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The afterlife of colonial radio in Christian missionary broadcasting of the Philippines

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ABSTRACT
The article explores Christian missionary radio broadcasting as part of a wider sonic colonization of the Philippines under US colonial rule. Specifically, I explore how some post-Second World War faith-based broadcasters shaped the listening practices of Filipino audiences through programming tactics such as blocktiming. Furthermore, I consider how missionary broadcasters cultivated direct relationships with listeners through the imagined 'shared experiences' of aural space. As a case study, I explore the activities of the US-based Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC), which began its operations in the Philippines in 1948. Since then, the organization has used the country as a hub for its expanding domestic and international radio network, which now includes broadcasts to South East Asia, China and other parts of the world. In addition to exploring how FEBC's localized approach to programming has cultivated specific listening audiences, I explore how programmes have been received by listeners in the Philippines, many of whom continue to tune in via terrestrial radio.

KEYWORDS
Missionary radio; evangelism; Philippines; listening practices; colonialism

Christian missionaries were integral to the United States' colonial project in the Philippines. Early expeditions to the archipelago in the late 1900s, before it formally came under rule by the US, brought Protestant missionaries, Army chaplains and other officials, some of whom would remain to become part of the colonial administration. By 1902, US missionary groups from at least seven different Protestant churches had sent representatives to the Philippines, choosing specific territories around Manila and outlying provinces in which to work (Wright 1924). Given the negative significance of the term 'Protestant' in the predominantly Catholic Philippines at that time, it was decided the churches founded by missionary groups would all be called 'evangelical churches', irrespective of denomination (Briggs 1913, 125). The work of US missionaries, in this regard, must be understood within the wider objectives of administrative, geographic, public health, educational and other colonial practices of the US military and civilian organizations (Posadas 2016, 101–103). In the context of spreading Protestant belief in Asia through missionary work, this article explores the political impact of Christian missionary radio broadcasting and its afterlife as part of a wider sonic colonization of

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the Philippines under US rule. The word 'afterlife' here connotes a sense of continuity and survival, not only in a literal spiritual meaning (e.g. personal identity or consciousness continuing after death) but also in new reiterations of worldviews, attitudes and other expressions associated with colonial rule and the ongoing dependence of the Philippine state on the US.

The article begins by examining how missionary broadcasters, namely the Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC), a multinational evangelical missionary radio organization, have incorporated elements of US colonial era radio broadcasting in terms of format and objective. Founded in 1948 by three Pentecostal men from southern California, FEBC has emerged as a dominant evangelical Christian broadcaster in the Philippines and across South East Asia. Brandishing their slogan, 'Until all have heard', FEBC broadcasts worldwide on AM and FM frequencies and through satellite and Internet radio with programmes in 124 languages and an estimated listenership of over four billion people.[1] As a privately owned US-based Protestant missionary broadcaster headquartered in La Mirada, California, FEBC represents a case study to explore how the global engagement of Christian missionaries, specifically evangelicals, have been channelled through their work locally. Since beginning its operations, FEBC has used the Philippines as a hub for its expansive radio network, which now includes broadcasts to various countries in South East Asia, including Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Malaysia. Part of the article explores how missionary radio, as a domestic and international communicative medium, has cultivated audiences through 'shared experiences' (Hendy 2007) that have enabled missionary broadcasters to forge direct relationships with listeners in the Philippines and internationally using localized content.

In a wider context, the article contributes to a growing body of literature about Christianity and empire, and in this case, US militarist expansionism and its rationalization through Christian language that further amplifies the civilizing mission (see Kim and Joh 2016, xiv). As a technology introduced in the US colonial period, radio has been integral to Protestant missionary work in the predominantly Catholic Philippines, especially since the Second World War. At this point, it is worth briefly contextualizing the place of contemporary evangelicals within the wider Christian missionary project. Firstly, it should be noted that evangelicalism was (and has been) neither a church nor a denomination. Instead, it drew a sizable following in ways that resembled a social movement, emerging as a distinctive and dynamic form of Christian spirituality.[2] Core beliefs of evangelicals, such as an inerrant interpretation of the Bible, the born-again experience and a focus on proselytization, differentiate this group from other Protestant groups. More significantly, the focus on creating a transnational and transdenominational identity characterizes many evangelical organizations. In the twentieth century, these ideas have fuelled expansion and a global shift of the evangelical base from Europe and North America to Asia, Africa and Latin America. One of the main goals of the evangelical project from the outset has been to reach a global audience using radio as the primary communicative medium. Before exploring this further, I turn to ideas on radio, listening and audiences, especially as they pertain to a colonial context.

[1]https://www.febc.org/learn-about-us (accessed 18 February 2019).
[2]Hindmarsh, Bruce. "What Is Evangelicalism?" https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/march-web-only/what-is-evangelicalism.html (accessed 23 September 2019)

Radio listening and empire

Radio is a medium that encompasses issues of policy, technology, identity, culture and ideology. Radio is often taken for granted, as David Hendy (2007, 2–5) observes, because of its pervasive quality: it is a ubiquitous medium that still has the widest reach and greatest penetration. Radio galvanizes public opinion and provides, in the case of talk radio, a participatory space where listeners can connect to engage in a particular topic. Radio has been a 'medium of presence' credited with the ability to achieve a live and simultaneous gathering of a diffused national community, or what Carolyn Birdsall (2012, 109–110) calls, an 'imagined *listening* community'. As Birdsall observes in the context of Nazi Germany, radio broadcasters appealed to a fragmented audience who had individual listening patterns, interests and attitudes towards radio, in order to merge public and private space while promoting a pan-German identity based on (Aryan) ethnic identity and shared language.

In this sense, radio represents a pre-Internet social media technology that allows people to speak and confide within an anonymous listening audience. Radio is simultaneously a distinctly local and global mass media, and in recent years, the proliferation of Internet radio and podcasting has created a truly global listenership. New technologies give people more ways to access radio broadcasts from across the globe, providing real-time information, broadcast twenty-four hours a day to provide listeners with the most recent updates. Radio broadcasts can transcend borders and are a source of information in areas where other news broadcasts are unavailable. In cases where Internet connection is blocked or phone lines are cut, radio listeners scour the airwaves for information from trusted sources; even electricity is not necessary for battery operated and hand-cranked radios.[3] Although the use of satellite, online and mobile-phone radio has increased, none of these platforms have reached the simplicity and effectiveness of standard terrestrial radio. In many parts of Africa, Asia and the Americas, radios are still far more common than mobile phones or the Internet.[4]

Radio has long been connected to people and communities who have lived under European and US imperialism. Although historians of empire have overwhelmingly represented Western imperialism as a visual enterprise, colonial officials, beginning in the 1920s, used radio to sonically extend their power into the private and intimate spaces of homes, cafes and meeting places (King 2014, 38; Scales 2010, 386). Radio's ability to confound the boundaries of public and private aural space created the appearance that it emanated from within the domestic space itself, disguising the power speaking through intimate spaces. Colonial radio broadcasting, often conducted from the metropole to overseas territories, was used to strengthen imperial power, contract spatial and temporal distance, provide entertainment, encourage national unity and disseminate propaganda (see Kuitenbrouwer 2016, 85; King 2014, 39; Scales 2010, 387; Smulyan 2007, 63). The emergence of radio in the early twentieth century became a nodal point in the rise of other global communications technologies and emerging philosophies of science as knowledge pursuit and sociocultural enterprise (Anduaga 2009, 3). The interplay

[3] "The Importance of Radio in the Twenty-First Century", *Canadian Journalists for Free Expression*, https://www.cjfe.org/the_importance_of_radio_in_the_21st_century (published 12 April 2011, accessed 14 May 2019).
[4] "The Importance of Radio in the Twenty-First Century", *Canadian Journalists for Free Expression*, https://www.cjfe.org/the_importance_of_radio_in_the_21st_century (published 12 April 2011, accessed 14 May 2019).

between the radio industry, governments, militaries and universities was interlaced in the research and development of radio and communication technologies, especially in the period between the two world wars. These technologies became important tools of empire facilitating faster flows of goods, people and information, which encouraged overseas expansion of European powers and bolstered colonial connections (Headrick 1981). Colonial institutions had significant control over global media, and often determined who received access to communication technologies (Kuitenbrouwer 2016, 83). By the early twentieth century, both the telegraph and radio relied on old circuits of commerce and empire while creating new ones (Bronfman 2014, 37). As a waning British colonial system and an ascendant US neocolonial power vied for control of telecommunications, the wires and airwaves represented new cartographies of information and connection (Winseck 2007). US engineers in the radio, telephone and motion picture industries perceived themselves to be on a technological mission to get the world 'in sync' with the modern United States through their synchronous sound technology (Thompson 2004, 192).

Local listeners also engaged with radio, using it to navigate their own colonial realities. For some, the act of listening to colonial radio itself signified the 'welcome embrace between occupier and occupied', legitimating the occupation by emphasizing a shared desire and appreciation for colonial culture, capitalism and its technological forms (King 2014, 40). It was not only the colonizers who saw the potential impact of radio. Anticolonial movements saw in radio an aural space that could overcome spatiotemporal distance among resisters and produce new social formations that would create alternative futures to the colonized present. As Franz Fanon (1965, 85) suggests, radio was an open-ended site of semiotic and political contest with a surplus set of meanings and possibilities encoded within and by colonial powers. In Fanon's formulation of radio's role in the Algerian resistance to French rule, the creation of a covert network of broadcasters and listeners undermined the strategies of the occupier. Tactics of the colonized, as Fanon observes, cultivated a capacity to understand themselves as a coherent 'felt community' where listening was not simply the act of consumption but a 'tactical activity' (Baucom 2001). The social performance of listening and the tactics of tuning in therefore created networks connected through the shared experience of colonial interference (King 2014, 41).

Besides a colonial context, writers have described how radio can connect diverse and unknown people into a temporal relationship through the 'shared experience' (Hendy 2007, 121) or 'co-presence' (Chignell 2009, 74) of listening. Although people may listen to radio alone, there is an awareness of others elsewhere listening at exactly the same time – a simultaneity of experience that, although illusory and imagined, elicits a 'collective sensibility' created through orality (Douglas 1999, 29). Although the geographical reach of this shared experience is determined by the radio station's physical reach (i.e. through transmitters), the experience itself is not limited to geographical or political boundaries. To listen entails becoming a member of a community of interest, albeit imagined and temporary, that ignores location. As Hendy (2007, 121) describes,

> The act of listening to radio is … quite paradoxical. It prompts us to explore our innermost thoughts and memories, but it also takes us out of ourselves. It stimulates idiosyncratic mental images, but also panders to our desire for the familiar song and the shared experience.

Attention to the sociability of radio has led some to use the word 'co-presence' interchangeably with shared experience. Although the words overlap in meaning, slight differences between them require further elucidation. As Hugh Chignell (2009, 76) explains, 'Co-presence is not an accidental by-product of radio, it is a defining characteristic and vital ingredient in the success of the medium and therefore one which is often actively fostered'. The idea of actively creating or building co-presence as part of performance is integral to how radio studies scholars have conceived the word. For instance, Chignell uses the example of how DJs consciously try to not only 'build intimacy at a distance but also a sense of shared identity and experience in their audience'. Any successful DJ (radio or otherwise) must bind the audience together and to the DJ to keep them listening, which, as Chignell suggests, reiterates the interrelationship between intimacy, live-ness and co-presence.

US evangelicals embraced radio in the early 1900s and lobbied for policies that would ensure their dominance in the realm of religious broadcasting (Blake 2005, 34). Building co-presence, for missionary broadcasters such as FEBC, has meant a continued engagement with communities of listeners on an affective, spiritual and functional level that exploits radio's strengths in cultivating sociability and individual experience. Before turning my attention to FEBC's programming practices, I now briefly contextualize the role of radio broadcasting in the Philippines.

Radio in the Philippines

Despite an overall decline of listenership in many parts of the world, radio remains an important mass media. This is especially true in lower-income countries where at least 75% of households have access to radio.[5] In Asia, as elsewhere, the impact of the US commercial model of radio broadcasting has been pervasive. Beginning in the 1990s, tight formats, morning zoos[6] and higher commercial loads took over as listeners drifted to the stations (legal or otherwise) that could grab their attention (Freeman 2011, 113). Radio attracted listeners in South and South East Asia by adopting much of the zaniness and uniformity of US commercial radio. Recently, however, a growing number of stations in Asia have managed to stay alive by reducing or avoiding content from the West and choosing instead to build up local music libraries and address local topics of discussion (Freeman 2011, 113). Although some stations continue to feature US music and older formats of commercial radio, many now draw inspiration from US local community-oriented radio for new models in station operation and programming.[7]

Of all broadcast media in the Philippines, radio has attracted the greatest number of people, especially among the rural poor (Kenny 1996; Rosales 2006). In the rural interior of the country, radio is considered the most reliable channel for distributing news, information and entertainment where mountains obstruct television signals.[8] In 2016, it was

[5] "Statistics on Radio," http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/world-radio-day-2013/statistics-on-radio/ (accessed 13 July 2020).

[6] The term 'morning zoos' (or zoo radio) here refers to a common presentational style of morning radio programming where two or more radio DJs engage in spontaneous comic interaction, reminiscent of US radio 'shock jocks' or British 'youth television', along with the presentation of news, weather and other informational programming.

[7] See also Medrado (2013).

[8] "Statistics on Radio," http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/world-radio-day-2013/statistics-on-radio/ (accessed 13 July 2020).

reported that more than 65% of the people in the Philippines listen to the radio, with the vast majority listening to FM stations.[9] Advertisers continue to find radio an effective means of reaching consumers to sell household products. Hundreds of paid radio station campaigners go door to door each year distributing goods such as soap, canned sardines and rice in order to entice families to tune in to a particular station (Rosales 2006, 149). Although FM stations in the Philippines are popular choices for music, their reach is limited primarily to large urban areas. Conversely, AM stations, which focus on news, talk and public affairs programming, remain popular because they reach even the most remote towns and barrios in the Philippines.

Christian and Catholic radio stations also have a significant presence on AM and FM. The Far East Broadcasting Corporation operates eleven stations across the Philippines, including its flagship AM station, 702 DZAS, which broadcasts from Manila to the entire Luzon island and to parts of the Visayas and Mindanao, and 98.7 DZFE (nicknamed 'His Master's Touch'), which programmes Western classical music. Other Christian radio stations include local affiliates for the multinational Trans World Radio (TWR) network, Anchor Radio, a station based in the city of Iloilo, and Saved Radio, an online station. Important Catholic stations include Radio Maria, a non-profit, non-commercial organization, which runs four stations on Luzon island and broadcasts primarily through cable television networks, and Radio Veritas, a non-commercial shortwave station inaugurated in 1969.[10]

Radio Veritas, a Catholic church-run station that celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2019, is one of the Philippines' major faith-based broadcasters. The station was founded after an assembly of 100 bishops from Asia and Australia in 1958 discussed using radio to spread their teachings.[11] Since that time Radio Veritas has played a significant role in Philippine national politics, especially noted for their coverage of the 1983 assassination of Philippine senator Benigno Aquino Jr. and the 1986 revolt to remove President Ferdinand Marcos and his regime. In 1991, Radio Veritas became a commercial station in the Philippines while Radio Veritas Asia (a separate organization) continued its overseas shortwave broadcast to Asia. Since 2007, Radio Veritas's operations have increasingly shifted towards digital format and social media, culminating in the closing of their shortwave radio station in June 2019.[12] According to a senior Radio Veritas programme director whom I interviewed, a key difference between Radio Veritas and Protestant broadcasters (such as FEBC) is that Radio Veritas is a commercial station while FEBC is non-commercial. Radio Veritas relies on money from advertisers and sponsors, although they reject items they consider 'sin products' (i.e. liquor, contraceptives and gambling).[13] The relationship between Radio Veritas and other Christian broadcasters was described as 'cooperative' by the managers I interviewed. One reason cited is that many belong to the National Association of Broadcasters in the Philippines (*Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas*), an organization whose members abide by a system of self-regulation regarding ethical and professional standards for television and radio

[9]"High Audience Concentration in Radio," https://philippines.mom-rsf.org/en/media/radio/ (accessed 13 July 2020).
[10]https://www.radiomaria.ph/about-us/.
[11]https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2019-04/radio-veritas-50-years.html.
[12]https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/as-shortwave-radio-dies-a-slow-death-enthusiasts-long-for-a-revival/article24325071.ece.
[13]Personal communication with Radio Veritas director of operations in Manila, 10 January 2019.

broadcasting.[14] In cases such as natural disasters, faith-based radio organizations may work together to coordinate transport of emergency supplies and personnel. However, there does not appear to be significant interaction in their daily operations. Some of my interviewees implied that religious or ideological differences were not necessarily the main issues keeping them from working together, issues of funding and status were also a factor.

Whether listeners tuned in to religious or secular stations, listening to the radio is how many Filipinos accessed information about their faith, surroundings (local and international) and entertainment (musical or otherwise). Radio, in this sense, was integral to how many people constructed everyday realities both individually and through the imagined shared experience of listening. An article recently published by the Philippine National Commission for Culture and the Arts notes that 'no other media channel has touched the lives of ordinary Filipinos as much as the radio, from traditional *panawagans* [public appeals for financial support] and tearjerker dramas to late night health advice and pop music, the radio for many Filipinos is a way of life … it is a part of Filipino culture'.[15] As Elizabeth Enriquez (2009, 5) observes, despite the dominant hold of Western models on radio in the Philippines, Filipinos have, since the US colonial period, been adept at appropriating a cultural practice alien to them and converting it for their own purposes.

This process likely began as early as 1898 when telegraph communications were introduced by the US military in a war to wrest control of the Philippines from Spain (McCoy 2009, 27). Experiments with commercial radio started in 1922 when a US settler named Henry Herman began broadcasting from three 50-watt towers in Manila, Pasay and a mobile station (Enriquez (2009, 39). These early stations existed primarily for demonstration purposes, and for about two years broadcast music to those who owned radio sets (Lent 1968, 38). By 1924, Hermann had combined the three experimental transmitters into a single 100-watt station under the call letters KZKZ, which operated from his home. KZKZ was eventually bought by the Radio Corporation of the Philippines (RCP), who increased its power to 500 watts on 24 October 1924. The mergers of early radio companies such as RCP and Far Eastern Broadcasting Company (no relation to Christian broadcaster discussed in this article) in the years following resulted in the demise of KZKZ but saw the emergence of more powerful stations in Manila that were extended to the outlying provinces. The establishment of KZRC in 1929 in Cebu City, for example, was an experiment to extend Manila station KZRM's signal by shortwave radio. Other stations were subsequently launched using shortwave radio, which transmitted in shortwaves that could travel longer distances rather than the long waves of regular broadcasting.

At its inception, radio broadcasting in the Philippines was a secular medium introduced by US settlers mainly for commercial purposes: first to sell radio sets and later as a medium to advertise US consumer goods. Although not a lucrative business initially, entrepreneurs in the 1920s and 1930s considered radio a legitimate platform to sell local and imported goods such as cigars, soaps and toothpaste (Enriquez 2009, 59–60). The practice of 'blocktiming' (or 'time brokering') was the practice of selling airtime to sponsors in fifteen-minute blocks, which became standard practice for many Philippine

[14]http://www.kbp.org.ph/about-kbp.
[15]Tuazon, Ramon R. 2015. "Radio as a Way of Life." http://ncca.gov.ph/about-ncca-3/subcommissions/subcommission-on-cultural-disseminationscd/communication/radio-as-a-way-of-life/ (accessed 12 February 2019).

stations by the 1930s. Blocktimers, who often were not affiliated with the station, produced programmes in Tagalog, Spanish and Chinese, catering and advertising to a specific audience. Blocktiming eventually became a lucrative business model for radio stations in the US colonial era. Besides reaching its advertising objectives, blocktiming also disciplined Filipino listening practices, not only in terms of structuring time but also in connecting patterns of listening with patterns of consumption. Radio capitalism promoted the colonial project of modernity by creating a listening audience of Filipinos attuned to the 'auditory regime' of US democracy and capitalism.[16] Filipino listeners, in this context, did not achieve modernity simply by purchasing and listening to a radio set, they also had to consume the products advertised. As Timothy Taylor (2012, 6–7) observes in the context of US radio broadcasting in the early twentieth century, the advertising industry desperately sought to discover what listeners wanted to hear, and therefore choice of music became integral for attracting the type of audience advertisers desired. Using a strategy Taylor calls the 'production of consumption', advertisers generated 'goodwill' for their products by sponsoring programmes that played music listeners would enjoy, a practice that also imparted 'personality' to a brand through music. Furthermore, as Taylor (2012, 51) suggests, radio educated listeners about 'their roles as consumers in an era widely viewed as a kind of technological modernity, encouraging people to fashion selves not through their experience in their communities, in churches, in schools, in unions, but through mass-marketed goods made real and vivid – and desirable – on the radio'. This marketing strategy crossed over to broadcasting practices in the colonial Philippines, where US radio capitalism produced Asian customers and listeners. The following section examines how Philippine radio listeners responded to commercial aspects of programming during this period.

Radio listening in the colony

Evidence of how some listeners reacted to sponsored programmes can be found in a 1932 editorial published in the *Philippine Review*, which focuses its critique on contemporary radio programming. Entitled 'This Radio Entertainment Rot', the editorial, penned by an anonymous Manila listener identified only as 'A Radio Fan', begins by complaining about the amount of time devoted to 'popular music', which here refers to jazz (a genre described as 'a horrible mess') and music by 'other local talent' featured on the Manila station, KZRM.[17] The listener's main complaint rests on the 'hopelessly stupid "sponsored" programmes which are increasing in number'. Interestingly, the writer informally gathers information about the listening habits of eight homes in their neighbourhood inhabited by 'average Filipino people'. By listening in on their radio sets over the course of a several evenings, the writer observes,

> Starting at 6:30pm – all of the sets being 'dead' [off] prior to that – [neighbours] were listening to the 'Informational Period,' followed by the 'Dinner Period,' then a 'Studio Program' followed by a 'Sponsored Program,' which was tuned out by four of the seven sets within my hearing. … This was followed by a fifteen minute studio program which the others tuned in for a few minutes, then out again. After this came the climax – a sponsored

[16]For further explanation of the term "auditory regime," see Daughtry (2015) and Morat (2014).
[17]"This Radio Entertainment Rot," *Philippine Review*, April 1932, 27(11), 548.

> program that all tuned out. It was too utterly worthless and hopeless for any of the eight sets to waste current [electricity] and tubes on.[18]

Besides being ethnographically insightful, the observations indicate how Manila listeners chose programmes despite an apparent lack of alternatives. Some listeners preferred their radios go 'dead' than tune in for tiresome programmes that hawked certain goods and services. As the writer asserts, in many cases, the content, delivery and format of sponsored programmes was 'too stupid for description'. In another critique of a sponsored programme, the same writer describes how the programme began 'appropriately' by playing appealing music, although multiple lengthy commercial announcements were inserted in between songs, which, according to writer 'utterly [ruin] the interest or goodwill that the sponsor might have created [with listeners]'. Today, these complaints may seem unfounded to many radio listeners, especially since radio (and other media) is regularly inundated with advertisements. It is worth noting, however, that the complaints are directed at the form and content of radio programming, namely its failure to entertain, rather than the capitalistic premise of sponsored radio programming. Although the editorial alludes to the agency of local Filipino listeners in turning off their radio sets, it falls short of intimating that they should. The piece concludes by returning to this point.

> From the manner in which sponsored programs are thrown together it would seem that the sponsors are under the impression that radio listeners are forced to listen. You are wrong, Mr. Sponsor … If you have something interesting to say about what you have to sell, and will tell it to us in an interesting way, we will gladly give you a chance to say it, but don't labor under the delusion that we have to do this. The radio sets are ours, not yours. We bought them to be entertained, not to be bored.[19]

After the Second World War, the use of radio as commercial space in the Philippines continued as US and local business interests drove the creation of new commercial stations. The 1949 merger of the Manila Broadcasting Company and the Philippine Broadcasting System made the stations associated with these two companies the strongest in the Philippines at the time (Lent 1968, 42–43). The 'colonial flavour' of postwar radio in the Philippines was represented through the vast number of programmes originating as serials from the US. Although locally produced programmes in Tagalog language, such as *Kuwentong Kapitbahay* (Neighbour's Story), an early Tagalog soap opera, and *Kapitan Kidlat* (Captain Lightning Bolt, a local version of Superman), emerged during this period, radio programming largely reflected the agenda of its sponsors. As a listener described in 1952,

> [Philippine] Radio stations stay on the air eighteen hours … [and] a number of loyal listeners prize their radio sets for the unexpensive entertainment and information they get from them. Even radio people themselves agree that of their eighteen hours on the air only a few are spent on broadcasting worthy programs. So much time is spent polluting the air [waves] with cheap, morbid, unintelligent programs. … A few years back when the announcement was made that radio was here to stay, everybody was happy. [Now] frustrated radio reformants aren't so sure they want it to stay.[20]

[18]Ibid.
[19]Ibid.
[20]Granada, Ernesto, "Radio's adolescent troubles," *Freedom,* 20 September 1952, 7–8.

Cultivating a Filipino radio audience also was an objective of the US government, which funded the distribution of radio sets throughout the Philippines (Enriquez (2009, 59–60). Many large speakers were installed in town plazas of various municipalities to encourage radio listening as a community activity. In the estimation of colonial administrators, the dissemination of radio technology would connect even the most remote villages of the archipelago with the business, social and educational activities of its centre.[21] The US government considered radio not only an effective tool in the dissemination of official news to colonial administrators and people in remote areas, it also served dual purposes as a technopolitical project and civilizing agent (Hecht 2011, Enriquez 2009). Radio capitalism was responsible for not only popularizing elements of US pop culture (e.g. language, fashion, dance, music, movies), but also a value system that privileged the consumption of imported goods as a progressive act. As I alluded to earlier, Filipino radio audiences were encouraged to purchase and experience the US products being advertised as proof of their own penchant for democratic and capitalistic notions of progress. In this sense, the colonial project of radio broadcasting was part of a wider colonization of the Philippines that included the refiguring of urban space and auditory environments (public and private) through practices of urban design and resource extraction. I will examine specific examples of how FEBC programme content and format have used blocktiming to cultivate listening audiences later in the article. The following section, however, focuses on Christian missionary radio and specifically on FEBC's work as a local and international evangelical broadcaster.

FEBC's missionary radio network

In South East Asia, US missionaries were generally considered by locals and other European colonials as 'proselytizers for Americanism' as much as for Christianity (Foster 2010, 77–78). Although many missionary groups were more evangelistic in terms of their focus on conversion, others were suspected to be engaged in 'political actions' linking missionary messages to US political values. In the decades following the Second World War, evangelical Christian radio broadcasters such as FEBC performed a more explicit political role, for instance, in combatting the spread of global communism during the Cold War. Before exploring this topic further, the emergence of FEBC must be contextualized within a wider surge in missionaries after 1945. As Timothy Stoneman (2017, 1139) explains, 'the postwar American evangelical expansion into missions was fueled by the growth of parachurch agencies, including radio broadcasting'. International religious broadcasters 'pioneered the transformation of the conservative evangelical missionary movement from "more generalized" self-sufficient, faith-based mission societies to highly specialized, technologically driven "parachurch agencies", which became the "dominant form of late-twentieth-century US evangelicalism"' (2017, 1143; citing Carpenter 1990). Parachurch mission agencies, including radio broadcasters, promised followers a solution to the massive postwar changes that, among other events, saw the demographic and religious balance of power shift from Europe and North America to other areas of the world (Stoneman 2017, 1143). Evangelical communication abroad provided a dual movement of hope and anxiety, forward-looking innovation, and rearguard-focused conservation. Despite

[21]"Radio in the Philippines," *The American Chamber of Commerce Journal*, October 1922, 17

having begun their operations at home, many US evangelical missions found that broadcasting internationally provided far greater opportunities for innovation than in the US market, for all major areas of broadcasting, including transmission, programme production and reception (Carpenter 1990, 92–132).

The creation of a US 'networked empire' (Oldenziel 2011) after 1945, consisting of strategic military bases, territorial (primarily island) possessions and friendly regimes, allowed evangelicals to build radio stations and purchase airtime on foreign commercial outlets. This US network drew inspiration from British imperials who invested in island possessions to create a system of globally networked power anchored in naval strategy (Kennedy 1971; Headrick 1981; Hugill 1999). The US expanded on this idea to create networks to serve as hubs of communications, information and military systems that radio broadcasters such as the Voice of America (VOA) and private companies utilized to conduct wireless global telecommunications (Lundestad 2012; Stoneman 2017, 2009). As James Wood (2000, 29) observes, the structure of US international broadcasting consists of an elaborate structure of separate broadcasting organizations; some are government funded and others privately funded. Each broadcaster, however, has a duty to broadcast in the interest of the state and to project US culture, ways of life and politics to the world. Or as Wood suggests, 'make the rest of the world user-friendly to the [United States]'.

Evangelical broadcasters used the postwar networked empire to increase their international activities. Radio became a medium where missionaries could directly access foreign audiences, and bypass state authorities and church institutions. As FEBC founder Robert Bowman recounted in an interview, 'When Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945 and General Douglas MacArthur issued his famous call for a thousand missionaries to Japan … I thought, if God used radio to reach so many people in [the US], what about the Orient?'[22] Bowman, with his partners John Broger, a former US Navy officer, and William Roberts, a pastor and religious radio host in Los Angeles, launched FEBC as a missionary radio broadcaster with the explicit intent of 'sharing Christ with the people of Asia'.[23] In 1946, FEBC's founders sought to establish their base of operations in China, a longtime target of Protestant missionaries, which would serve as the hub of their radio broadcasts to all of Asia. For various reasons, however, including the resumption of civil war between Communists and Nationalists and difficulties obtaining local broadcasting licences, a decision was made after six months of negotiations in China to explore options at a secondary site in the Philippines (Ledyard 2018, 18–19; Bowman 2018, 45–46). In Manila, FEBC found a more hospitable climate for their nascent radio organization. Arriving amidst the wreckage of Japanese warships littering Manila Bay just two days after the Philippines received independence, FEBC organizers made key connections with government and other local officials early on. FEBC found in the Philippines what it could not in China, namely 'a strongly sympathetic [radio] broadcasting environment … the legacy of American colonial rule' (Stoneman 2017, 1154). Colonial radio's afterlife was patterned though the Philippines' 'special relationship' with the US, which continued economic and military assistance through informal means

[22]"Far East Broadcasting Founder Bob Bowman Watched God Do the Impossible with Radio." https://www.crossmap.com/blogs/far-east-broadcasting-founder-bob-bowman-watched-god-do-the-impossible-with-radio.html (accessed 18 September 2018).
[23]https://www.febc.org/learn-about-us (accessed 18 February 2019).

after the war. This relationship benefitted FEBC, enabling the organization to pursue a dynamic and ambitious expansion strategy from 1948 through 1954. This process began with the founding of its flagship station DZAS in 1948 serving the greater Manila region and the island of Luzon, followed by shortwave radio operations in other parts of the Philippine archipelago, and finally, global outreach targeting audiences in China, Japan, India, the Middle East, Russia, Africa, North America and Europe, also via shortwave. The idea for a wider FEBC radio network in Asia was romanticized, for instance, by an early FEBC employee in Manila, who wrote,

> There is an unseen network [that] … fans out like a gigantic web … to embrace half of the earth's circumference. Invisible chains of sound waves are strong and swift, linking the stations with listeners in faraway places. The strands of sound go out in every direction, pushing aside barriers and boundaries … Sound waves link us to many lands. (Bowman and Titus 2018, 46)

The 'unseen network' of radio sound could penetrate the political borders and boundaries of 'enemies' in order to communicate with listeners in geographic areas previously unreachable. These global objectives, situated within a Cold War context, provided FEBC and other evangelical broadcasters an opportune moment to extend their enterprise overseas. International radio became the auditory space of propaganda (Stoneman 2017, 1140; Westad 2005; Wood 2000). The BBC and VOA in 1946 decided to continue wartime broadcasting amidst deteriorating relations with the Soviet Union to create frameworks that legitimized international broadcasting to foreign audiences, paving the way for private parties (Spohrer 2013). Actively combatting Communism abroad was a key motivation for missionary broadcasters, who simultaneously demonstrated patriotism, allegiance to US foreign policy and provided a source of financial support among their base audience.

Financial sustainability has been an issue for FEBC from the outset. Early on, FEBC organizers overcame not having direct financial backing by using their reputation regionally (in Southern California) and domestically (in the US) to secure necessary funding (Ledyard 2018, 14). As an organization of non-profit status in the US, FEBC is classified as a publicly supported organization exempt from federal and (California) state income taxes. A majority of FEBC's funding has been obtained from contributions made by individuals, churches, foundations, ministries and other institutions. In connection with its international radio ministry, FEBC provided financial support to broadcasting stations in a number of countries not under the direct control of the US office. For instance, the stations in countries/regions receiving the most financial support in the 2015–2016 fiscal year were Vietnam, Russia, Philippines, (South) Korea, Mongolia, Central Asia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Cambodia and Thailand.[24] While the exact 'return on investment' expected by individual FEBC investors varies, it is apparent that the funding of strategic locations suggests how (and why) FEBC have chosen to target specific international populations and radio audiences. The allocation of funding, in this context, continues to reflect the wider political objectives of FEBC as a missionary broadcaster.

Furthermore, similar to other evangelicals, early FEBC organizers were widely opposed to Communism, an ideology they interpreted as a 'godless materialism' that threatened the

[24] Independent Auditors Report (Capin Crouse LLP, 21 October 2016), https://www.febc.org/wp-content/uploads/FEBC-Audit-2017-2018.pdf.

global future of Christianity (Stoneman 2017, 1140). Penetrating the Iron and Bamboo Curtains through missionary broadcasting meant not only reaching listeners in China and the Soviet Union, it also paralleled and, in some cases, superseded the work of US propaganda radio. In the Philippines, FEBC's overtly anti-Communist stance was reflected in their involvement against the Hukbalahap (or Huks), a peasant army formed in Luzon in 1942 led by the Communist Party. The US assisted effort to quell the Huks and other movements of the radical left became part of the Cold War agenda (Ileto 2017, 6). The distribution of FEBC portable radios in rural communities of Luzon and elsewhere were understood to be 'doing something to the villagers' in terms of turning listeners on to Christianity (and away from Leftists and Communists) through FEBC programmes (Ledyard 2018, 102–103).

Programming and format: reaching international and local audiences

Part of the evangelical focus on international expansion was devoted to finding approaches to radio programming that were locally relevant. Many postwar missionaries were acutely aware that the worldwide population explosion meant that proven methods they had used to draw audiences at home would not necessarily translate outside the US (Robert 2000; Carpenter and Sanneh 2005). Using the infrastructure and technology left over from the Second World War, and an emerging framework of the Cold War, FEBC established the station KZAS in Manila in 1948 and began broadcasting locally in the Philippines and internationally. Subsequently, FEBC stations were built in Okinawa, the Seychelles and Korea, and FEBC's international radio network began to take shape.

Since then, FEBC Philippines has operated twelve stations in the Philippines and served as a hub for the organization's international broadcasts. In an interview I conducted with FEBC Philippines' president Dan Andrew Cura, he explained,

> We have our two transmission sites for shortwave broadcasts into South East Asia because in many countries, especially China, you can't have a Christian network or radio station in-country. So, what we do is broadcast through shortwave from [Manila] into those areas. … That's the thing with shortwave broadcasts, once it's in the air, it's in the air. If it's picked up by a local radio station in Indonesia [for instance] that's [just] hardware. (Personal communication, 4 January 2019)

Cura stated that shortwave broadcasts effectively reached their target audience because in countries such as China and Vietnam, jamming shortwave signal was 'an act of futility', as governments understood that FEBC would not cease broadcasting. Governments sought to avoid the high cost of jamming 100 kW broadcasts, and for this and other reasons, FEBC was labelled an 'enemy station' during the height of the Bamboo Curtain. The jamming of FEBC broadcasts in the 1950s represented a sign of its growing international effectiveness and implication in the global Cold War (Stoneman 2017, 1155–1156). FEBC responded by beginning a new phase of expansion which included the acquisition of two surplus high-powered 50 kW shortwave transmitters from the former US Office of War Information (now known as the VOA). The first transmitter was installed in the Philippines for direct broadcasting, and the second was converted to medium wave and installed on the island of Okinawa directed at the Chinese mainland. Formal restrictions on broadcasting into China, for instance, have since eased under the condition that FEBC 'not say

anything against the Chinese government' (personal communication with Dan Cura, 4 January 2019). Furthermore, according to Cura, 'We have taken the extra effort … to keep our broadcast neutral. And when I say neutral, it's not to water down the message, but to not be antagonistic toward the host country'. This approach is indicative of how FEBC has used shortwave broadcasting to 'sensitive' areas, which have included countries with significant Muslim populations in Central Asia and Africa.[25]

FEBC's approach also involved filtering its international broadcasts through localized content. In South East Asia, local contributors created programmes in 'heart languages,' meaning that FEBC did not translate material in English but instead relied on regional affiliates to create culturally relevant content in the local language. Emphasizing localized content, according to Cura, differentiated FEBC from many other evangelical broadcasters. FEBC avoided using the national (or trade) language, as much as possible, by searching for local expertise in curating material. Using regional dialects, even of smaller ethnic groups, 'gained traction' among local listeners, especially since many smaller language groups in South East Asia were not accustomed to hearing their marginalized language used on the radio (personal communication with Dan Cura, 4 January 2019).

Despite being an important node in FEBC's international network, FEBC Philippines' main concern is its domestic audience. In an interview I conducted with FEBC's administrator of International Ministries, Jonathan Mortiz, he told me that FEBC's approach for targeting Filipino audiences rest on creatively addressing the 'felt needs' of the people. A 'felt needs' approach, evoking Fanon's 'felt community' mentioned earlier in the article, emphasized addressing the functional needs of specific communities, status levels and geographic areas (e.g. rural farmers, urban mothers, overseas workers) while remaining relevant to a wider listenership. Mortiz explained that because FEBC understands, for example, that farmers are early risers, morning programmes catered to them, providing concise blocks of news, weather, current events and devotional programming with titles such as *Hardin ng Panalangin* (Garden of Prayer) and *Bagong Araw, Bagong Balita* (Fresh News for a New Day). Later, on weekday mornings, programmes targeted young mothers with a block from 9.30 to 11am entitled 'Family Matters', featuring titles such as *Memo ni Mommy* (Mommy's Notes), *Menu ni Mommy* (Mommy's Menu), *Panuntunan* (Guidelines) and *Parekoy* (Buddies), and an early afternoon programme called 'Doctors Online', which addressed issues related to family health, childcare and other relevant topics.[26] As Mortiz explained,

> [FEBC Philippines] understands that our mothers need to hear about the new science, how to breast feed, how to take care of their children, because we know many of the mothers stay at home to take care of their kids. So, that is the sensitivity of broadcasters, to know who your people are. (personal communication)

Closely following the needs of its audience was integral to FEBC's approach to programming. This approach evokes a type of shared experience that enabled Filipino mothers, for instance, to create an 'imagined listening community' (Birdsall 2012) based on a collective sensibility associated with being part of a wider radio audience of Christian mothers. The

[25]An FEBC online blog entitled "Christ to Muslims" highlights successful efforts made by the organization to Christianize Muslims in Africa, Central Asia and elsewhere. https://www.febc.org/category/content-theme/christ-to-muslims (accessed 8 August 2019).

[26]DZAS Program Schedule, https://dzas.febc.ph/program-schedule/ (accessed 26 June 2019).

informational programming FEBC provided also incorporated this approach with faith-based material. FEBC's news programming, as senior managers explained, was 'not political' (at least overtly) in the context of national politics, but instead provided a [Evangelical Christian] 'principle' that, similar to other Christian and Catholic broadcasters, addressed situations, ideas and values from the Bible. In this sense, FEBC Philippines' programmes fell into three main categories: informational, instructional and inspirational. These categories provided a framework for creating blocks of programming that were 'relevant to the community' and incorporated Christian perspectives and commentary (personal communication with Dan Cura, 4 January 2019).

FEBC Philippines' programming format, as I described earlier, remained quite similar to the 'blocktiming' format introduced during the US colonial period. FEBC's teaching programmes, consisting of Bible study or informational programmes, were organized into fifteen to thirty-minute blocks. During these segments, programme hosts spoke directly with local experts or officials in government agencies to address topics such as personal nutrition, new health services and agricultural techniques. The time block format continued to effectively reach Filipino listeners. Reasons for this, as some listeners told me, are based in how listening to these programmes structured time in their daily lives. One FEBC listener described how she enjoyed the time block format because, even though she listened to other radio stations, she knew to tune in for bible study on FEBC promptly at 9pm. Another listener expressed how growing up in a rural province made listening to radio difficult, since the signal from Manila stations was usually weak during the daytime but better at night. As a result, this listener tuned in because of the station's clear signal and because they knew that programmes could be heard nightly. The continued use of the blocktime format also enabled FEBC Philippines to target audiences with focused messages (religious and otherwise) they believed would resonate and expand their listenership. This technique, as Enriquez suggests, was what made radio in the US colonial period such an enticing and exciting medium for advertisers, entrepreneurs and government officials alike (Enriquez 2009, 59–65).

Conclusion

Since the Second World War, evangelical Christians from the US have creatively combined religion and missionary radio in establishing an agenda for their international activities. In organizational terms, international Christian broadcasters pioneered the transformation of the conservative missionary movement from self-sufficient, faith-based mission societies to highly specialized, technologically driven 'parachurch agencies' and the mass-mediated 'Electric Church' (see Carpenter 1990; Schultze 2005; Stoneman 2017). From its inception in 1948, the FEBC has promoted its objectives to 'meet the spiritual needs' of listeners in Asia and elsewhere through terrestrial radio, the Internet and other emerging platforms. FEBC's core stations in the Philippines and their international network have used shared listening experiences to strategically target diverse local audiences, including indigenous groups, overseas Filipino migrant workers, agricultural workers and Western classical music aficionados. The organization's international objectives are framed locally through the service-oriented work it provides in communities across the Philippines. As senior managers emphasized to me, FEBC's status as a non-commercial broadcaster allowed for flexibility, with specialized programmes designed to

address the intimate needs of listeners. In practice, the type of service FEBC provided was evident not only in its daily broadcasting but also in cases of emergency, namely first responder programming following natural disasters, which are quite common in the Philippines. In such instances, the focus was not only on disaster-related programming but on establishing mobile sites of distribution for medical supplies, food, portable radios and reliable information. FEBC's role during such calamities should not be interpreted as purely opportunistic. As Dan Cura explains,

> [FEBC] doesn't want to use disasters as simply a hook to evangelize. We don't believe in that. … We'll do it because it's the right thing to do. If people come up to us and ask why we do it, then we'll share [but] … that comes at a later time.

Besides disaster programming, Cura's comments allude to instances where FEBC has effectively addressed needs in areas where government agencies and other broadcasters have not. FEBC has relied extensively on programme production by indigenous staff overseas and partner missionaries in the field to successfully expand its operations across Asia (Stoneman 2017, 1156). Conversely, a focus on 'being local' has shielded FEBC from its historically complex relationship with the US government. Through this relationship, the organization has benefitted from colonial radio infrastructure, Cold War priorities, surplus equipment and technical data even as it has conflicted with the US government over institutional cultures, the use of scarce frequencies and sectarian programming.

Although aspects of FEBCs programming format, such as blocktime, evoke an afterlife for radio practices of the US colonial period, other manifestations of coloniality,[27] are more obvious in the organization's hierarchical structure. As I mentioned earlier, FEBC's headquarters and leadership continue to reside in La Mirada, California. Furthermore, FEBC's expansion strategy into predominantly Muslim geographical areas of Central and South Asia align the organization with wider imperatives of the US global 'War on Terror' and its logic of preemption – just as it did in the Cold War against communism. FEBC's stated goal to 'reach the least reached', beyond a religious context, represents an ongoing and complex interweaving of the organization's objectives as a local Christian radio broadcaster in the Philippines with its political objectives as a US-based international broadcaster.

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[27]For further explanation of the term 'coloniality', see Quijano (2007) and Mignolo (2000).

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