation for Holistic Mission

As stated above, the purpose of Christian mission in the Christianized areas (e.g. popular Catholic area) is no longer for bringing people to "my church," but it is for enhancing the meaning of the gospel in "their churches." Culturally, Christian mission is no longer for bringing people to my Christian culture, but it is to present the gospel into their culture.

In order to dialogue and cooperate with other Christian churches, it is necessary to have a common purpose for Christian mission. Michael Amaladoss argues that we should know the focus of Christian mission for today, and he says it is to combat mammonism.

I think that today the focus of mission is changing again to what it was at the time of Christ. The Good News is a call to conversion from Mammon to God, because no one can serve two masters. This struggles between God and Mammon finds its traces in all religions and cultures, as also in the Church itself, unfortunately. But the cultures and religions are also marked by the presence of the Spirit. The missionary challenge therefore is not primarily to substitute cultures and religions by a Christian culture and religion, but to fight against Mammon in dialogue and collaboration with other believers and all people of goodwill. 441

⁴⁴⁰ E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road* (India: Lucknow Publishing House, 1964), 132.

⁴⁴¹ Michael Amaladoss, "Toward a New Ecumenism" in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 286.

According to Amaladoss, the necessity for dialogue with other believers is to fight against mammonism and secularization, which are in opposition to religious/sacred life. What I see here is that the dialogue between Methodist Christians and popular Catholic Christians is not to figure out who has the more proper Christianity in the Filipino current context, but the dialogue is for evangelical cooperation in order to stand firmly against non-biblical and non-Christian realities⁴⁴² through investigating the true meaning of being a Christian in secularizing contexts.

On this point, this study agrees to Amaladoss' argument that Christian mission through dialogue with other believers needs to focus on anti-Christian beliefs, such as mammonism, and not to focus on simple evangelism. The reason for agreeing with Michael's argument is that the dualistic perspective that divides what is evangelism and what is the social gospel in Christian mission is invalid for the holistic missional purpose. The Westernized Christian's dualistic worldview is divided between what is religion's responsibility and what is science's responsibility in this world, as Chapter Three argued (see Table 3-1). This dualism in Westernized Christianity would not be effective for Christian mission in the area of holistic worldview. Christian mission cannot be separated into evangelism and social gospel because of a dualistic perspective; however, it should refer to bringing the gospel, which emphasizes the gospel manifested in social life (social gospel), and which highlights the gospel proclaimed through Christian life (individual evangelism). About the holistic Christian mission, E. Stanley Jones wrote that:

... the clash between the individual gospel and the social gospel leaves me cold. An individual gospel without social gospel is a soul without a body, and a social

⁴⁴² Realities refer to ideas, thinking patterns, cultures, philosophy, practices, mammonism etc.

gospel without an individual gospel is a body without a soul. One is a ghost and the other a corpse. Put the two together, and you have a living person. I want and need one gospel... one gospel, two applications. 443

This holistic Christian mission, including both social gospel and personal evangelism, may provide the balance between the manifestation and proclamation of religious expressions, which David Tracy mentions, regarding the Christian mission in Batangas. 444 It is not to say which one is more important than the other, but they both (manifestation and proclamation as different religious expressions) exist to express people's sincerity to their faith.

Popular Catholic religious practices are not only religious activities, they are also social and communal activities that express social desires for justice and social wellbeing. Thus, Christian mission should not focus on only personal evangelism, but it should emphasize a social gospel as well in order for the Filipino Church to break down the anti-Christian reality and the non-Christian practices caused by the separation of what is the Christian ideal and what is the social reality.

In other words, religious dialogue should be for reemphasizing the meaning of the gospel in the evangelical as well as the social gospel perspectives, and dialogue is the proper way to reemphasize the gospel, as Leonardo N. Mercado argues:

...Dialogue must be understood in the broadest possible sense, namely as the pastoral approach to traditional religion in order to present the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the most appropriate manners so that the Church may have deeper roots among that people. 445

Dialogue and cooperation between the Methodist Church and popular Catholicism

⁴⁴³ E. Stanley Jones, *A Song of Ascents: A Spiritual Autobiography* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 151.

⁴⁴⁴ For more detail, see Chapter Three for David Tracy's Religious Expression.

⁴⁴⁵ Leonardo N. Mercado, ed., *Filipino Popular Devotions: The Interior Dialogue Between Traditional Religion and Christianity* (Manila: Logos Publications, 2000), 9.

for personal evangelism and social gospel authenticate popular Catholic Christianity as one of the local forms of Christianity, and also verify the Methodist Church as an important mission agent interacting with popular Catholicism. Again, the necessity for dialogue and cooperation between these two Christianities is to enhance the faith of Christians, both Methodists and popular Catholics, in Christ.

A Narrative Approach to Christian Mission: An Example of Apostle Paul

In order to have dialogue with popular Catholicism, Methodist Christians need to have open minds. In the Bible, the Apostle Paul was a person who opened himself to everyone to establish dialogue and cooperation for Christian mission. Paul describes himself as a free man as well as a slave to win as many people as possible for Christ 1 Corinthians 9:19. He keeps saying, "I have become all things to all men...." This expression indicates he is ready for an "apostolic ecumenism" for the spreading of the gospel. The purpose of dialogue should not be for simple unity with other Christians, but it needs to be evangelical, in the same way the Apostle Paul presented it in order to win people for Christ.

The Apostle Paul was an evangelist of a narrative approach. In Acts 17, he introduces the gospel to Jews in Thessalonica. He proves from the Jewish Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah. Later, he is in Athens. He speaks in the meeting place of the Areopagus by connecting the gospel to their "unknown god." He says,

^{446 1} Corinthians 9: 22b, NIV.

⁴⁴⁷ Kosuke Koyama, "I have Become All Things to All People..." in *Popular Catholicism* in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 251.

⁴⁴⁸ Acts 17: 1-4.

⁴⁴⁹ Acts 17: 16-31.

... For I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you. 450

In both cases, Paul is utilizing the already existing narratives of his audience, and suggesting that what he brings is not new to them, but that they have always had it within their belief systems, yet they have just never recognized it. He tries to connect their story (narratives) to the gospel in order for them to receive the gospel into their religious contexts. Paul exemplifies the narrative approach to Christian mission and evangelism.

Paul utilizes the narrative approach to connect the gospel to their stories (narratives). Through connecting people's narratives to the gospel, Paul was able to share it as a story of salvation for people of all cultures through Jesus Christ.

Bruce Bradshaw defines two different "symbols" which are significant narratives of cultures. He says,

The meanings of symbols are further defined as discursive and non-discursive. A discursive symbol is one whose meaning is limited to its cultural or functional context. ... A non-discursive symbol is one whose meaning transcends its culture, but it can include discursive meanings.⁴⁵²

The approach to popular Catholicism needs to be an integrated approach of the gospel into a popular Catholic narrative. The gospel, which should be proclaimed by Christian mission, already exists in the popular Catholic context; therefore, Christian mission should include the popular Catholic narrative for re-proclaiming the meaning of the gospel, which is precisely what Bradshaw mentioned above, a non-discursive symbol

⁴⁵⁰ Acts 17: 23, NIV.

⁴⁵¹ "Symbols are mental categories humans create and label to grasp and order the realities in which they live." Paul Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 234.

⁴⁵² Bruce Bradshaw, Change Across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 222

which includes discursive meanings.

How Christian mission can include popular Catholicism for dialogical and cooperative missions in Batangas is this chapter's next area of inquiry. According to the interviews and surveys with Methodist Christians, evangelical cooperation for Christian mission in Batangas requires two applications: bible studies for personal evangelism, and missional cooperation for social gospel.

Bible Study: Missional Evangelization

According to Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest, popular religion tends to accept "the meaning and ecumenical value of different religious beliefs and practices." This tendency has characterized popular religion as an inclusive religion for other religious meanings and values. This tendency leads popular religion to become a syncretistic religion with other religious features. Because of this syncretistic religious tendency, popular religion has an open mind concerning other religions and religious practices. Popular Catholicism, as a form of popular religion, is the same.

As one of the important dialogical missional methods, most Methodist Christians suggest missional evangelization through bible study with popular Catholic Christians, because Bible study can be a good dialogical interaction with popular Catholic Christians. Moreover, the bible study can be conducted by Methodist Churches and ministers without a feeling of being repulsed by popular Catholic Christians because of the open mind of popular Catholicism to other forms of Christianity.

Interestingly, all of Batangas Methodist pastors came from popular Catholic

⁴⁵³ Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest, ed., *Popular Catholicism in a World Church:* Seven Case Studies in Inculturation (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 10.

backgrounds. 454 Many of them have experienced and realized the importance of bible study with popular Catholic Christians. For example, Rev. Noel Mansida who is a senior pastor of Knox Crossville UMC in Batangas says:

I came from Catholicism, and my family converted to the Methodist Church in 1986. In my village, there was a pastor from a Methodist church, and he invited my family to the bible study. Because of the bible study at that time, we could recognize what the bible says about truth. We abandoned Catholic practices, such as the veneration of Mary. ... I didn't have any bible [before I became a Methodist Christian]. I didn't know the truth at that time. ... Practically, I just used to follow what other Catholic Christians did, for example, touching statues of saint, Mary, and Sto. Niño for healing and blessings without understanding what the bible says. Thus, I think I was a cultural Christian at that time. 455

There are many similar stories about experiencing the Bible through studies which convinced Catholics to come into the Methodist Church. Here is another Methodist minister who testified to the experience of Bible study.

I converted to Methodism in 1996 after I met a Methodist pastor in my hometown. I used to pray with a Rosary and walk on my knees from the gate to the altar in the Catholic Church. In 1996, one pastor from a Methodist Church opened a Bible study in my house. I was a very disciplined Catholic Christian. For example, I woke up at 3 AM to pray with my rosary. However, I was transformed by the Bible study. The Bible study changed my life. 456

Studying the bible with a Methodist minister was the reason for them to come to the Methodist Church.

Noel Mansida, who is a senior pastor at Knox Crossville UMC in Batangas, considers bible study an important reason and purpose of Christian mission. He says:

I don't want to mention conversion as a main reason for Christian mission, but opening a bible study is an important way of Christian mission. We do not need to focus on what they believe, but we should focus on what the Bible says. Thus, conducting bible study for Catholic Christians is imperative for Christian mission in Batangas. Bible study will provide the perspective to see the truth in the

⁴⁵⁴ All of fourteen Methodist local pastors in Batangas were Catholic Christians before.

Noel Mansida, Interview with Author, May 2nd, 2011.

⁴⁵⁶ Terista Viensina, Interview with Author, May 14th, 2011.

biblical perspective. That is my experience and my suggestion for Christian mission conducted by the Methodist Church today. 457

Terista Viensina also says the purpose of Christian mission in Batangas is to conduct bible studies with popular Catholic Christians. She says, "my purpose [for Christian mission] is to let them read the bible, let them know the bible really."

There are many similar testimonies about bible study, and its necessity is not deniable for evangelizing people in the popular Catholic context. However, the problem is that there is no guide or manual made by the Methodist Church in the Philippines for conducting bible studies with popular Catholic Christians. Suggestions and encouragement without actual guidance are not enough for Methodist ministers and missionaries, but a manual for bible studies which takes into account socio-cultural studies, religious studies, and biblical studies is vitally necessary for evangelism.

Popular Catholic Christians are not pagan Christians who need Christian teachings and values imposed upon their lives by other Christians, but they need to be recognized by mission agents as Christians who can, by themselves, evaluate the meaning of being a Christian through missional evangelism, which this study is proposing involves bible study.

⁴⁵⁷ Noel Mansida, Interview with Author, May 2nd, 2011.

⁴⁵⁸ Terista Viensina, Interview with Author, May 14th, 2011.

⁴⁵⁹ Jesus B. Villamin, Email with Author, December 18th, 2011. "One of our most neglected issues is our own material for evangelism. Other churches resort to get materials coming from different sources but not Methodist. The answer to your question [do you have any guide or manual for the Bible Studies with Catholic Christians for evangelism?] is "none." BCEC (Board of Christian education and Communications) is the agency responsible to it. We have manuals for confirmation class, but it emanates from conflation of our discipline and Wesleyan heritage books. It has no touch that considers Catholic faith."

Social Gospel: Missional Cooperation

If bible study is one wing of Christian mission for missional evangelism, the social gospel should be the other wing for the missional needs of Filipino Christians. Christopher Wright highlights the integral interpretation of Christian mission in terms of evangelism (God as the redeemer) and social action (God as the deliverer from oppression) through the story of Exodus. He writes, "Reducing our missional mandate to either pole of the whole model will result not only in hermeneutical distortion, but worse, in practical damage and deficiency in the fruit of our mission labors." In the perspective of this integral interpretation of Christian mission, his suggestion of balancing between evangelism and social action seems compatible, because Christian mission is not only for spiritual needs, but also for bearing fruit and meeting material needs. Wright goes on to say:

Mission that claims the high spiritual ground of preaching only a gospel of personal forgiveness and salvation without the radical challenge of the full biblical demands of God's justice and compassion, without a hunger and thirst for justice, may well expose those who respond to its partial truths to the same dangerous verdict. The epistle of James seems to say as much to those in his own day who had managed to drive an unbiblical wedge between faith and works, the spiritual and the material. If faith without works is dead, mission without social compassion and justice is biblically deficient. ⁴⁶¹

In the context of popular Catholicism in Batangas, investigation of the development of popular Christianity in the midst of people's lives is necessary. As was researched in Chapter Two, the historical influence of colonial Christian mission, the message passed down from "top to bottom" (from colonizer to the colonized) could not contain the full meaning of the gospel for Filipinos' actual lives. They were oppressed in

^{à61} Ibid., 288.

⁴⁶⁰ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Illinois: IVP Academic, 2006), 286.

order to be Christianized, and marginalized by the colonial social system. Other popular Catholics, such as those in the global south have experienced similar spiritual and material marginalization. Thus, while missional evangelism through bible study is for overcoming spiritual marginalization, the social gospel is for overcoming material, physical, and societal marginalization. Bamat and Wiest describe popular Catholics in the global south in the following:

Most are oppressed and some are very marginalized people. They strive for good health and seek healing from physical and emotional as well as spiritual afflictions. They want to overcome poverty. They long for personal and collective wellbeing. Their prayers and rituals are often focused on tangible goods like a decent wage, the successful sale of a cow, or an abundant harvest; and on protection from natural as well as social or political catastrophes. 462

However, in Batangas, popular Catholicism has not prevailed only among people who are poor or sick; it is popular for everyone. The reason for the popularity of popular Catholicism is closely related to the hope of being prosperous. It is closely related to a form of the prosperity gospel in their social, cultural, and economic contexts. Being the subject of debates amongst Christians, the prosperity gospel overemphasizes God's blessings and healing. Simply speaking, the belief that "we can be rich, we can be healed, we can be well" is based on faith in which Christians can be blessed physically and materially by God. The actions of touching statues of Sto. Niño, Mary, and other saints come from this idea that they can be blessed through showing God their religious sincerity by engaging in those practices. In order to counteract the prosperity gospel from popular Catholicism, the concept of a social gospel, in which Methodist Christians should engage in Christian mission within the poplar Catholic context, is vitally necessary.

⁴⁶² Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest, ed., *Popular Catholicism in a World Church:* Seven Case Studies in Inculturation (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 11.

According to group discussions with seventeen Batangas Methodist workers, social action, which can fulfill the people's needs through medical, dental, and other social missions, is necessary for Christian mission. Here is the conversation with pastors.

Me: There is a certain situation in the Philippines. People looking for healing power are mostly lowland people who cannot go to the hospital because of their financial situation. What they need is someone, or something, that they can depend on when they or their family are sick. Maybe this is one of the reasons for doing those religious practices (popular Catholic practices). What do you think about that? How can the Methodist Church fulfill the needs of popular Catholics through Christian mission in this situation?

One of Pastors: Through birth, most Filipinos traditionally become Catholics. Of course, there are certain reasons why these religious practices have prevailed in the Philippines. Socially, it is understandable; however, I would like to see these religious practices from the perspective of the history of pagan practices among Filipinos. In this situation, what the Methodist Church should do is to bring the social gospel through medical missions, dental missions, and so on. Together with the social gospel, we need to bring the real meaning of the gospel through evangelism. As you see, Sto. Niño is not only for lowland people, but all Filipinos have traditional beliefs about participating in these kinds of pagan practices without understanding biblical teachings. 463

Biblical teachings and social actions are simultaneously necessary for Christian mission in Batangas. The necessity of the social gospel in the context of popular Catholicism should be compatible with missional evangelism through Bible study.

Overall, "spiritual evangelism",464 needs to go with social action for Christian mission. Especially, social action that fulfills people's physical and material needs should take an important role for Christian mission in Batangas. Social action based on the concept of Christian mission is different from a simple desire to be prosperous through the gospel. The social gospel is the actual missional work in which Methodist Christians, who are the neighbors of popular Catholic Christians in Batangas, should participate, in

Seventeen Batangas Pastors, Group Discussion with Author, May 22nd, 2011.
 Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Illinois: IVP Academic, 2006), 287.

the same way that the good Samaritan story presents the way to be a neighbor of those who need help.

Moreover, the social gospel is a means of cooperation with Catholicism. The social gospel should not be a unilateral missional methodology from the Methodist Church to popular Catholic Christians, but it should be mutually cooperative with popular Catholic Christians in order to include them as mission partners for revitalizing the responsibility of Church in the current social, economic, and political situation in Batangas. Thus, while the Methodist Church provides the actions of the social gospel, popular Catholic Christians may provide the contextual interpretation of the social in order to contextualize its meaning for the context of popular Catholicism.

Foundations for this type of cooperation between the Methodist Church and popular Catholicism can be found in the biblical teachings, and it is a Filipino cultural value. The early church's life in Acts was rooted in the sense of community, equality, and sharing, ⁴⁶⁵ and the most important value among Filipinos can be defined as "solidarity and mutual help." "Bayanihan," which means, "helping each other," and literally "carrying heavy things together" in Tagalog, is the basic and vital Filipino sentiment. Ruby-Nell Estrella, who was a District Superintendent in the Batangas area, suggests restoring and using the meaning of *Bayanihan* through Methodist missions.

I would like to use the concept of bayanihan for Christian mission in the Philippines. The idea is to help each other when people face difficult times. I think it is also the model of the early church in Acts. Thus, bringing biblical culture into Filipinos' lives is not a new thing, but it is to restore the real meaning of life among Filipinos. I think we can give the biblical and theological meaning

⁴⁶⁵ ACTS 4: 32-37, NIV.

⁴⁶⁶ Michael Amaladoss, S. J., "Toward a New Ecumenism: Churches of the People" in *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, ed. Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 292.

to Filipinos' sense of bayanihan. 467

Bayanihan, therefore, can symbolize cooperation among Filipinos, and it is the fundamental reason for the cooperation in the social gospel between Methodist Christians and popular Catholic Christians.

The social gospel involves missional practices that meet the needs of Filipinos, and therefore a way that the Methodist Church should embrace as an as a method for Christian mission with popular Catholic Christians in Batangas.

Pentecostalism: Missional Ecumenism

Moving to the present scene in the Philippines, Pentecostalism is significantly altering the country's religious landscape primarily because the Pentecostal religious tendency to pursue supernatural phenomena as signs of God's providence fits with popular Filipino spirituality. In other words, the Pentecostal Church seems to find a proper Filipino religious garment in the context of popular features of Catholicism. The Pentecostal Church emphasizes spiritual experiences and supernatural gifts, like healing experiences and speaking in tongues, which are comparable with Filipino's supernatural-oriented religiosity rather than dogmatic teachings or biblical proclamation.

Moreover, "Pentecostalism has managed to hold on to the very sacramental, symbolic ethos and worldview that made pre-Reformation Christianity possible." Because of the similarity of sacramental and symbolic ethos with Pentecostalism, popular Catholic Christians can easily accept Pentecostalism because they are more focused on

⁴⁶⁷ Ruby-Nell Estrella, Interview with Author, May 28th, 2011.

⁴⁶⁸ Orlando O. Espin, *The Faith of The People: Theological Reflections on Popular Catholicism* (Maryknoll: Orbis Boos, 1997), 142.

the manifestation of spirituality through religious experiences and practices than the traditional Protestant Church, which emphasizes formal (traditional) ways to express their faith, such as through the Scriptures and Christian traditions.

Pentecostalism can be suitable for popular Catholicism because of the similarity of the experience-focused religiosity between them. Therefore, Pentecostalism can be a means to initiate missional ecumenism between Methodist missions and popular Catholicism.

Denominationally, the unity and cooperation for Christian mission between the Methodist Church and popular Catholicism in Batangas has not been attempted, because "we [Methodist Church and popular Catholicism] have fallen into the error of identifying the church with our own organized institution, whose primary function is to lead its people in worship and to nurture them." Paul Pierson argues that we, as Christians belonging to world Christianity, should overcome the boundaries of identity made by organized institutions and denominations, and a mission-focused ecclesiology, which can be beyond any boundary of denominations, because this is necessary for the 21st Century mission. In this point, Pentecostalism can be an important ecumenical bridge between the Methodist Church and popular Catholicism.

Timothy Tennent also argues that Pentecostalism can contribute positively to global ecumenism in three ways. 471 First, Pentecostalism can go beyond the

⁴⁶⁹ Paul Pierson, "Beyond Sodalities and Modalities: Organizing for Mission in the Twenty-first Century" in *Evangelical, Ecumenical, and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation*, ed. James, R. Krabill, Walter Sawatsky, and Charles E. Van Engen (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 228.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 228-230.

⁴⁷¹ Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way we think about and discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids,

denominational sectarianism since it did not come from a single church tradition or geographic region, but it was birthed in diversity. Second, Pentecostalism can be a means of ecumenical movement through Theopraxis, which refers to "a heart-oriented praxis" 472 in Christian mission. Theopraxis is not belonging to any certain denomination or holding on to any specific dogmatic theological issue, but it should be an important theme of Christian mission for all churches because it brings together faith and practice. Thus, Pentecostal Theopraxis reminds us that our Christian faith and our Christian practices cannot be separated in Christian mission. Third, Pentecostalism has exemplified that evangelism and mission works can go beyond any ethnic and social barrier. The Revival Movements in the early twentieth century demonstrated that social classes and ethnic boundaries could not stop the penetrating message of the gospel to all different people.

Some Methodist churches in Batangas have endeavored to develop an ecumenical movement with the Catholic Church through the Batangas Ecumenical Council (BEC). Within this ecumenical movement in Batangas, I think two issues need to be mentioned. First, theological discussions between Methodist churches and the Catholic Church need to exist in this ecumenical movement. However, interviewees who were Methodist pastors in BEC did not mention any theological issues or doctrine entering into the discussion, "The Batangas Ecumenical Council only discusses unity, peace, justice, social concern, and social responsibility."473 This ecumenical endeavor may be the beginning of a church ecumenical movement; however, this superficial ecumenism without any theological and missional discussion for Christian mission is not sufficient for

Michigan: Zondervan, 2007), 186-189.

⁴⁷³ Ramos Rene, Interview with Author, May 1, 2011.

ecumenical Christian mission. Second, the Methodist Church needs to understand popular Catholicism profoundly through theology, religious practices, and cultural understandings. The Pentecostal understanding of the gospel, experiencing the gospel, can be a good way for recontextualizing the gospel with popular Catholicism.

Phenomenologically, Pentecostalism has been prevalent in the Philippines in forms of charismatic churches. It has also influenced Catholicism, as well as Protestantism. However, Pentecostalism could not initiate missional ecumenism between Methodist Christians and popular Catholic Christians in Batangas. Two reasons exist. First, Methodist churches in Batangas haven't experienced the Pentecostal movement, yet. In other words, Methodist churches and pastors, in some ways, are still dogmatic and theoretical, and thus, some of the pastors still want to exclude popular Catholicism. Second, many popular Catholic Christians also have not experienced Pentecostalism, and still stay in their traditional and cultural religious ways through popular Catholicism. In short, the Pentecostal movement has not succeeded in making a significant impact on the religious context (popular Catholicism and Methodist Church) in Batangas yet.

Recontextualization of the gospel in Batangas should be based on "a pneumatological understanding of Christian mission" in order to revive, reformulate, and revitalize the meaning of the gospel. Therefore, Pentecostalism, which is based on Spirit-oriented mission, heart-oriented praxis, and experience-focused gospel, can be a model of missional ecumenism. It can help create and strengthen the partnership between the Methodist Church and popular Catholicism for Christian mission in Batangas.

 $^{^{474}}$ A pneumatological understanding of Christian mission refers to Spirit-centric mission in which Christian mission has been conducted by the Holy Spirit.

Golden Calf Or The Edge of His Cloak

The gospel should be related to our lives on a very basic and real level. In other words, the gospel should be contextual. Thus, the methodology of Christian mission is also to be contextual in order to facilitate the spreading of the gospel among people.

Religious practices and expressions in Batangas popular Catholicism have become an important religious and relational culture among people, and the understandings of these practices should not be ignored by the Methodist Church because these practices and expressions are the place (context) of Christian mission for recontextualizing the meaning of the gospel. In this understanding of religious practices in popular Catholicism, the following section will investigate and present two biblical stories as a conclusion of this research; the golden calf in the Old Testament and the edge of Jesus' cloak in the New Testament will be used in order to suggest a biblical understanding of popular Catholic practices in Batangas.

Golden Calf⁴⁷⁵

After the Exodus, in Exodus 32, Israelites made a golden calf and said, "It is our god." Ironically, they did not create a new god, but they just shaped the image of God into a golden calf. They just shaped, embodied, and confined God within material and called it god. In doing this, God was very angry and about to destroy them. 477

When the Israelites made the golden calf to represent the God who brought them from Egypt, Moses was not among them, but he was on Mt. Sinai with God. Because of

⁴⁷⁵ Exodus 32, NIV.

⁴⁷⁶ Exodus 32: 4, NIV.

⁴⁷⁷ Exodus 32: 10, NIV.

his absence among people, the Israelites needed something (or someone) to put their trust in for security from uncertain future instead of Moses, so they shaped God into a physical form, based on an old Egyptian religious tradition of making a golden calf.⁴⁷⁸

The reason for God's anger was not only for making or confining the physical image of God into a golden calf, but also for manipulating God for his or her own sake. The story of Exodus 32 gives a biblical example of a ruined relationship between God and people through the formation and execution of incorrect religious expressions and practices (making and worshipping gold calf).

Filipinos in popular Catholicism are similar to the Israelites in Exodus 32. Images and statues of saints are made in popular Catholicism, and they are often to be treated as deities who protect people. What the Methodist Church needs to do in the current popular Catholic context is not to exclude Filipino popular Catholic religious practices from Christian mission, but the Methodist Church should include their popular Catholic religious practices in order to recontextualize these religious practices for Christian mission with "the energies of the Spirit of embrace" in order to present a proper biblical model of religious expressions based on the gospel.

The next story in the Bible can be a proper biblical model for religious expressions in the popular Catholic context.

The Edge of His Cloak⁴⁸⁰

The story of the woman who was healed from her bleeding disease illustrates a

 ⁴⁷⁸ Sean Gladding, *The Story of God, the Story of Us* (Illinois: IVP Books, 2010), 92.
 ⁴⁷⁹ Miroslav Volf, "Exclusion and Embrace: Theological Reflections in the Wake of Ethnic Cleansing," in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 29:2, Spring 1992, 248.
 ⁴⁸⁰ Mark 5: 25-34, Luke 8: 43-48 (NIV).

different pattern of Jesus' healing ministry. Many Jesus' healings were conducted by Jesus' willingness to heal the sick and the suffering, but this story does not contain Jesus' intention to heal her, but subjectively, she came behind Jesus and touched the edge of Jesus' cloak and was healed. Moreover, this story was not the main story in Mark and Luke, because it was inserted in the story of Jesus' healing of Jairus' daughter.

This story is about the marginalized woman who had no hope, but was just eager for healing from the terrible disease, which people thought as unclean. There was no other way to be healed. She met many doctors but they couldn't heal her, and she spent all she had but she was getting worse instead. All medical, social, and religious hope was gone, but only suffering remained. In this situation, she heard about Jesus, and thought she might be healed if she touched Jesus' clothes. She was right and she was healed completely, and Jesus felt his power had gone out from him. This story obviously presents the action of touching Jesus' clothes. She didn't make any image or physical representation of God, but just approached Jesus and simply touched his clothes.

The focus is on *her* religious action for healing. As this research has investigated the intention of Filipinos to have tangible and visible images of deity in Chapter Three, the action of the woman was apparently tangible and visible in that she really touched the edge of Jesus' cloak. Filipinos touch Sto. Niño, the statue of Jesus, and other statues of saints for protection from any sickness and for healing powers. Lowland Filipinos do not have enough financial resources to go to the hospital in times of illness, but they do participate in religious practices, based on their understandings of popular Catholicism, for healing and wellbeing. However, the actions and practices in popular Catholicism

⁴⁸¹ Mark 5: 26, NIV.

⁴⁸² Mark 5: 27-28, NIV.

need to be reconsidered to address whether they are more akin to the action of touching Jesus' clothes or making another golden calf.

Proclaiming the gospel should bring the power of the gospel. In between the proclamation and manifestation (Chapter Three) of religious expressions, no one can say that one is right and the other is wrong, but the proclamation of the gospel in a form of evangelism and the manifestation of the gospel in a form of social action should be balanced in Christian mission as previously observed. The process of balancing between proclamation of the gospel and manifestation of the gospel are necessary for recontextualizing the gospel for Batangas people. Likewise, studying popular Catholicism and Methodist missions is an important task for doing this faithfully.

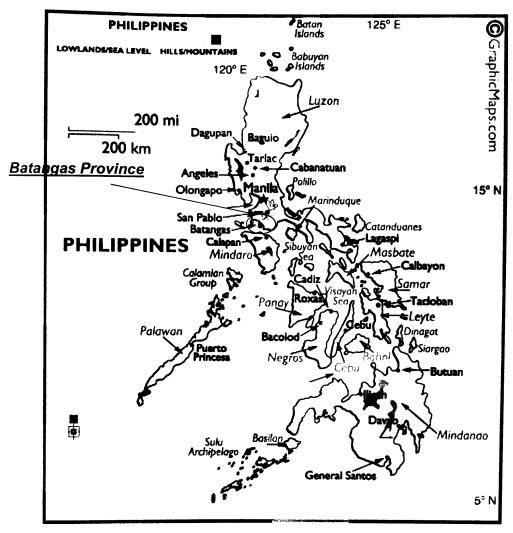
The woman who was healed is an example of what Filipino popular Catholic Christians in Batangas need to do in their socially and financially marginalized situation. If Filipinos are ignorantly understanding their relationship with God as the Israelites did in Exodus 32, then the main task of Christian mission is to introduce Jesus Christ who is passing on their narrow streets in the Philippines, and to encourage them to go to Jesus to touch the edge of his cloak for healing and salvation. As Jesus proclaims to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering," the proclamation of the gospel should be manifested in Filipinos' daily lives through encountering Jesus and touching his clothes. That is recontextualization of the gospel and reinterpretation of Christianity for the popular Catholic context in Batangas, Philippines.

⁴⁸³ Mark 5: 34, NIV.

If an immigration officer in Korea asked me again the reason for doing Christian mission in the Philippines, I would now answer "I don't go there to scold them or judge them because of what they have done because of their beliefs (the golden calf), rather I go to the Philippines to show them where Jesus' cloak is, and how to touch the edge of His cloak. In doing so, they will hear the voice, 'go in peace and be freed from your suffering.' That is the reason for doing Christian mission in the Philippines."

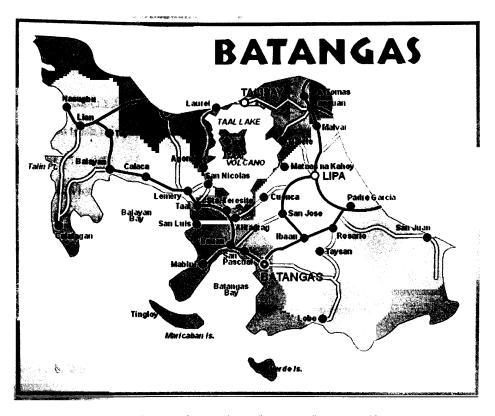
Appendix A

A Map of the Philippines



From: http://www.ephilippine.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/12/philippines-map.gif
The Batangas province is located in the circle.

A Map of the Batangas Province



From: http://www.islandsproperties.com/maps/img-maps/batangas.gif

Appendix B

Interview Questionnaire: Personal Interview and Group Interview

Personal Interview Questionnaire

Issues of People's Theology

- 1. Do you think it is a blessing that the Philippines has become a Christian nation by Catholic Church?
 - a. Why? Or Why not?
 - b. Is Catholicism the representative of truth?
 - c. Is it only historical leftover of colonialism?
 - d. Is it the missional plan of God to Filipinos?
- 2. Do you agree to "salvation by baptism" and "salvation by penance"?
 - a. What does "salvation" mean to you?
 - b. What does "grace" mean to Catholic Christians and Methodist Christians? Is there any difference?
- 3. What do you think of Mariology (adoration of Mary)?

Issues of Religious Practices

- 1. What experiences do you have about Catholic religious practices?
 - a. Do you have statuses of Sto. Niño, Mary, and other saints in your house?
 - b. Do you think the Catholic's practices are (can be) Filipino Christian cultures?
- 2. How do you feel when you look at the Catholic's practices and objects (symbols)?

Issues of Missiological Application

- 1. Have you ever shared the gospel with Catholic Christians?
 - a. If so, what was your point? Conversion? Revision? Partnership for mission?
 - b. If not, why didn't you share the gospel with them? Any religious reason or cultural reason?
- 2. Do you feel you need to evangelize them with the biblical teachings?

Group Interview Questionnaire

- 1. Date/Time/People/Place/Numbers
- 2. What is historical interpretation to see Catholic Christians and their beliefs?
- 3. Do you see any reason to evangelize them to Methodist Church?
- 4. Do you see any reason to cooperate with them for Christian mission?
- 5. Is (was) there any conflict you have experienced with Catholic Christians because you are Methodist Christians?
- 6. What is the significant difference between being a Methodist Christian and a Catholic Christian in Batangas?
- 7. What/how do you see when you encounter Catholic religious practices such as *Pasiyon*, veneration of Mary, Black Nazarene, Sto. Niño, etc?
- 8. How could Methodist Church be an important mission agent in Batangas?
- 9. Is there any suggest or comment for Christian mission conducted by Methodist Church in Batangas?

Appendix C

Survey Questionnaire

General Statistics

1. Age, (Edad)

Gender (Kasarian)

2. How long have you been a Methodist Christian? (Gaano na kayo katagal bilang

Kristyanong Metodista?)

- a. From birth (Pagkasilang)
- b. more than 20 years (Mahigit 20 taon)
- c. 10-20 years (10-20 taon)
- d. 5-10 years (5-10 taon)
- e. less than 5 years (5 taon pababa)
- Do you think you are different from Catholic Christian? (Sa tingin po ninyo magkaiba ba kayo sa Kristyanong Katoliko?)
 - a. Yes, we are different (opo, magkaiba kami)
 - We (Methodist/Catholic) are all Christians believing in God (Magkatulad lang na naniniwala sa Diyos)
 - c. I don't know. (Hindi ko po alam)

<u>Issues of people's theology</u> (Mga usapin tungkol sa teolohiyang pangkaraniwan)

- 4. What do you think of "salvation by baptism" which Catholics emphasize? (Ano po sa tingin ninyo tungkol sa "kaligtasan sa pamamagitan ng Bautismo" kung saan binibigyan diin ng mga Katoliko?)
 - a. Strongly agree (Lubos na sumasang-ayon)
 - b. Agree (sumasang-ayon)
 - c. Disagree (Hindi sumasang-ayon)
 - d. Strongly disagree (Lubos na hindi sumasang-ayon)
- 5. Do you think there is a work of the Holy Spirit in the Catholic Church? (Sa tingin po ninyo, may pagkilos ba ang Banal na Espiritu sa Simbahan ng Katoliko?)
 - a. Yes (meron po)
 - b. No (wala po)
 - c. I don't believe in the work of the Holy Spirit. (Hindi po ako naniniwala sa pagkilos ng Banal na Espiritu?)
- 6. Do you think the God in Catholicism is the same God we (Methodists) believe in? (Sa tingin po ninyo ang Diyos ng Katolisismo ay siya ring Diyos na pinaniniwalaan ng mga Metodista?)
 - a. Yes (Opo)
 - b. No (Hindi)
 - c. I don't know (hindi ko po alam)

- 7. Can you accept Catholic's practices such as veneration of Mary and Sto. Niño as one of Filipino religious lives? (Matatanggap ba ninyo ang Katolikong kagawiang pagsamba kay Maria at Sto. Niño bilang ilan sa mga pinaniniwalaan sa buhay ng mga Pilipinong reliyoso.)
 - a. Yes (OO)
 - b. Partially yes (maaari)
 - c. No (hindi)
- 8. Are you willing to share the gospel with Catholics? (Nais nyo bang magbahagi ng Ebanghelyo sa mga Katoliko?)
 - a. Yes (Opo)
 - b. No (Hindi po)
 - c. I don't know (Hindi ko po alam)
- 9. If yes, what is the purpose to share the Gospel? Kung OO, ano ang pakay sa pagbabahagi ng ebanghelyo?
 - a. Conversion (to bring them to Methodist Church)(Pag-akay, upang madala sa Iglesya Medtodista)
 - Enhancing their belief (to foster their faith in Christ in their church)(lalong mauunawaan ang pananalig, upang mabigyan diin ang pananampalataya kay Kristo sa kanilang simbahan)

<u>Issues of Religious Practices</u> (Usaping Kagawiang Pang-Relihoso)

- 10. Do you think it is necessary in a way to pray to Mother Mary and Sto. Niño to access God and Jesus (sa tingin ninyo, mahalaga na manalangin sa inang Maria at Sto. Niño upang maabot ang Diyos at si Jesus)
 - a. Yes (Opo)
 - b. No (hindi po)
- 11. Have you attended *Pasyon* (reading the story of Jesus during lament) after being a Methodist Christian? (Nakakadalo na ba kayo sa Pasyon, pagbasa ng talam-buhay ng pagkasakit at kamatayan ni Hesus, kahit kayo'y Metodista na?)
 - a. Yes (Opo)
 - b. No (Hindi po)
- 12. Do you think it is acceptable "culturally" to have symbols/pictures/amulets/statues around living circumstances (home, jeepney, work place, etc.)? (sa tingin ninyo katanggap-tanggap ba "bilang kultura" na magkaroon ng simbolo/larawan/rebolto/agimat sa mga lugar na kalimitang ginagalawan (bahay, sasakyan, tindahan atbp.)?
 - a. Only culturally acceptable (katanggap-tanggap lang bilang kultura)
 - culturally and religiously acceptable (Katanggap-tanggap bilang kultura at relihosong paniniwala)

- c. only religiously acceptable because it is their religious practices (katanggaptanggap lang bilang pagrelihoso sa dahilang ito na ang nakagawian)
- d. strongly unacceptable (Hindi katanggap-tanggap)
- 13. Do you feel comfortable to be around statues/amulets/pictures/symbols? (maaayos lang ba ang iyong pakiramdam sa mga lugar na may simbolo/larawan/rebolto/agimat atbp.?)
 - a. Yes (Opo)
 - b. No (hindi po)
 - c. I don't know (hindi ko po alam)
 - d. Culturally acceptable (katanggap-tanggap na kagawian)
- 14. Can you accept them (Catholic Christians) as your church members if they come to your church (Methodist while they don't give up Catholic religious practices?
 (Matatanggap nyo ba ang mga Katoliko bilang kaanib ng Metodista kahit hindi inaalis ang kanilang kinagagawiang paniniwala?
 - a. Yes (Opo)
 - b. No (Hindi po)
 - c. I don't know (Hindi ko alam)
- 15. If yes, you ask them to give up Catholic practices? Kung OO, hilingin mo ba na 'alisin ang Katolikong paniniwala?

- a. Yes, I will (Opo, aking gagawin)
- b. No, I won't (Hindi, ayaw kong gagawin)

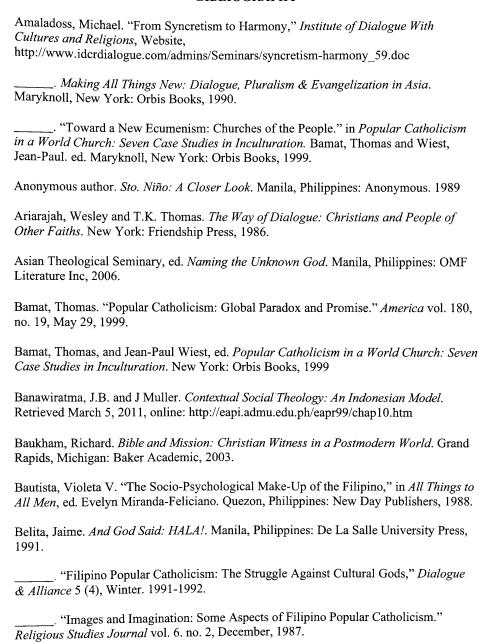
<u>Issues of Missiological Application</u> (Usaping pagsasagawa ng pagmimisyon)

- 16. Do you think catholic Christians are the people whom we (Methodist Christians) need help to foster the true faith in Christ? (sa tingin ninyo ang mga Katolikong Kristyano ay kinakailangan natin, bilang mga Metodista, na matutulongan upang maisapamalayan ang tunay na pananampalataya kay Kristo?
 - a. Yes (Opo)
 - b. No (Hindi)
- 17. If yes, do you think Catholic Christians are target people for the Methodist mission? (kung OO, sa tingin ninyo ang mga Katoliko ang nararapat nating pagmimisyonan bilang mga Metodista?
 - a. Yes (Opo)
 - b. No (Hindi po)
 - c. I don't know (Hindi ko po alam)
- 18. If No from 17, what do you think of Catholic Christians in terms of Christian mission? (Kung HINDI sa bilang 17, ano sa tingin ninyo ang mga Katoliko sa usaping Kristyanong pagmimisyon?)

- a. Partners for the mission (co-workers for the mission) (kasama sa pagmimisyon)
- Another Christian paralleled with Methodist Christians (isa ring kristyano katulad ng kristyanong Metodista)
- c. I don't know (Hindi ko alam)
- 19. If No from 16, what do you think of Catholic Christians? (kung HINDI sa bilang 16, ano ang tingin ninyo sa Kristyanong Katoliko?)
 - a. Pagan people in Catholic faith (mga taong pagano sa pananampalatayang Katoliko)
 - Filipinized Christian people following Catholic faith (mga taong may paniniwalang kristyanong inakma sa kagawiang Filipino na sumusunod sa Katolikong paniniwala.)
 - c. Mission partners (Katuwang sa pagmimisyon)
- 20. What does Christian Mission means in Batangas? (ano ang pakahulugan ng Kristyanong pagmimisyon sa Batangas?)
 - a. To convert Catholic Christians to Methodist Church (upang akayin ang mga
 Kristyanong Katoliko sa Paniniwalang Metodista)
 - To enhance faith in Christ in our daily lives (upang diinan ang pananampalatayang Kristyano sa ating buhay sa bawat araw)

- To help people in need with Christ' love (Upang tulungan ang mga taong nangangailangan ng pag-ibig ni Kristo)
- d. I don't know (Hindi ko alam)
- 21. Are you willing to cooperate with Catholic Christians and Church for Christian Mission in Batangas? (nais mo bang makikipag-isa sa mga Kristyanong Katoliko at simbahan para sa Kristyanong pagmimisyon sa Batangas?)
 - a. Yes (Opo)
 - b. No (Hindi Po)
 - c. I don't know (Hindi ko po alam)

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