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Short title:

CLERICALISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

Becker, STM, 1965

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*Becker*

AN ANALYSIS OF CLERICALISM IN SOME PHILIPPINE CHURCH  
BODIES AS AN OBSTACLE TO LAY ACTIVITY IN THE LUTHERAN  
CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
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in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. DEFINITION AND SCOPE. . . . .	1
II. SCRIPTURES, LUTHER AND CONFESSIONS ON CLERICALISM . .	12
III. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CLERICALISM . . . . .	23
IV. AN ANALYSIS OF THREE PHILIPPINE CHURCH BODIES . . . .	35
The Philippine Independent Church . . . . .	35
The <u>Iglesia ni Kristo</u> . . . . .	41
The United Church of Christ in the Philippines. . .	48
V. FACTORS FAVORABLE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CLERICALISM .	57
VI. THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES. . . . .	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	78

## CHAPTER I

### DEFINITION AND SCOPE

Christian leaders the world over have come to realize the value, if not the utter necessity, of genuine lay activity for the life of the Church. Among those who are most keenly aware of the value of an active laity are those who have had a hand in guiding the so-called "younger churches," or mission churches. Necessity has often led church leaders in mission lands to press laymen into service in order to be able to carry on the Church's program of worship, teaching, and evangelism.

The present study is born out of the conviction that, humanly speaking, the future of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, and that of any Christian body for that matter, lies in a vitally active laity. It is also born out of a bit of experience that has seen what laymen can do when properly stimulated and guided. The study is made also in the belief that the clergy themselves to a large extent hold the key to a genuinely active laity and that they can be a tremendous influence either positively or negatively.

Clericalism in its various forms is here viewed as an obstacle to lay activity. That clericalism stifles lay initiative is to some extent an assumption, since exact motives for human action or inaction are often difficult to determine. It is, however, an assumption shared by many churchmen. James O'Gara, a noted Roman Catholic editor, says it plainly with regard to his own church body:

Clericalism and lay apathy go hand in hand. The combination does more than alter the basic spirit of the liturgy; it reduces the role of the layman to that of a passive bystander in almost every area. While clericalism seems to guard the strength of the Church in the face of attack, it in fact weakens it and reduces the area of the Church's influence.<sup>1</sup>

Clericalism, therefore, is a problem to which churches need to be alerted and with which they need to deal. We do not claim, of course, that clericalism is the only hindrance to genuine lay activity and that its removal would suddenly cause the laity to come to the rescue of the Church and solve all of its ills. Our contention is that clericalism is one hindrance to lay activity and one which should be recognized as such and dealt with.

The timeliness of our topic is seen in the struggle now in process in the World Council of Churches and elsewhere with the phrase, "ministry of the laity."<sup>2</sup> This striking and useful phrase has gained popularity especially in ecumenical circles during the past fifteen years. It has driven some church bodies in the World Council of Churches to rethink such fundamental doctrines as baptism and the doctrine of the church. It has resulted in numerous high-level conferences and institutes on the subject of lay training. It has resulted in attempts to spell out a theology of the laity, notably that of Hendrik Kraemer.<sup>3</sup> A French priest, Father Yves Congar, has

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<sup>1</sup>James O'Gara, The Layman in the Church (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. "List of Publications of the Department on the Laity," Laity No. 17 (June 1964), pp. 53-54.

<sup>3</sup>Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958).

written an exhaustive volume entitled, Lay People in the Church,<sup>4</sup> indicating that the Roman Catholic Church, too, is struggling with the problem of how to activate the laity more fully.

The term "clericalism" has seldom been defined and it has apparently never been the topic of a treatise of any size. The reason for this is obvious. Clericalism is not accepted as a doctrine or official practice of any church body. Usually it is a practice which develops quite subtly in a church body. It is not ordinarily something tangible enough for analysis and study. The present study, we realize, suffers a weakness on account of this factor. However, the cumulative materials and evidence available are sufficient to establish that clericalism is a reality and a threat that needs to be recognized.

The older Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias rarely treat the topic of clericalism. When they do treat it, it is usually defined as the clergy's assumption of authority in matters that pertain to the State. We are not here concerned with this particular aspect of clericalism. A more modern definition and one which approaches the meaning of the term as we conceive of it here is that given by The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church: "A term, often used in an opprobrious sense, for an excessively professional attitude of outlook, conversation, or conduct on the part of the clergymen."<sup>5</sup> This definition

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<sup>4</sup>Yves Congar, Lay People in the Church (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1957).

<sup>5</sup>"Clericalism," The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, F. L. Cross, editor (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 302.



expresses quite well the concept of the term as we deal with it here. For our purposes, however, we prefer to broaden the definition to include also the laity's attitude with regard to the status of the clergy and their own status. The assumption is that whether the excessive emphasis on clergy status originates in the mind of the clergy or in the mind of the laity, it may in either case become an obstacle to lay activity.

Clericalism is here thought of as the notion that clergymen have powers or prerogatives in the Church which cause laymen to feel themselves inferior or second-rate in spiritual matters. We hesitate to call it a doctrine because, especially in Protestantism, it is not so much a doctrine as a practice. It is a practice, however, which sometimes nearly acquires the status of a doctrine and tends to obscure the doctrines of the universal priesthood and ministry of believers. In his brief "Sketch of the Concept of Ministry in History" Erwin Lueker shows how clericalizing tendencies and practices gradually solidified into doctrinal positions.<sup>6</sup>

Because of the prominence of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines and because of its influence on the people of the Republic, we cannot here pass over without comment the hierarchial type of clericalism exemplified in that communion. Father Congar readily concedes that his church, at least in the past, has accepted Gratian's statement, "Duo sunt genera Christianorum," which clearly gives laymen

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<sup>6</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer and Erwin Lueker, Church and Ministry in Transition (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 64ff.

a secondary role in the church. "The lay position is presented as a concession to human weakness."<sup>7</sup> Father Congar sums up the effect that this doctrine has had on lay activity in his church in the past:

Unhappily the laity, too accustomed to receiving Christian truth "ready-made" from the clergy, were for long without initiative in the fields which nevertheless belonged to them, fields wherein it was especially out of place that the clergy should decide for them, relying on an authority whose competence does not in fact extend here. From a point of view of conscience, the laity, used practically to reducing all virtues to obedience (and all sins to those of the flesh), often lived by proxy; in things where their clergy did not authoritatively decide their duty, they most often did nothing.<sup>8</sup>

In his argumentation, Father Congar struggles valiantly to show that the laity is as essential to the being of the Church as the clergy is, but he has difficulty bringing laymen to a status above that of an "appendage." He has this difficulty because he must hold to the dogma that the church's hierarchial structure is divinely instituted and therefore untouchable. Some American Catholic writers openly acknowledge that only canonical changes can bring the layman up to the status which he should have.<sup>9</sup>

That clericalism in its strictest sense may invade also non-Roman communions is brought out in William Lefroy's exhaustive study of the Christian ministry as he saw it in England at the end of the past century. Quoting various Anglican writers, he complains of what

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<sup>7</sup>Congar, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>9</sup>O'Gara, pp. 86ff.

he terms "sacerdotalism":

The minister of the Christian Church "represents Jesus Christ"; exercises his delegated power; applies "to men the merits of that sacrifice which He offered on the cross"; mediates between God and man; bestows judicial absolution whereby sin against God is pardoned, and by "offering" and consecrating the elements of Holy Communion, they become "that which our Blessed Lord took from the Blessed Virgin," which suffered on the cross. . . . Through this sacrifice the Church is said to approach God. But approach, corporate or individual, is possible only through the priest, upon whom the sacrifice depends. Spiritual life is the "very life of God." But it cannot be received save by dependence upon "ordained ministers," who are "human mediators." The priest is thus the individual, official, essential and sole intermediary through whom man approaches God. He is, moreover, the channel through whom the individual life "can receive this fellowship with God"; indeed he is the only channel.<sup>10</sup>

This type of sacerdotalism usually arises where the apostolic succession and a "high" doctrine of the sacraments is held. While the apostolic succession generally is not a concern in Protestant churches, in the administration of the Sacraments the clergy is often set apart and above in the eyes of the laymen. It is at this point that clericalism may evolve. The sacredness of the sacraments, especially when coupled with elaborate ceremony and vestments, easily gives rise to the notion that the officiant must be a person with a kind of higher spiritual status. This is one respect in which the Lutheran Church in a predominantly Roman Catholic country needs to be aware of the dangers of clericalism.

The hierarchial, or "high church," brand of clericalism is not

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<sup>10</sup>William Lefroy, The Christian Ministry (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1891), pp. 424-425.

the only type of clericalism which concerns us here. There is another, more subtle type of authoritarianism in churches which easily stifles lay initiative and activity of a spiritual nature. This is "professionalism," which means that professional church workers, chiefly the clergy, are held responsible for carrying out the work of the church so that laymen feel relieved of responsibility. This may begin with the concept of congregational supremacy, so that the clergy's authority is considered a delegated one. But whether the authority and responsibility are thought of as delegated or whether they are conceived of as coming directly from above, the practical result is nearly the same. The layman, often quite willingly, becomes something of a second-class church member, while the clergy assumes prerogatives above and beyond what the Scriptures ascribe to the Holy Ministry.

A growing number of church leaders is recognizing the evils of professionalism in modern Protestantism. Many of the more recent studies written on the Holy Ministry deplore the status of the laity in the Church. Frank Segler, for example, observes that

the layman is often the "displaced church member," displaced by employed staff members who do everything in the layman's stead. Someone has called the vast army of enlisted laymen the "reserve force" of the Church.<sup>11</sup>

These remarks of Segler introduce us to what might be thought of as a sub-form of professionalism in the church, referring to a group of

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<sup>11</sup>Franklin M. Segler, A Theology of Church and Ministry (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1960), p. 76.

people termed "the clericalized laity" by Hendrik Kraemer.<sup>12</sup> This term refers to paid church workers other than the ordained clergy. While authority is perhaps not so easily transferred to these church workers as it is to the clergy, responsibilities are definitely transferred to them and thus removed from the average layman. In addition to this group of professionals, there is often another group which may be termed the "select laity" because they are the more active in a congregational program.<sup>13</sup> This group also may come to have a status and responsibilities above that of the "ordinary" laity. Both the "clericalized laity" and the "select laity" may be considered forms of professionalism insofar as they rob the "ordinary" laymen of responsibility and initiative. We are therefore concerned also with these two forms of professionalism, although it does not fall within the scope of this paper to deal with them in our analyses in later chapters.

There is a related problem found most frequently in mission countries, where lay initiative often suffers from what is called "paternalism." The case is stated by some African churches affiliated with the World Council of Churches:

The Church in Africa has for so much of its history been on the receiving end of missionary and other outside help that this has tended to have a crippling effect on the development of a sense of local responsibility.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Kraemer, p. 166.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>14</sup>"Some Reflections from Africa," Laity, No. 17 (June 1964), p. 40.

While this is not primarily a matter of authority in the Church, authority is usually involved because leadership is quite often in the hands of foreign missionaries representing the "sending church." The missionary, through whom the aid is channeled to the mission group, is generally respected, and well-meaning Christians are content to leave authority and responsibility with him. In some cases the missionary may himself assume this authority and responsibility in such a way that he is not conscious of its undesirable effects on the members of the mission church. In any case, paternalism may easily become a form of clericalism, or at least run parallel with it in given situations, thus becoming an obstacle to the kind of lay activity with which we are concerned here.

James A. Scherer, speaking specifically to the missionary situation, classifies clericalism as a specific ramification of the broader concept of "ecclesiasticism." He conceives of ecclesiasticism as basically the reproduction in foreign lands of the pattern of the mother church. This pattern includes the professional ministry, denominationalism and institutionalism. Concerning clericalism specifically he observes that it

assumes that the western tradition of a trained and salaried professional ministry is the best arrangement for the younger churches, even if it is not always attainable. It holds that ministries by laymen in the church are temporary expedients to be continued only until well-trained ministers are available. It would exalt the professional status of the minister as a religious official.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>James A. Scherer, Missionary Go Home! (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 36.

This analysis agrees with our definition of professionalism and accents the fact that this type of clericalism on a mission field does not usually develop apart from other factors but is closely related to institutionalism and denominationalism as developed in the sending churches. This does not preclude, however, that some forms of clericalism may develop apart from the other "isms" mentioned here.

A common denominator of all forms of clericalism--sacerdotalism, professionalism, and paternalism--is the concept of rank or status of the clergy, which sets them above the laymen and causes them to be considered as more essential to the Church than the laity. Whether this status is assumed by the clergy or whether it is given them by the laity, the result often is that both privilege and responsibility of the layman is minimized.

The plan of this study is to analyze the situation in which the Lutheran Church in the Philippines finds itself with regard to these matters, so as to create an awareness of the problem. In Chapter Two we present briefly the Scriptural and Confessional basis of our aversion to clericalism. In Chapter Three we trace in a sketchy way the history of the development of clericalism beginning with the early church. In doing so we are primarily interested in isolating causes for this development and in establishing responsibility for the same so far as that is possible. In Chapter Four we analyze three Philippine church groups for evidences of clericalism in those church bodies with a view toward application to the Lutheran Church in that country. In

Chapter Five we turn our attention to some factors which we consider favorable to the development of clericalism on the Philippine scene. These factors are some basic values of the people and some social and political patterns set by their society. In the final Chapter we look briefly at the situation in the Lutheran Church in the Philippines itself and attempt to sum up the prospects for a continued "high" view of the laity, and hopefully, continued lay activity.



## CHAPTER II

### SCRIPTURES, LUTHER AND CONFESSIONS ON CLERICALISM

It should be noted, first of all, that Scripture recognizes a special ministry set apart which is generally thought of as corresponding to what we call the clergy today. The apostles were thus set apart from others. Those especially gifted by the Holy Spirit for service are given titles, or "offices," in the Church (Rom. 12, I Cor. 12, Eph. 4). The Ephesians passage specifically states that these leaders are Christ's gift to the Church "for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph. 4:12). Church leaders are characterized as "overseers" (Hebr. 13:17) and as "stewards of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. 4:1). The Holy Spirit has made them "guardians" over the flock (Acts 20:28). That the clergy has a high and respectable position in the Church is not to be denied. It is the abuse or false conception of this position that leads to clericalism.

Scripture has very little to say explicitly concerning clericalism but has much to say by way of implication. The most pertinent Scripture statements are those dealing either with the Holy Ministry or with the privileges and duties of the Church's membership as a whole.

Among the more explicit statements is the exhortation of the Apostle Peter that church leaders do not lord it over the flock, but that they be examples of humility to them (I Pet. 5:1-5). Saint Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for tending to elevate human leaders above

Christ (I Cor. 1). The same apostle, in spite of his special apostolic position, sets the pattern for church leaders with his attitude toward the Christians at Rome: "that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine," (Rom. 1:12). Similar examples could be cited from other epistles, indicating that the apostles wanted no part of clergy domination.

An outstanding statement of Jesus Himself is the one in which He speaks of the equality of all Christians:

You are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher and you are all brethren. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have one Master, the Christ. He who is greatest among you shall be your servant (Matt. 23:8-11).

By these statements Jesus certainly implied that religious leaders of any day are to be aware of the temptation to assume an importance which is contradictory to the Christian spirit.

Two prominent Scripture teachings which warn against undue clergy authority are the doctrines of the universal priesthood and the universal ministry of believers. Regarding the first of these, on the basis of I Peter 2 and Revelation 1:6 and much of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we can conclude with Thomas Coates that:

the New Testament ministry is not a continuation of the Old Testament priesthood, which God had placed into a special mediatorial position between the people and Himself, and to which alone as a divinely selected order He entrusted the sacrifices and services of the temple. The office was actually a prefiguration of the priestly office of Christ . . . and was therefore both fulfilled and abrogated by Him at His

coming and by His vicarious sacrifice as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."<sup>1</sup>

In the New Testament the functions of the priesthood are ascribed to all Christians. All believers have direct access to God through Christ (Rom. 5:2). Sins are to be confessed to "one another" and intercession is to be made by all (James 5:16). All of the redeemed are to offer spiritual sacrifices (I Pet. 2:5). Any teaching or practice, therefore, which claims that the clergy has prerogatives over the laity with regard to access to God or offering of sacrifice to God is contrary to the New Testament and is the most patent form of clericalism.

The dominant theme of the New Testament, however, is not the universal priesthood but universal ministry. Ministry (*διακονία*) is a characteristic feature of the Church of Jesus Christ. It applies to all members, both clergy and laity. Jesus Himself set the pattern for this ministry, which is characterized by love and humility (Mark 10:41-45). The Christian's mission is to continue the mission begun by Jesus Himself (John 17:18). The Christian's ministry is an extension of Jesus' ministry. In His own ministry Jesus not only preached but also exemplified equality and unity among the members of His kingdom. Therefore, although He instituted a Holy Ministry set apart from others within His Church, His emphasis and that of the entire New Testament is more on the unity of believers than on the difference of function

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Coates, Authority in the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), p. 48.

of individual members. We agree, therefore, with the summary statement of Richard Caemmerer when he says of the Holy Ministry:

In Scripture ministers are described as ministers, pastors, overseers. Always it is emphasized that they, too, stand in relation to God in which every Christian stands; nowhere are they described as having prerogatives or dignities other than those of every Christian.<sup>2</sup>

Most modern Protestant writers on the Holy Ministry emphasize that the New Testament doctrine of the Ministry does not give rank or status to the clergy but rather confers on them a special function within the body of believers. In an attempt to elevate the laity to its proper position, some modern churchmen have popularized the term, "ministry of the laity." For the sake of emphasizing equality of clergy and laity in the Church, some have gone so far as to describe the clergy as "the other laity."<sup>3</sup> The intention is not to abolish the distinction between clergy and laity or to deny the importance of the specialized functions of the former. It is rather to stress the Scriptural truth that ministry is a privilege and responsibility of all. The clergy, it is contended, are set apart by their special gifts which qualify them for the training of others in the Body of Christ. Walter Bartling suggests that the New Testament views the ordained servant of the Word as a minister to ministers, that rank or status is not involved, but that mutuality of service in the one Body of Christ is

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<sup>2</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, "The Universal Priesthood and the Pastor," Concordia Theological Monthly, (August 1948), p. 564.

<sup>3</sup>Alden D. Kelly, The People of God (Greenwich, Conn.: The Seabury Press, 1964), p. 32.

the New Testament emphasis.<sup>4</sup> This is certainly in accord with the tenor of Ephesians 4, where humility and mutual service is the mark of the whole membership of the Church and Christ is the only recognized Head. The humility and unity which are characteristic of the Church certainly argue strongly against a division of Christians into clergy and laity in terms of rank.

Closely related to this is the Scriptural teaching concerning the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Perhaps Roland Allen has brought out more forcefully than others the spontaneity of the Spirit's activity in missions and in the building of the Church.<sup>5</sup> He shows that in the early Church the Holy Spirit was not bound to the structures and forms usually found in churches and missions today. Much more emphasis was placed on the Spirit's leading and guidance, so that as Christians were conscious of their dependence on the Spirit of Christ, there was little thought of rank and status among them. When there were exceptions to this, it was because of those who did not permit the Spirit of Christ to prevail. It must be admitted that a proper regard for the Holy Spirit's leadership in the Church does not allow clericalism as we have described it.

Luther and the Lutheran Confessions speak out against clericalism, although they are not so explicit as we might hope with regard to specific

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<sup>4</sup>Walter J. Bartling, "A Ministry to Ministers," Concordia Theological Monthly, (June 1962), pp. 334-335.

<sup>5</sup>Roland Allen, Missionary Principles (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964).

lay activities in the Church. This comparative silence, however, is understandable in view of the circumstances. Most of Luther's invectives were directed against the abuses of the clergy in the higher offices, especially the papacy, more than on the congregational level. Luther was also conscious of groups like the Anabaptists at the other extreme, who down-graded the office of the ministry. For these two reasons it is not surprising that specific lay activities on the congregational level do not receive a great deal of attention in Luther and the Confessions.

Luther's insistence on the priesthood of all believers is well known. Harry Coiner summarizes Luther's position:

Luther affirmed that the Christian and apostolic Church did not consist of a) a priest who belonged to a spiritual caste, a separate order of men, invested with "indelible character," whose service was "religious," and b) laity, whose service was less worthy and in any sense temporal. The Church was rather a congregation in which all the baptized Christians were members of the priesthood of believers. He said, "Through baptism all of us are consecrated to the priesthood . . . and there is no difference at all but that of office."<sup>6</sup>

For Luther the only real authority in the Church was the Word of God and under this authority the clergy and laity have the same privileges and responsibilities. In his comments on Psalm 104 he says: "Even though not everybody has the public office and calling, every Christian has the right and the duty to teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, and rebuke his neighbor with the Word of God at every opportunity

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<sup>6</sup>Harry G. Coiner, "The Role of the Laity in the Church," Toward Adult Christian Education (River Forest, Ill.: Lutheran Education Association, 1962), p. 49.

and whenever necessary."<sup>7</sup> Vilmos Vajta points out that Luther saw the incorrect distinction between clergymen and laymen as a serious obstacle to salvation, as it elevated man-made methods of salvation at the expense of God's own creation.<sup>8</sup> For Luther, clericalism was a hindrance to both the salvation of the laity and the service they perform, to justification and sanctification.

In the Lutheran Confessions explicit statements pertaining to clericalism are very few. In the Apology's Article XXII, where the subject is the "two kinds" in Holy Communion, the clergy-laity issue is touched on rather incidentally. Here the withholding of the cup from the laity in the Roman Catholic Church is seen as a deliberate attempt to elevate the clergy above the laity and it is implied that this type of distinction between clergy and laity is to be condemned.<sup>9</sup>

The Apology is careful to point out that the final authority in the Church is not the body of the ordained but the Church itself. It states that "the ministry of the Word has God's command and glorious promises. . . . The Church has the command to appoint ministers; to this we must subscribe wholeheartedly, for we know that God approves this ministry and is present in it."<sup>10</sup> Thus while the ministry is

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<sup>7</sup>Martin Luther, Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), XII, 333.

<sup>8</sup>Vilmos Vajta, Luther on Worship (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. 111.

<sup>9</sup>Theodore G. Tappert and others (editors), "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," The Book of Concord (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1954), p. 237.

<sup>10</sup>Tappert, p. 212.

functionalized through election of clergy to the office, the ministry still belongs first to the Church. The Confessions, therefore, do not accept the idea of the ministry as transferred responsibility from the priesthood of believers. Edmund Schlink points out that in the Confessions "the Church does not transfer its office of preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments to individuals in its membership, but it fills this office entrusted to it by God."<sup>11</sup> Therefore, if the question arises as to whether the minister or the congregation has the higher authority, the question is out of order, as Schlink observes: "Because the Confessions look to this Lord who governs the congregation through the external Word, they are not at all interested in a logically satisfying clarification of the relationship between the universal priesthood and the public ministry."<sup>12</sup> Thus the existence of a set-apart ministry and the universal priesthood or ministry side by side is no contradiction, since the function of the clergy is essentially one of guidance under the Word of God.

The Confessions say very little as to what limitations, if any, should be made on lay activity in the Church. The interpretation of Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession on this point is still being debated. The article states: "Nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the Church without a regular call."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Edmund Schlink, Theology of the Lutheran Confessions (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 245.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>13</sup>Tappert, p. 36.



It has been debated whether or not this statement is intended to exclude the unordained from public preaching and administration of the sacraments. We do not intend to settle this debate finally here. The most acceptable interpretation seems to be that this statement is not intended to minimize the universal priesthood and ministry in any way, but that it presupposes this priesthood and ministry of all. The stress on the "regular call" is that the public administration is not to be neglected or done in disorderly fashion, but is to be ordered by the authorization of the assembly of believers. It is not stated that it is ordination which gives authorization to the clergy; rather, it is the "regular call." This statement of the Augsburg Confession, therefore, hardly clarifies the issue as to the necessity of ordination for the functioning of the ministry.

Regarding ordination itself, the Confessions, like the Scriptures offer little specific information. Schlink notes that in the Confessions ordination is not clearly distinguished from the call and election.<sup>14</sup> Usually ordination is spoken of as the normal and correct way of setting apart ministers of the Word within the church. There is little thought of discontinuing this ordinance which the Church has used for centuries. The chief concern seems to be that ordination is not abused by the clergy so as to rob the entire Church of its priesthood. It is pointed out that in the early Church the people elected pastors and bishops and ordination was merely a ratification of that election.

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<sup>14</sup>Schlink, p. 244.

It was later that new ceremonies were added and special powers were thought to be transmitted through the rite of ordination.<sup>15</sup>

The Apology is "not unwilling" to call ordination a sacrament, if this is correctly understood. If thinking of ordination as a sacrament helps to elevate the ministry of the Word to its proper place, this may be especially useful in opposition to the "fanatics" who hold a low view of the Holy Ministry.<sup>16</sup> That ordination is essential to the functioning of the ministry is not, however, proposed. Rather, it seems to be accepted as a good procedure to assure the public administration of the Gospel and to assure order in the church. On the other hand, it is quite definitely stated elsewhere in the Confessions that in case of necessity a layman can absolve others and thus become the minister and pastor of others.<sup>17</sup>

From the little which the Confessions say that is specific to our topic of clericalism, we may conclude that they join Scripture in condemning it in its crassest forms as exemplified in the hierarchial system, but they do not treat specifically of some of the more subtle forms of clericalism as defined in Chapter One. This is to be attributed to the setting and the times in which the Confessions were drafted. However, as stated above, the limitations of clergy authority and the

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<sup>15</sup>"Smalcald Articles," Triglot Concordia. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 311.

<sup>16</sup>"Apology of the Augsburg Confession," Triglot Concordia. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 311.

<sup>17</sup>"Smalcald Articles," p. 523.

corresponding privileges and duties of laymen as priests of God are set forth in the Confessions and especially in the writings of Luther. We do not find, nor should we expect to find, in the confessional writings of the sixteenth century the details and specifics of clergy and lay activity as applied to our times.

## CHAPTER III

### THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CLERICALISM

In view of the Scripture teaching on the universal priesthood and universal ministry of believers, one asks how and why clericalism should have developed as it has. Its existence in the Catholic traditions is obvious enough and Father Congar observes that modern Protestant communions, in spite of starting from strict congregationalist premises are in practice almost as clericalized as the Roman Church.<sup>1</sup> The existence of clericalism is recognized by Protestant leaders as evidenced by a World Council of Churches report which states: "Alas . . . special ordination means too often not setting apart within and for the ordained people of the baptized, but setting over above and apart from the laity."<sup>2</sup> It is generally recognized that the term "layman," derived from the *λαός τοῦ θεοῦ*, the "people of God," has lost much of its original loftiness. Franklin Segler notes that the term "layman" has come to be "tainted with all sorts of hereditary and class distinction or discrimination within the Church."<sup>3</sup> It is not uncommon to hear clergymen speak of "using" laymen, or of enlisting laymen to do "their" work, or to be their "assistants."

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<sup>1</sup>Yves M. L. Congar, Lay People in the Church (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>"Christ's Ministry Through His Whole Church and its Ministers," Laity, No. 15 (May 1963), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Franklin M. Segler, A Theology of Church and Ministry (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1960), p. 75.

These and other evidences of subtle forms of clericalism are abundant enough.

It will be helpful to us to sketch briefly how clericalism developed beginning with post-apostolic times down to the present. In doing so we are especially interested in determining the causes for this development and in fixing the responsibility for the same as much as this is possible.

The derivation of the term "clergy" indicates that the setting of clergy in opposition to laity was not intended in the earliest days of the New Testament Church. The *κλήρος* was originally a "lot" as in the expression, "casting lots" for the purpose of reaching a decision. In Scripture it also meant a "portion" or "inheritance," as when Israel is referred to as Jahweh's *κλήρος* (Deut. 4:2 in the Septuagint). Peter refers to the Christians in the charge of church leaders as *κλήροι* (I Pet. 5:3). It is not clear exactly how the term "cleric" came to be applied to the overseers of the flock rather than the flock itself. It is clear, however, that by the time of Jerome the "clerics" were set in opposition to laymen, who were the original *κλήροι* of Peter's epistle.<sup>4</sup>

From Church history, it is obvious that some forms of clericalism began to develop rather slowly and subtly toward the end of the first century. Humanly speaking, the situation in which the early Church found itself gave rise to this development. Richard Caemmerer observes:

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<sup>4</sup>Alden D. Kelly, The People of God (Greenwich, Conn.: The Seabury Press, 1962), p. 63.

Surrounded as [the Church] was by a society strongly governed by central authority, the Church, too, found it convenient to exalt the position of its teachers and leaders into one of direction and rule beyond the original function of guidance and channeling of the means of grace.<sup>5</sup>

Around the year 100 this trend already was developing into a system of bishops, who served in the capacity of more than advisors. By about the year 110 there is evidence that bishops were quoting Scripture in order to validate their authority over a congregation.<sup>6</sup> Early in the same century also, the principle of sacerdotalism was gaining headway. The means of grace began to take on power because of the character and office of the man who employed them. In this way pastors became priests. The priesthood was set apart by the laying on of hands of a bishop.

Caemmerer points to one of the reasons for this development when he says:

This principle has a normal and natural origin. Since the age was illiterate, the vast majority of churchgoers could not read or write, it was easy for the undisciplined and ill-equipped ministers to claim a position of authority, and it was very necessary to hedge the office of the ministry about with the authority of a bishop.<sup>7</sup>

Early in the third century at the time of Cyprian the clergy was already functioning as a specific mediating class, taking over much of the structure of the Old Testament priesthood. The view that the

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<sup>5</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, "The Universal Priesthood and the Pastor," Concordia Theological Monthly (August 1948), p. 566.

<sup>6</sup>Ignatius, "Ignatius to the Philadelphians," Apostolic Fathers, Vol. I, translated by Kirsopp Lake (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1912), p. 247.

<sup>7</sup>Caemmerer, p. 567.

ministry is a separate priesthood was generally accepted in the Greek Catholic Church by the time of Chrysostom. In the Western Church the differentiation between clergy and laity had become an accepted fact by the time of Constantine the Great.<sup>8</sup>

These clericalizing tendencies seem to have gone for the most part unchecked and reached a climax in the Middle Ages, when the principle finally gained acceptance that the Church was the body of the clergy under the guidance of its bishops, especially the chief bishop at Rome. Laymen were made Christian only as they accepted the formulas of belief laid down by the clergy and as they submitted to the ministrations of the clergy. It seems that genuine lay activity and lay initiative was little encouraged when the Reformation came upon the scene.

It is, of course, difficult to judge the spiritual life of individual Christians during the dark years of the Church. In the volume entitled, The Layman in Christian History it has been adequately demonstrated that there were active Christians, both laymen and clergy, in all periods of the Church's history.<sup>9</sup> Segler points out that especially prior to the Reformation many of the reform efforts were led by laymen and that they took part in the monastic movements because

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<sup>8</sup>Harry G. Coiner, "The Role of the Laity in the Church," Toward Adult Christian Education (River Forest, Ill.: Lutheran Education Association, 1962), pp. 47-48.

<sup>9</sup>Stephen Charles Neill, editor, The Layman in Christian History (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963).

they desired to live dedicated lives uncorrupted by the world.<sup>10</sup> An outstanding lay movement of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was that led by Francis of Assisi, who was himself a layman. The order of Little Poor Brothers founded by Francis consisted of large numbers of dedicated laymen who became known for their simple and sincere preaching, among other things. Unfortunately, this movement degenerated in later years, so that by the year 1300 the friars of this organization were no longer able to foster the spiritual life which they had supplied a century before.<sup>11</sup> During the years before the Reformation there were lesser lay movements arising from time to time. It appears that the status and power of the clergy of that time did much to discourage the activity of the average layman.

The Reformation brought with it a renewed emphasis on the doctrine of the universal priesthood. The reformers' pronouncements against clericalism were loud and clear, and there was indeed some renewed lay activity, especially at the beginning. But it was again due to the situation, humanly speaking, that the ideal lay activity was never realized. In Reformation lands the pastor was also an agent of the government, exerting its penalties and exercising its prestige. He was a chief citizen of the community and possessed rank and authority over the people. In both the Lutheran and Reformed Churches ministers had prestige, not because of the Gospel but because

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<sup>10</sup>Segler, p. 77.

<sup>11</sup>Herbert B. Workman, The Church of the West in the Middle Ages, Vol. II (London: Chas. Kelly, 1900), pp. 207ff.



of their position.<sup>12</sup>

Segler sums up the developments as they took place especially in countries where the state church prevailed:

In spite of the fact that the universal priesthood of believers was emphasized and the place of laymen recognized, after the consolidation of the Reformation in various countries, the laity receded into the background, and the ministry of the clergy, although with different motivations and in different forms, was again established as the "office" and body which represented the Church. Although theoretically the universal ministry of the Church was recognized, practically it was crowded into the background by the strong authority assumed by the clergy in the performance of its task. This was not always a deliberate and conscious effort on the part of the clergy but a natural result as laymen expected the clergy to carry out a professional function.<sup>13</sup>

Church groups which came to America received a fresh start and fared somewhat better. Often, however, there were again factors and conditions which gave rise to clericalism and professionalism. Caemmerer points out that in the early years of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod both the hierarchial and congregational types of administration were proposed and tried, but it was chiefly the situation that gave undue authority and rank into the hands of the clergy. The large number of German immigrants put stress on the church. There was little time for proper indoctrination of the laity. Under this situation pastors felt obligated to assert redoubled authority over doctrine and morals in the church, so that people were trained to defer to the administrative judgments of their pastors.

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<sup>12</sup>Caemmerer, "Universal Priesthood," pp. 570-571.

<sup>13</sup>Segler, p. 77.

As Caemmerer summarizes:

They were not trained to review the doctrine like the Bereans. They were not habituated to share in the administration of their churches. . . . The pastor became a channel or sound system through which God reached the people, rather than a workman who coupled the people directly to God.<sup>14</sup>

It apparently did not occur to the church of that day, as it has to alert missionaries in our time, that a clergy shortage affords excellent opportunities for encouraging laymen to practice their ministry and priesthood more fully.

Turning to the main-line Protestant denominations, it is generally recognized that also in these church bodies the clergy have undue prerogatives so that laymen often do not exercise their privileges and responsibilities. Walter Bartling has pointed out that clergy prerogatives have developed out of both the "high Catholic" and the "low Protestant" views of the ministry.<sup>15</sup>

According to the former the functions of the clergy are radically distinct from those of the laity. According to the latter, the universal ministry is usually recognized but laymen are very willing to hand over their prerogatives to the ordained servants. It is the "low Protestant" view which is most commonly responsible for the professionalism found in American Protestantism today. The pastor becomes an executive secretary of the church's business so that an

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<sup>14</sup>Caemmerer, "Universal Priesthood," p. 574.

<sup>15</sup>Walter J. Bartling, "A Ministry to Ministers," Concordia Theological Monthly (June 1962), pp. 333-334.

accent develops on executive authority.<sup>16</sup> This accent is easily carried over into the realm of spiritual matters and a subtle form of clericalism develops. As a result the clergy "enjoy" responsibilities and burdens which are not rightly theirs alone. Hans Ruedi Weber, who is currently an Associate Director of the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches, observes that this type of clericalism is prevalent in churches around the world:

[The clergy] either try or are forced to assume the whole ministry of the church, working alone or urging the laity to help them. (The "good layman" becomes the one most willing to help the pastor!) Or those set apart take up the role of first class citizens, a kind of "super layman" who are supposed to do in a better way what each Christian is meant to do.<sup>17</sup>

It should be profitable to ask why clericalism should develop in the history of the Church and should continue to develop. There is no doubt as to the ultimate cause or force behind any practice or teaching which would tend to hinder genuine lay activity in the Church. Satan, who is fully committed to preventing the upbuilding of the Body of Christ, makes use of any human element or weakness to accomplish his purpose. Richard Caemmerer has pointed out that "the obstacles for realizing the ideal of the royal priesthood, today as in the past, lie in the domain of the flesh."<sup>18</sup> It is at this point where the Church's chief adversary makes his attacks and inflicts damage.

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<sup>16</sup>Caemmerer, "Universal Priesthood," p. 574.

<sup>17</sup>Hans Ruedi Weber, "A Living Church," Laity, No. 6 (December 1958), p. 43.

<sup>18</sup>Caemmerer, "Universal Priesthood," p. 572.

Our concern here is to look for the more immediate and "human" causes in the development of the various forms of clericalism to determine to what extent the responsibility can be fixed with the laity or clergy, or both. There can be no doubt about the responsibility of the laity in this matter. A laity which is not vigilant and actually practicing its ministry and priesthood is thereby encouraging the clergy to exert undue authority, as Harry Coiner says:

When people are content to let their pastor carry out his special functions thinking of themselves merely as objects of his ministry and not also as sharers, they have failed to see and accept their proper role in the church.<sup>19</sup>

A half century ago P. T. Forsythe warned that a lack of vigilance on the part of the laity, especially in the form of disuse of the Bible, could easily lead to a form of clericalism in much of Protestantism.<sup>20</sup>

While the entire Church has the responsibility of guarding the rights and duties of the laity, there can be no doubt that the clergy themselves bear special responsibility in the matter. The clergyman is in a key position to prevent the development of clericalism in a given situation. Richard Caemmerer has observed that "humanly speaking the clergy hold the key to the thinking of

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<sup>19</sup>Coiner, pp. 58-59.

<sup>20</sup>P. T. Forsythe, Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind (London: Independent Press, Ltd., 1907 and 1959), pp. 24-25.

the church. . . . The people do not advance beyond their pastors in thinking."<sup>21</sup> The called servant of the Word who has been given to the Church by the ascended Lord, has a special responsibility to be vigilant in this matter as in others. The clergy, with their knowledge of Scripture and church history, have the duty of proclaiming and teaching the Word of God with sufficient scope and clarity that individual laymen can recognize and accept the ministerial and priestly office into which God has placed them. Obviously, "teaching" in this connection refers not only to verbal instruction but also includes the attitude of the clergy as they lead the flocks committed to their care.

Walter Bartling has described well the situation in many churches in saying:

Laymen are generally quite satisfied with their contributory and secondary functions in the church. . . . They are quite content with things as they are. The point is, however, that we [the clergy] should not be content. Nobody will ask to have your pulpit, but it is the Lord who asks you to share your ministry.<sup>22</sup>

Most churchmen, if not all, agree that it is at this point that clericalism has crept into the Church. Laymen usually accept the type of leadership offered. The clergy, through a combination of circumstances, and through human weakness on their part and the part of the laymen, permit a situation to develop in which undue authority and

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<sup>21</sup>Caemmerer, "Universal Priesthood," p. 572.

<sup>22</sup>Bartling, p. 335.

responsibility is centered in themselves. Coiner suggests that an inadequate view of the ministry and of the Church may at times be responsible for this development:

Good Pastor Able, looking upon his pastoral ministry solely as something he will do for the people rather than with them, has a faulty concept both of his role and the role of God's people when he calls all the plays and most times carries the ball. He has forgotten that his special function is to help the rest with their work.<sup>23</sup>

Reuel Howe suggests that the problem often arises because clergymen are unwilling to be ministered to as well as to minister. The answer, he says, is that "the minister as well as laymen should each accept as his primary role that of being a member of the Church, in which person meets person and the ministry of each is available to the other."<sup>24</sup>

While human pride has been known to be a factor in the development of clericalism, we may safely assume that it seldom happens that a pastor consciously seeks to exalt his station into one of undue authority. Usually the development is more subtle and quite unintentional. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, situations have arisen which are of an emergency nature, so that the clergyman feels it necessary to exert authority in order to meet the needs of the people as he sees them. It may be in some cases that the

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<sup>23</sup>Coiner, p. 58.

<sup>24</sup>Reuel Howe, The Miracle of Dialogue (Greenwich, Conn.: The Seabury Press, 1963), p. 77.

clergyman is himself largely a victim of circumstances. The fact remains, however, that responsibility for lay activity and involvement in the church lies primarily with the clergy and that clergymen can be a tremendous influence for good or for bad in this respect.

The importance of the clergy's role in all of this will be seen in later chapters as we relate the problem of clericalism to the Philippine scene.

The history of the Philippine Independent Church, the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, whose history provides numerous examples of our present study of clericalism. That story has been summarized by Robinson.<sup>1</sup>

Our approach here is to take selected for analysis three major events which are either very indigenous to the Philippines or are unique to the Philippines. Our approach is that of a descriptive study with a view toward application to the larger church in the Philippines.

#### The Philippine Independent Church

The Philippine Independent Church is one that deserves our attention because it is an indigenous church body and one whose membership has been estimated to be about two million. It was born at the very end of the century of the revolution of the Filipino people against Spain. The original intention of its founder, Father

<sup>1</sup> Robinson, The People of the Philippines (New York: George Brazier Co., 1952).

## CHAPTER IV

### AN ANALYSIS OF THREE PHILIPPINE CHURCH BODIES

As we consider the situation in which the Lutheran Church in the Philippines finds itself, we can profit from a brief analysis of some Philippine churches as to lay activity and clericalism. For various reasons we pass over the Roman Catholic Church, the dominant church in the Islands, whose history provides numerous examples of the various forms of clericalism. That story has been amply treated by historians.<sup>1</sup>

For our purposes here, we have selected for analysis three church bodies which are either more indigenous to the Philippines or more similar to our own church body in some way. Our approach to the three bodies is that of an objective study with a view toward application to the Lutheran Church in the Philippines.

#### The Philippine Independent Church

The Philippine Independent Church is one that deserves our attention because it is in some respects an indigenous church body and one whose membership has been estimated to be about two million. It was born at the turn of the century in the revolution of the Filipino people against Spain. The original intention of its founder, Father

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Frank Laubach, The People of the Philippines (New York: George Doran Co., 1925).



Gregorio Aglipay, was to establish a "free" Catholic Church, making only such changes as would be necessary to throw off the yoke of the foreign clergy. His aim was the Filipinization of the clergy and episcopal sees in the existing Roman Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup> When this was found to be impossible, the movement became extremely radical, espousing rationalism and denying even fundamental teachings found in the Apostles' Creed. However, since almost no provisions were made for indoctrination of either the clergy or laity, most Independent priests continued to perform the rituals and functions which they had performed as Roman Catholics. An attempt was made to substitute the title "apostle" for "priest," but the new term was never widely accepted. The mass of uninformed laymen in the Independent Church could see little difference, if any, between their new church and the Roman Church, especially after the initial enthusiasm of the revolt had died down. In fact, laymen were often told by their priests that the two were exactly alike.<sup>3</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that lay activity in the Independent Church remained very passive and that authority remained centered in the priests and bishops.

The early writings of Independent leaders, especially of Aglipay and his most prominent layman, Isabelo de los Reyes, attempt to characterize the new church as the "people's" church, but there is

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<sup>2</sup>Nicolas Rosai, Aglipayanism Yesterday and Today (Manila: U. S. T. Press, 1959), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Pedro S. de Achutegui, Religious Revolution in the Philippines (Manila: Ateneo de Manila, 1960), p. 255.

nothing that suggests a universal priesthood of believers. In his exhaustive study of the Aglipayan movement, Jesuit Pedro Achutegui has analyzed the six official or semi-official writings which appeared to 1911.<sup>4</sup> From his analysis it appears that the documents contain very little that was constructive but that their chief purpose was to free the Filipino people from domination by foreign spiritual leaders. There is no evidence that Aglipay was revolting against clericalism itself in the church. Quite the opposite is suggested by his assuming the office of "Supreme Bishop" himself.

The successive constitutions adopted by the Philippine Independent Church also suggest that the universal priesthood and universal ministry has not been in the thinking of the leaders of this church body. The constitution of 1903, and revised in 1906 and especially in 1919, was apparently in force until the "Constitution and Canons, Revised" appeared in 1947. The early constitution makes some attempts at democratic rule in such statements as these: "The government of our Church rests upon the most pure Christian democracy." "All who belong to the IFI (Iglesia Filipina Independiente--Philippine Independent Church) shall be absolutely equal." "Power passes directly from God to the people, who transmit this power to the incumbents elected by them, namely bishops, ecclesiastical governors, parish priests, etc., who thus

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 256-270.

become our guides and superiors."<sup>5</sup>

The hierarchial structure of the church as outlined in this constitution clearly resembles that of the Roman Catholic Church. The Supreme Bishop has almost unlimited power, although a Supreme Council is to serve as an advisory group with limited authority also. The hierarchy continues downward through the bishops to priests and finally laymen. Achutegui observes that the parish priests are considered the "chief instruments" of the bishops,<sup>6</sup> so that for practical purposes authority is in the hands of the hierarchy.

In the early years of the Independent Church, therefore, in spite of the talk of democracy and equality, it is evident that there was little recognition of the laity's privileges and responsibilities. Another evidence of this is seen in Aglipay's attempts to negotiate for apostolic consecration of his bishops from various "catholic" bodies: the American Episcopalians, the Swiss Catholic Church, and possibly the Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>7</sup> Although the attempts were unsuccessful, Aglipay's concern for apostolic succession indicates that he visualized the hierarchy as being quite essential to the Church.

The "Constitution and Canons" as adopted in 1947 and revised in 1961 indicate a definite trend toward a more conservative and

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 272.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 273.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 403.

Biblical theology. This is no doubt due to the influence of Protestant bodies, notably the Episcopalian Church. By this time, moreover, the extremely liberal wing of the Independent Church had split off from the organization. In the 1947 Constitution the church government remains hierarchical in structure, as the "ministry of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons" is considered to be the divinely instituted ministry of the Church.<sup>8</sup> Although the powers of the hierarchy have been modified, there remain evidences of what we would term clericalism. Only the Supreme Bishop, for instance, has the authority to dedicate a church building:

92. The blessing and laying of the cornerstone of a church belong to the Supreme Bishop, who may delegate this privilege to the Bishop of the place.

93. Before divine worship is held in the new church, it must be solemnly blessed by the Supreme Bishop or the Bishop.<sup>9</sup>

An ordained priest is essential to the functioning of any parish:

If on account of some very urgent reason, the priest is obliged to leave his parish in which there is no assistant, he must inform his bishop of the priest whom he left in charge, if any, or he must request that someone be assigned to his parish during his absence.<sup>10</sup>

A section of the constitution entitled, "On the Laity" is an indication of a growing awareness of the responsibilities of the laymen. Following are selected paragraphs.

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<sup>8</sup>Constitution and Canons (Revised) of the Philippine Independent Church (Manila: n. p., 1961), p. 13.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

108. In every parish there shall be a Commission of laymen consisting of a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer, and at least six members whose terms of office shall be one year.

109. The parish priest is the ex officio advisor to the commission.

110. The purpose of this commission of laymen is to help the church in the construction, repairs, and improvement of churches and chapels in their respective towns; to help the priest in acquiring a place suitable for a cemetery for the faithful of the parish; to undertake works of piety and charity.

112. The parish priest with the approval of the Ordinary, must also organize a commission of lady members of the church in his locality for the purpose of helping him in the decoration of the church, especially on the following occasions: the town fiesta, Christmas and important holidays and festivities which the faithful celebrate following the tradition of the people.

113. It is advisable for the faithful members of the church to organize pious associations within the parish to interest the youth in matters of religion and in the teaching of Christian doctrine to the children, especially in the "going to the church" movement.<sup>11</sup>

According to these Canons, lay activity is definitely encouraged, but the layman's role is clearly secondary to the clergy's. Material needs of the church are the layman's chief sphere of activity. One exception is indicated in the paragraph which speaks of "interesting the youth in matters of religion and in the teaching of Christian doctrine." This is obviously an attempt to encourage the introduction of "Sunday School" classes or other religious instruction classes for children, which is no doubt an influence exerted by Protestant churches, with which the Independent Church has more recently come into closer

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-25.

contact. It remains to be seen what further influence the Anglican Church, with which a concordat has been reached, may exert on this church body, which has been handicapped by a lack of trained leadership.

### The Iglesia ni Kristo

A second non-Roman group which deserves attention is the Iglesia ni Kristo (Church of Christ). Although few Christian leaders, if any, regard this sect as Christian, it claims to be a Bible-centered church and in its outward activities resembles Christian denominations. It is included in our present analysis because of its phenomenal growth, which is attributed, at least partially, to the zeal of the laity. While the two largest Protestant denominations in the Philippines number in the one hundred thousands, one estimate of the Iglesia's membership has been set at nine hundred thousand.<sup>12</sup> The sect's missionary activities have also established this church body firmly in Filipino settlements in such faraway places as Hawaii and California.<sup>13</sup> The lay activity of this group concerns our topic also because the Iglesia is an organization indigenous to the Philippines. It was founded

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<sup>12</sup>Manuel P. Alonzo, Jr., A Historico-Critical Study on the Iglesia ni Kristo (Manila: U. S. T. Press, 1959), p. 14.

<sup>13</sup>Elton J. Rengstorf, "The Fifth Angel in the Philippines and His Church" (Unpublished manuscript written for Prof. Wm. J. Danker in connection with correspondence course, Christian Missions in the Modern World, for credit toward a Bachelor of Divinity Degree, 1961), p. 2.

in 1914 by Felix Manalo and has grown to its present strength without the foreign funds and personnel deemed necessary by other denominations.

Official teachings and writings of the Iglesia ni Kristo are very few and are obtained only with difficulty by non-members. Secrecy, in fact, seems to be a useful weapon of the organization. However, a number of scholars, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, have gathered what appears to be reliable information on the sect. On the basis of their findings we can reach some definite conclusions concerning clericalism and lay activity in the Iglesia.

All observers agree that lay activity in this sect is nothing short of outstanding when compared with other groups. Individuals are encouraged to teach and to witness to their faith, and they do so. In method and approach they most closely resemble the Jehovah's Witnesses. A few well-memorized Bible verses, usually designed to disprove the deity of Christ and establish the Iglesia as the only true church, fortifies the average member for discussion with prospective members. While not all laymen are encouraged to engage in public debate, most are very faithful in attending public debates in which their ministers challenge other religious leaders. In these respects the laity of the Iglesia is observed to be more active and more loyal to their church than is the laity of many Christian groups. Most members attend services faithfully on Sundays and Thursdays, the prescribed days of worship. They travel freely to participate in church rallies. They contribute quite generously. They seem to have developed

a "sense of mission" as Albert Sanders observes:

Each member is given a sense of responsibility by serving on a committee of 8 or 10 persons. The purpose of the committee is to carry out a program of evangelism in the homes of the community and sometimes to arrange for or participate in meetings held in the open air. As a member of this committee, one shares the responsibility of trying to keep other members from becoming indifferent or faithless. In this way, each one develops a sense of mission.<sup>14</sup>

In order to determine whether or not the lay activity in the Iglesia is the desirable type, we first investigate the governmental structure of the organization. The Iglesia claims that its organization is democratic and encourages all members to refer to one another as "brother" or "sister."<sup>15</sup> However, Manuel P. Alonzo, who gives us the most detailed study of the Iglesia, concludes that the government of this organization is not at all democratic, and other observers agree with him. Alonzo describes the Iglesia ni Kristo as

a closely-knit society divided into smaller groups under the charge of ministers and deacons who are directly under the control of the Supreme Executive. The success of this society largely depends upon this ingenious set-up of government, and the continuance of this hierarchial order of powers.<sup>16</sup>

Information regarding the organization's structure is obtained largely from "The Articles of Incorporation" and "The Amended Articles of Incorporation." On the basis of these Alonzo further describes the

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<sup>14</sup>Albert J. Sanders, A Protestant View of the Iglesia ni Kristo (Manila: Philippine Federation of Christian Churches, 1962), pp. 66-67.

<sup>15</sup>Sanders, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup>Alonzo, p. 20.



sect thus:

The Iglesia ni Kristo is a highly centralized society which has the legislative, judicial and executive functions concentrated in, and exercised by one and the same person, the Supreme Brother or Executive Minister, who is at present Felix Manalo himself. This set-up naturally flows from the nature of the sect since it was registered as a Corporation Sole . . . a body politic or corporate formed and authorized by law to act as a single person and endowed by law with capacity of succession.<sup>17</sup>

The executive function of the organization has been charted in detail by Alonzo, revealing a hierarchy which proceeds downward from the Executive Minister to members as follows: Executive Minister, Division Ministers, Local Ministers, Head Deacons, Assistant Deacons, Chairmen of Local Units, members. Although there is activity on all levels of this structure, it is clear that all final authority is centered in the Executive Minister. He decides how the Scriptures are to be interpreted. He has final authority on appointments and transfers of division and local ministers. He takes a hand in settlement of serious problems and disputes of his members. He prepares the lessons to be taught and sermons to be delivered by ministers in their weekly services. He alone has the power to ordain ministers.<sup>18</sup>

On the level of the local congregation the hierarchy continues in such a way that every individual is directly responsible to his superior. Deacons are considered to be lay workers but are "the most

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-22.

honored group among the laity. They serve as intermediaries between the local ministers and the members."<sup>19</sup>

Protestant and Roman Catholic critics of the Iglesia ni Kristo are agreed that, although there is indeed an enviable record of lay activity in the sect, on the basis of its unchristian teaching and its methods of operation this activity cannot on the whole be considered spiritual or desirable activity in the Christian sense. Alonzo does state the belief that "the moral discipline of the Iglesia has some good in it," but he gives no further explanation.<sup>20</sup> The negative judgment of the Iglesia is made on the basis of their denial of some basic Christian truths. Here we cite only their vehement denial of the diety of Christ and their insistence that there is no salvation outside of membership in their organization. To those who have come into contact with members of this church body it appears that the system of the Iglesia is based on a subtle form of legalism whereby unsuspecting laymen are caused to "serve" and do so willingly, through the clever psychology of the higher authorities. The organization's leaders have capitalized on certain needs of people in general and especially of people of the lower economic and educational status. According to Sanders and others, several human factors seem to be involved in the high degree of activity of laymen in this sect.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Rengstorf, p. 25.

<sup>20</sup>Alonzo, p. 89.

<sup>21</sup>Sanders, pp. 64-65.

As the first of these human factors, Sanders names the dynamic leadership of Felix Manalo, the Supreme Executive. There is no doubt that Manalo succeeded in building an image of himself as the "angel" he claimed to be on the basis of Revelation 7:2. Since Manalo was only recently succeeded by his son, it is perhaps too early to determine what type of leadership his successor can display.

A second factor in the high degree of lay activity is that members of the sect are made to feel important and responsible in the organization. Each member has duties to perform and no one is excused for lack of education or income. The poor and uneducated are proud to identify themselves with the elaborate chapel-cathedrals erected in larger centers, although many of them ordinarily worship in humble rural chapels. Members are also proud to be identified with the prestige of their Supreme Minister and with the skill in religious debate displayed by their not-so-highly educated ministers.

A third factor in the laity's activity is the use of fear as motivation. Each member is considered a policeman with the duty of watching his fellow-member and reporting irregularities to the higher authorities. This police type of action is fortified by the sect's teaching that outside of the membership of the Iglesia ni Kristo there is no salvation. This doctrine is no doubt a fearful weapon hanging over the heads of those who have once accepted it as true.

A fourth factor to be considered is nationalism. The Iglesia ni Kristo is the only purely national religious movement of any size in the country. It is not surprising, nor is it wrong that people

should want to promote an indigenous organization rather than those of foreign origin. It is, in fact, commendable. The proper and legitimate use of the nationalistic spirit has probably not received sufficient consideration by most mission groups. The danger, of course, lies in this that nationalism may become a substitute for genuine spiritual motivation. Observers of the activities of the Iglesia ni Kristo suspect that this has happened, at least to a degree, in that church body.

Our conclusions concerning the Iglesia ni Kristo must be largely negative. In view of the use of Scripture and evangelical language by members of the Iglesia we cannot deny that there may be genuine Christians within the sect who serve not merely for legalistic reasons but for evangelical reasons. In general, however, our judgment must be that of the Christian leaders who have analyzed the sect and of other Christians who have observed the church body in action: most of the sect's activity is based on a legalism which cannot be condoned. To the extent to which authority is centered in the hierarchy of the organization clericalism is also involved here, but it appears that legalism is the dominant motif.

On the positive side, the Iglesia ni Kristo has demonstrated that, at least in the Philippines, foreign aid is not absolutely essential to the establishment and growth of a church body. It remains to be seen which, if any, of the methods employed by the Iglesia can be successfully adopted by a truly Christian church without succumbing to the dangers of legalism and clericalism.

## The United Church of Christ in the Philippines

In the United Church of Christ we have a church body which is considerably more conventional, from our point of view, than either the Independent Church or the Iglesia ni Kristo. It is a union of what was originally several missions established by well-known American denominations. It includes Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, United Brethren, and others. It is basically a Biblical and evangelical church and is now self-governing, although still receiving aid in various forms from "mother churches" in America.

We shall here investigate both the official teachings and the practices of the United Church with respect to clericalism.

The Book of Government: Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church presents a picture of a church which is very democratic in form and very conscious of the importance of lay activity. One of the stated principles is that "the autonomy of the local church congregation in all matters pertaining to its life in its own community shall be preserved."<sup>22</sup> The local congregation and the pastor together are responsible for the worship, life, education, and evangelism of the congregation.<sup>23</sup> The ruling elders, in cooperation with the pastor, have oversight of the spiritual interests of the local congregation.

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<sup>22</sup>Book of Government: Constitution and By-Laws (Manila: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1962), p. 6.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

Included in the list of duties of the elders are the exercise of church discipline, assisting the pastor in the administration of the sacraments, and visiting of members, especially the sick.<sup>24</sup> The pastor is to be the president or chairman of the church council and ex officio member of all committees and boards of the church.<sup>25</sup> Thus while the constitution recognizes the pastor's responsibility as leader of the flock, it does not give him undue authority nor does it intend to stifle initiative of the laity in any way.

That ministry in the United Church is not to be restricted to the ordained is indicated in Article IV on "The Ministry of the Church." Although ordained ministers are treated first in this article, an equal amount of paragraphs is given to unordained workers, of which four types are listed: (1) Annual Conference licentiates, (2) Local lay preachers, (3) Deaconesses and deaconess-kindergarteners, and (4) Religious education workers.<sup>26</sup>

The constitution provides that there shall be at least four bishops, who are to serve as executive officers of the Jurisdictional Areas to which they are assigned by the General Assembly. The term "bishop" however, is not intended in a hierarchial sense, and the bishop's powers are not those of a bishop in other episcopal systems. Enrique Sobrepena, himself a bishop and an outstanding spokesman for

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 34-35.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 57-60.

the church, wants this to be clear to all. He describes his church's organization as follows:

The United Church is a democratic organization. Its officers are elected by the representatives of the churches and they function as servants of the Church and not as its masters or rulers. Their duties and responsibilities are set by the church organization representatives. Under God's guidance members, ministers and officers follow democratic processes in the performance of their duties. At the head of a local church is the pastor or minister who governs the church and directs its activities with the advice and along the direction set by the congregation or its official board called the Church Council. At the head of the Annual Conference which groups together several local churches in a given territory is the Moderator elected by the Conference at its annual meeting. And at the head of the General Assembly, the highest ecclesiastical body of the Church, is the Presiding Bishop, who with the Area Bishop has general oversight of the church as a whole. The Presiding Bishop and the Area Bishops are elected once every four years by the General Assembly of the Church, which meets biennially.<sup>27</sup>

Elsewhere Sobrepena enunciates the doctrine of the universal priesthood as a treasured principle of the United Church. There is, he says, "freedom of access" to God by all believers, not only by the clergy.<sup>28</sup>

There can be no doubt as to the United Church's official teaching and intention with regard to the activity of the laity and clergy. When we consider the actual practice of the church we note on the positive side that much effort is being expended in attempting to realize genuine involvement of the laity and that there are notable examples

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<sup>27</sup> Enrique C. Sobrepena, That They May Be One (Manila: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, n.d.), pp. 92-93.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

of success in this area. A perusal of the publication, Christian Advance, from 1949 to the present indicates that institutes and workshops for the training of laymen are constantly being sponsored in some part or other of the Islands.

In a report of 1961 Richard Poethig, the church's Director of the Committee on Industrial Life and Vocations, indicates that his church body was having considerable success in involving the laity in at least two areas: (1) the study of industrial problems from the Christian viewpoint, and (2) seminars for professionals on the Christian witness of the laity in their work. Poethig's report indicates that laymen of the United Church realize their responsibility in these areas and do not expect the clergy to solve the church's problems alone.<sup>29</sup>

Donald Mc Gavran, a recognized authority on church growth in mission lands, was engaged to survey the situation in the United Church in 1956. His report, too, was basically optimistic with respect to lay activity and gave little evidence of the existence of clericalism. "The United Church of Christ," he says, "has a magnificent body of Christians."<sup>30</sup> At the same time he indicates that further training of laymen is needed in order to make use of the great potential which the church has in its willing laymen. He is impressed,

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<sup>29</sup>Richard P. Poethig, "New Industrial Frontiers in the Philippines," International Review of Missions, Vol. L (1961), pp. 165-172.

<sup>30</sup>Donald Anderson Mc Gavran, Multiplying Churches in the Philippines (Manila: n.p., 1958), p. 122.



however, with the lay activity already in evidence as these words bring out:

Out from many a church every Sunday go elders, deacons, deaconesses, and young people to visit, teach in and preach in outliers [remote villages]. I know of no other country in the world where there is as much of such outreach as here. It goes on year after year and is accepted as a normal Christian activity.<sup>31</sup>

Mc Gavran also cites examples of laymen functioning in evangelism without the aid of clergy. A new and small congregation in the province of Negros Occidental requested clergy aid in evangelizing a neighboring community. When clergy aid was not available, the laymen proceeded to evangelize the area, to baptize converts and thus establish a daughter congregation.<sup>32</sup> Mc Gavran also cites the outstanding work of Bishop Dia in training laymen for evangelism. In one situation within six months the laymen had won more people for Christ than the number of the original membership of the congregation.<sup>33</sup>

McGavran's survey was concerned chiefly with the growth and outreach of the United Church, and while he found much vitality in that church, his overall conclusion was that a "slowdown" was evident so that the church was barely "holding its own."<sup>34</sup> There is no indication in his report that any form of clericalism has contributed toward this declining vigor in that church. Rather, he suggests that

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

lack of growth is due to a feeling of uncertainty regarding the distinctive value of the Protestant faith. This uncertainty may be the result of many influences, one of which is the more liberal attitude toward the Roman Church in modern times. The great need, as Mc Gavran sees it, is to "recapture Protestant certainty."<sup>35</sup>

There are other sources, however, which indicate that some forms of clericalism are present in the church and that the church is grappling with the problem. A "Lay Ministries Study Program" has been introduced in order to provide the opportunity for laymen to learn how to fulfill their ministries. Norwood Tye and Ruperto Contreras, leaders in church planning, complain that:

for too long the church has expected the ordained minister to do most of the teaching and preaching and praying and calling and planning. The church too often assumes it can do little or nothing if it does not have a minister.<sup>36</sup>

Albert J. Sanders, a veteran missionary and a leader in theological education in the United Church, has given a helpful evaluation of the situation in his booklet, The Evangelical Ministry in the Philippines and its Future. Most pertinent for our purposes here is a section entitled, "Belief that Ordination Gives the Minister Superior Status." The problem, he says, lies first of all with the clergy themselves:

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>36</sup>Norwood Tye and Ruperto Contreras, "Introduction," The Cooperative Parish Plan (Enrique C. Sobrepena, author) (Manila: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1962), p. 1.

Many of our ministers are under the impression that the act of ordination, whether or not it is preceded by seminary training, bestows on them a status that makes them spiritually superior to the laymen with whom they work. This understanding of the ordained ministry was voiced by a product of Union Theological Seminary some time ago. At a gathering of ministers he declared that since the minister exercises the priestly office of representing the laymen to God, of being a mediator between God and the people, he is on a higher level than the laymen. Very often the minister believes that since he has been "set apart" he is over and above the members of his church. He regards the laymen as his assistants; they are to help him to do the work of the ministry. Many clergymen believe that the only real minister is the one who is trained and ordained.<sup>37</sup>

Sanders is convinced that many of the laymen in the United Church have the same understanding of an ordained pastor. The laymen's attitude is reflected in at least three ways:

1. Use of the term "Reverend." Ministers are usually referred to as pastors, but, if ordained, they are also addressed as "Reverend." Sanders sees in this latter term a trend toward setting the ordained too far above the laymen.<sup>38</sup>

2. Expectation of righteousness. "They think that it is easier for him [the clergyman] to be holy than it is for the average layman. They believe that he should be able to resist temptation more easily than the ordinary layman. In short, a double standard of morality has been set up for the pastors and for the people."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Albert J. Sanders, The Evangelical Ministry in the Philippines and its Future (Manila: National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 1964), p. 5.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

3. Efficacy of pastoral prayers. The pastor's prayers are generally regarded to be more efficacious than those of laymen. He "has a higher status spiritually and religiously than any of the members."<sup>40</sup>

Sanders discovers clericalizing tendencies also in the area of church administration. While some pastors do employ correct democratic processes, there are too many who "make too many decisions on their own. Too often they appoint persons to positions or responsibilities rather than allowing the proper body to elect them to these positions."<sup>41</sup>

John Fleming, a leading theologian of the United Church, indicates that the situation in the Philippines as well as in churches in other parts of Southeast Asia is very similar to that in Western churches: "Our thinking in the churches is still too dominated by 'the church = the clergy,' or official ministry, and not the 'people of God.'"<sup>42</sup> He suggests, among other things, that in the Philippine Church there has not been enough "indigenous Christian thinking" and that to raise the laity to its proper place more effort must be expended in translating great Christian words into the vernacular. This implies that the clergy have been content with the situation in which they themselves

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> John Fleming, "Some Aspects of the Biblical and Theological Basis of the Christian Ministry," The Southeast Asia Journal of Theology, Vol. I, No. 2 (October 1959), p. 30.

are theologically educated in the English language while the same privilege is denied the masses, the laymen who are not conversant in English.

By way of conclusion, it appears that in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines clericalism is condemned and the ideal of lay activity is not only encouraged but is much in evidence. Church leaders, however, seem well aware that clericalizing tendencies are a real threat to the vitality of their church. The realization of the problem stems partly from the evidences of extreme clericalism as exemplified in the Roman Catholic Church in the Islands, especially during the Spanish rule. More recently, however, the problem has come into focus, as it has in most of world Protestantism today, through the renewed interest in the "ministry of the laity" in ecumenical circles. Much of this new emphasis has come to the United Church through its American missionary leaders and it remains to be seen to what extent the national church leaders will carry this emphasis forward and attempt to put it into practice.

## CHAPTER V

### FACTORS FAVORABLE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CLERICALISM

Our purpose here is not merely to analyze clericalism from the historical viewpoint but rather to see its actual and potential development in terms of practical application to the Lutheran Church in the Philippines. It is, therefore, helpful to study briefly certain factors in Philippine society which appear to be favorable to the development of clericalism. It is hoped that an awareness of these factors can contribute to the prevention of the undesirable phenomenon treated in this thesis.

From the outset it should be made clear that the social factors described in this chapter are by no means peculiar to the Philippine setting. Much of what is observed here probably applies to the entire human race. It may be that some of the traits found here are more prominent in the Philippines or in the whole of Southeast Asia than they are in Western culture. Regardless of the situation elsewhere, our intention here is to point out some observations made specifically regarding the Philippine setting.

It should be noted also that competent authorities on the Philippines in the field of sociology and social values are not nearly so numerous as they are, for instance, in America. To that extent this study has limitations. The few existing authorities, however, are generally recognized as competent and their findings are generally regarded as valid.

It is our intention to demonstrate briefly that in the Philippines there are some basic social values of the people which tend to enhance the authority of people in leadership positions and that in the case of the clergy this may easily lead to clericalism in some form or other. That sociological laws are quite universally at work in churches in this way is pointed out by Yves Congar. Himself a Roman Catholic, he observes regarding Protestant groups that "there are sociological laws in virtue of which the most 'charismatic' religious communities, those made most 'from below,' quite soon become organizations with authority, traditions, a 'church' sociological structure."<sup>1</sup> Most naturally this authority and tradition can become centered in the clergy at the expense of lay activity.

This social value, known as "tradition-authority," is found to be a strong element in Philippine society by those who have studied the matter. It is evident in many of the country's social institutions and, therefore, many easily find its way into the churches. It is very possible that the long years of domination in the Islands by the Roman Catholic Church and its clergy have helped bring about the prominence of the "authority figure" in Philippine society.

Jaime Bulatao has made numerous detailed case studies on social values in the Manila area, where the population represents people from nearly all parts of the Republic. He lists the "authority figure" as

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<sup>1</sup>Yves Congar, Lay People in the Church. Translated from the French by Donald Attwater (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1957), p. 45.

the first among Philippine social values. He points out that those in position of authority are generally feared and served with awe. The authority figure is to be respected and obeyed, although within limits.<sup>2</sup> The implication is that those in position of authority may easily relinquish some of their own responsibility in favor of the higher-up.

Abraham Felipe's study of the personality of the hero in popular short stories agrees with Bulatao's conclusions regarding the prominence of the authority figure in Philippine society. Felipe concluded that the personality dynamics of the hero shows remarkable similarity to the authoritarian personality as described by sociologists.<sup>3</sup> This would seem to substantiate the hypothesis that people in position of honor are not only highly esteemed but may also be given authority and responsibility at the expense of the "common man." Our concern here is that insofar as the Church is still human, this situation can easily arise in clergy-laity relationships.

A detailed and interesting study of the "dynamics of power" in a Philippine community was made by Mary Hollnsteiner. For her study she selected what she considered to be a typical Philippine community in Bulacan Province. Her procedure was to examine the dynamics of community interaction, existing patterns of behavior and influence in a town to which she gives the fictitious name of "Hulo." Her observations were made chiefly through the study of social organizations in

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<sup>2</sup>Jaime Bulatao, "Philippine Values I: The Manileno's Mainsprings," Philippine Studies (January 1962), pp. 62-64.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 80.



the town. From Hollnsteiner's study there emerges the picture of leaders who bear more than their share of responsibility. She concludes that a Hulo association is closely identified with its president or its ruling clique. "The success of the organization is viewed as the president's or the clique's success; its failure, their failure."<sup>4</sup>

In a section entitled "The Character of Leadership in Hulo Associations" Hollnsteiner makes further observations regarding the tendency of a group to transfer its authority and responsibilities to its leader and the leader's willingness to assume the same: "When a person becomes president of a Hulo association, he takes almost sole responsibility for the organization's success in its activity and finances."<sup>5</sup> Members are aware of this and therefore will frequently elect and install other officers whom they can expect to cooperate well with the president. In spite of any assistance the president may receive, however, the organization is considered his club in a very real sense. The organization tends to rise and fall with him. Committees are formed and committee chairmen accept some responsibility, but success still generally depends on the President.<sup>6</sup>

Hollnsteiner's study was made of secular organizations rather than

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<sup>4</sup>Mary R. Hollnsteiner, The Dynamics of Power in a Philippine Municipality (Manila: Community Development Research Council, 1963), p. 130.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 124-126.

religious. We wish to point out here only the very real possibility that this concept of leadership can easily be carried over into the life of the Church.

A social value closely related to the above and found to be prominent in Philippine society is what has been termed "approval by the authority figure." An important part of social acceptance is being recognized and accepted by those in a position of leadership and authority. Bulatao describes it thus:

It is a concern for what the important person is thinking about oneself and a tendency to shape one's behavior accordingly. There is a fear of stirring up conflict with "people who count," this fear in turn giving rise to a need for "smooth interpersonal relationship." One does not reveal one's real thoughts completely to strangers, foreigners, or powerful individuals, but only those aspects of one's thoughts which will be acceptable to them. Funda-<sup>7</sup>mentally, the fear is that of exposing one's ego to danger.

Frank Lynch has perhaps studied Philippine social values more than any other individual. He, too, points to the value of "smooth interpersonal relations" and observes that this is considered to be of great importance in Philippine society. He defines it as

a facility at getting along with others in such a way as to avoid outward signs of conflict. . . . It means being agreeable even under difficult circumstances, and keeping quiet or out of sight when discretion passes the word. It means sensitivity to what other people feel at any given moment and a willingness and ability to change tack (if not direction) to catch the lightest favoring breeze.<sup>8</sup>

Lynch points out that it is considered especially valuable to have this

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<sup>7</sup>Bulatao, p. 59.

<sup>8</sup>Frank Lynch, "Philippine Values II: Social Acceptance," Philippine Studies (January 1962), p. 89.

type of relationship with one's superiors, such as teachers or employers. "Much of one's happiness," he says, "depends on the nods received from any number of authority figures. . . . Assurance of social acceptance or approval is sought after avidly and appreciated keenly."<sup>9</sup>

Another aspect of social acceptance closely allied to those already mentioned is that of the sense of "shame," which has also been described as amor propio, or self-esteem. The very common usage of this term in most, if not all, Philippine dialects, is an indication of its relative importance in the people's system of values. Lynch sees this sense of "shame" as playing an important role in an individual's relations with his superiors.<sup>10</sup> It often results in an individual's hesitation to approach authorities for fear of being unacceptable. Thus the everyday expression, "I am ashamed" to do this or that, is possibly an indication that the person hesitates to take certain responsibilities so as not to impinge on the rights of a higher authority and thus bring disapproval upon himself.

If the above analyses of social values are correct, the clergy and other leaders of Philippine churches seem to be faced with the real danger of being invested with undue authority and responsibility at the expense of genuine lay activity. It is a fact that the social values described here are in evidence in other institutions in the

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

life of the nation such as the government and educational institutions. While democratic ideals are held by these institutions, it is known that in practice too much authority is often invested in individuals who occupy official positions. There is often evidence of a consciousness of "status" which elevates an official above others so as to lessen the feeling of responsibility on the part of those not in his position.

While the Church certainly has spiritual power to help it guard against such pit-falls, we are concerned with the problem of social values because it is just in the area of human weakness that clericalism develops. Albert Sanders has a chapter on "The Emerging Image of the Minister in Relation to Philippine Cultural Values," in which he deals with the problem, without, however, claiming to have a final solution. He approaches the matter chiefly from the standpoint of the clergyman himself who is caught up in the "authority-tradition" value and who may feel that a "lower" view of ordination contradicts a fundamental Filipino social value. He summarizes the situation by referring to a specific clergyman in his church body:

This pastor sought to explain that although the different ethnic groups in the Philippines have different religious practices, yet they hold many views in common. One of these views is that of respect for old people. Another is the respect for the authority of religious leaders. Accordingly, if we challenge the accepted meaning of ordination, we thereby challenge a widely accepted cultural value. This concern is the concern of many of our pastors and perhaps of some of our ecclesiastical leaders.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Albert J. Sanders, The Evangelical Ministry in the Philippines and its Future (Manila: National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 1964), p. 55.

The implication of this is that the clergy themselves may be tempted to harbor within themselves the image of the "authority figure" and thus not give responsibility to the laymen. A possible answer, Sanders suggests, is a renewed emphasis on the ministry as servanthood, which is also the New Testament emphasis. He makes the point also that it is not contrary to social custom to refer to elected officials, including the President of the Republic, as a "servant of the people." It is very possible, he says, that the apparent conflict between servanthood and leadership has been unduly magnified and that the problem is therefore not so great as it may seem.<sup>12</sup> With regard to ordination and "status," Sanders believes that the clergy can be helped to see that their ministry is a "setting apart" to carry out certain special functions in the Church rather than to a higher religious status. He concludes:

There is reason to believe that this explanation is acceptable to all pastors who have a true sense of call and are zealous in their service of the Lord. The apparent conflict between our understanding of the New Testament on this point and a cultural value is more imagined than real.<sup>13</sup>

While we agree that these conclusions contain truth, we cannot minimize the fact that the problem of status-versus-servanthood is real to the Philippine clergyman and that it can be met only as both clergy and laity keep returning to the concept of ministry as expounded and exemplified by Jesus. No doubt Richard Poethig is correct in

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 52-53.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

observing that a pastor's pattern of administrative functioning will usually follow the particular bent of his personality, so that an authoritarian person will naturally administer more authoritatively than the person with a more permissive personality.<sup>14</sup> Normally, then, the authoritarian person needs to put forth the greater effort to avoid the mistakes of clericalism.

From the standpoint of the laity also, the "authority figure" presents problems and may result in their taking less than their share of responsibility in the Church. This would pertain especially to the rural folk, who comprise the great bulk of the membership in evangelical churches. Often poorly educated and sometimes illiterate, they are separated educationally from the clergy by a wide gap. There is, therefore, generally a high respect of these Christians for their pastor, which is very proper. But in view of the social and cultural values of acceptance and "shame," it is quite natural that laymen should hesitate to take responsibilities which they believe they cannot carry out as well as the clergy might. It would be almost unthinkable to them that laymen might in some cases be capable of teaching something to the clergy, as both Protestants and Roman Catholics are now advocating. The safer and easier approach for the layman, especially if uneducated, is to allow the clergy to assert more authority and claim more responsibility.

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<sup>14</sup>Richard P. Poethig, The Pastor's Role in a Changing Society (Manila: The United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1964), p. 6.

It should not remain unnoticed that there may be exceptions to what is stated here. Sanders refers to what he calls the "tyranny of laymen," of which a number of pastors in his church have complained.<sup>15</sup> At times it happens that laymen with strong personalities attempt to elevate themselves above the clergy and state openly that the church belongs to the laymen. This has happened especially in the case of older laymen of long standing membership in the church. These appear to be cases of individual pride and apparently occur in any culture. They do not reduce the danger of clericalism in general.

A final factor should be mentioned. It is not improbable that the influence of the Roman Catholic heritage in the Philippines is still felt to some extent in Protestant churches. During the nearly four hundred years of Spanish rule in the Islands the clergy of the Roman Church dominated the religious life and thinking of the people. Authority was fixed firmly in the clergy while the laity was expected only to obey. While the coming of democracy brought about some changes, the image of the priest is still basically unchanged. It is quite possible that this image is in some cases automatically transferred to Protestant pastors and that this transfer is prevented only when special or conscious efforts are made to remind the laity of their own ministry and priesthood.

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<sup>15</sup>Sanders, Evangelical Ministry, p. 17.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES

It is in some respects premature to attempt an analysis of clericalism in the Lutheran Church in the Philippines. This young church is still to a large extent in the "mission" stage, the first Lutheran missionaries having arrived in the Islands in 1946. The ratio of missionaries to locally trained national clergymen at this writing is nearly five to one, so that one can hardly speak of a national church as far as the clergy is concerned. Also, published materials pertinent to our topic are very limited and no complete history of the church or mission in the Philippines has been written.

In spite of these limitations, however, it appears possible to make an evaluation of the situation on the basis of the brief past history of the church. The church has drawn up policies and doctrinal statements which indicate the direction in which the leaders intend it to go. Resolutions of the field conferences also give indications of the extent to which the Lutheran Church hopes to involve its laity.

As we should expect, the church policy and government of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines reflects that of the parent body, the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. Apparently the early missionaries were aware of the desirability of involving the laity as soon as possible and of preventing the concentration of authority and responsibility in the hands of the clergy. At an early date in the mission's history efforts were made to give the laymen the right to represent



groups of Christians in "conference" meetings. The first Mission Policy adopted in 1948 by the clergy alone made provisions that "in such a conference or synod, member congregations shall vote through an equal number of lay and pastoral delegates."<sup>1</sup> The same document recognized the desirability of training not only clergy but also laymen for service in the church. It determined "to prepare nationals as church workers, as pastors, teachers, and lay workers."<sup>2</sup> In 1949 Bible institutes of two-week and three-week duration were already being held in Manila for the training of laymen.<sup>3</sup>

While laymen were actively assuming responsibilities on the congregational level from the beginning, they were also being slowly drawn into service on a "conference" level. By 1952 a Missions Committee had been established to promote the evangelistic efforts begun among the people of Mountain Province. The Committee chairman was Cecilio Valeriano, one of three laymen on the Committee together with three clergymen.<sup>4</sup> Records indicate that laymen were soon also given committee responsibilities in the areas of parish education and theological education.

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<sup>1</sup>"Mission Policy of the Lutheran Philippine Mission" (Unpublished document in the archives of Concordia Historical Institute, n. p., n. d.), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>John Scholz, "The Founding and Early Development of the Lutheran Philippine Mission" (Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, 1952), p. 105.

<sup>4</sup>Philippine Lutheran, III, No. 3 (July 1952), 3. In the remainder of the notes in this chapter this periodical will be abbreviated as PL.

The "Organization of the Philippine Lutheran Church" adopted January 27, 1956, and amended on January 10, 1957, indicates in several ways the confidence of missionaries and pastors in the laity of the church. Previous to this only the clergy were official delegates and voting members of the General Conference. The "Organization," however, made provision for congregations to be represented by lay delegates at the General Conference. The resolution introducing the new church organization was prefaced by these paragraphs among others:

Whereas it is desirable that our lay members should participate not only in supporting financially and in helping to expand the work of the Church, but also in administering it in an orderly and evangelical way; and

Whereas delegates, where they have served on committees and as visitors . . . have demonstrated that maturity and readiness to share in the responsibility of planning and administering the Church's work. . . .<sup>5</sup>

This organizational plan has been "provisionally" superseded by a new constitution by General Conference action first in 1963 and again in 1965. This constitution continues to recognize the spiritual rights and privileges of congregations and laymen. It provides for continued equal representation by lay and clergy delegates at General Conference. It is apparent that at times the framers of the constitution made conscious efforts to avoid giving the impression of any kind of clergy superiority. For instance, wherever both clergy and congregation or lay delegates are mentioned together, the term "congregation"

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<sup>5</sup>"Organization of the Philippine Lutheran Church," Minutes of the Conference of the Philippine Lutheran Church (Manila, January 4-10, 1957), p. 46.

or "lay delegate" always precedes the term "clergyman."<sup>6</sup> Another instance of this is found in Article Three, which lists eight objectives of the church. Here the training of clergy and other professional workers is listed in seventh place, after due recognition has been given to other objectives and activities of the church.

There are additional evidences that the Lutheran Church in the Philippines has been aware of the dangers of clericalism and has been taking steps to avoid some of these dangers. The Philippine Lutheran, the church's small publication begun in 1950, has repeatedly encouraged lay activity and has at times at least implied that the clergy should not be expected or allowed to carry on the church's work alone. From time to time the periodical sounds both encouraging and discouraging notes with regard to the progress of lay activity. In an editorial of 1952 there is the implication that the ideal of lay responsibility was far from realized:

The task of bringing Christ to more and more of our neighbors requires a planned program--planned by the members and the pastor together. Nothing would please a pastor more than to have his members suggest ways and means by which the congregation can improve its program of winning others for Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

Some encouraging notes appeared already in the early years of the mission. In 1950 it was noted briefly that "laymen are now active teaching adult Bible classes in some churches. It is a good sign when

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<sup>6</sup>"Constitution and By-Laws of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines," Proceedings of the Sixth General Conference of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (Manila, January 11-15, 1965), Appendix A, passim.

<sup>7</sup>"Editorial," PL, III, No. 1 (January 1952), 2.

laymen can lead in Bible study. The church can use more of them."<sup>8</sup> The following year it was reported that in the mountain village of Guinzadan, where missionaries had been visiting for only one year, some laymen had decided to conduct Bible classes on Sundays when no missionary was available to serve the people.<sup>9</sup> In 1952 it was noted that fifty-eight vacation Bible school teachers reached nearly a thousand pupils in the various mission stations. The editor stated enthusiastically that "the people or laymen of our church are at work, functioning as Spirit-filled Christians serving their Savior."<sup>10</sup> A similar enthusiasm is evident in a report on the 1958 General Conference:

This is the third time that lay delegates were represented and their increasing participation and sense of responsibility in committee meetings and plenary sessions were a source of encouragement to all clergy delegates.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the greatest single evidence of the church's desire to involve its laity properly is the establishment of the Department of Lay Training in 1962.<sup>12</sup> Under its director, Donald Morthole, this department assists pastors in the training of laymen by providing instruction materials and by promoting both district and "local" Bible

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<sup>8</sup>"News From Our Churches," PL, I, No. 3 (October 1950), 8.

<sup>9</sup>"Notes and News," PL, II, No. 3 (November 1951), 12.

<sup>10</sup>"Editorial," PL, III, No. 3 (July 1952), 2.

<sup>11</sup>"Conference Plans Gospel Advance," PL, IX, No. 1 (April 1958), 1.

<sup>12</sup>In 1965 the name of this department was changed to Department of Parish Education.

institutes. One purpose of the training of laymen is to equip them for service which is commonly performed by the clergy. Laymen are prepared in a limited way to conduct worship services, Bible classes, and instruction classes in preparation for church membership, and to assume some additional pastoral duties. In 1964 the department's director took part in five Bible institutes for laymen in different parts of the Islands.<sup>13</sup> About an equal number of institutes were held without the director's presence. It should be mentioned that similar institutes of two to three weeks' duration were held in Manila and elsewhere beginning in 1949. In 1958 in the North Luzon District a "Lutheran Lay Leaders' Institute" was founded to assure continuation of an annual institute in that district.<sup>14</sup>

On the basis of past policies and activities, the outlook for the Lutheran Church in the Philippines is generally optimistic. This is not to say, however, that the struggle is by any means over. In a conference essay in 1965 Director Morthole indicated his belief that the problem is still very real with the Lutheran Church. He stated:

Many of our laymen think that they are unqualified to minister because they are not trained in a seminary. They look to the clergy to do it all. Pastors and missionaries may very often look upon the layman's ministry as being inferior to theirs, or as a ministry which conflicts in some way with their ministry. The Lutheran

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<sup>13</sup>"Annual Report of the Department of Lay Training," Reports and Memorials for the Sixth General Conference of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (January 11-15, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>"Institute Trains Leaders," PL, IX, No. 2 (June 25, 1958), 1.

Church is known for teaching the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Still, in too many instances, this doctrine is only given lip service.<sup>15</sup>

At another point in his essay Morthole again refers to the Philippine scene when he says:

Pastor or priest has come to be looked upon as the professional. He has had special training. Perhaps it is even thought that he may have special powers. Those who are not part of the clergy are laymen. They are not as good at being religious as the clergy. They are just ordinary people or the "common tao" [common man] in the Church.<sup>16</sup>

From his comments we may assume that Director Morthole sees the danger of clericalism in the Lutheran Church in the Philippines as being approximately equal to that in most Protestant churches today. He does not make reference to anything on the Philippine scene or in the Philippine church which would set it apart from other church bodies. He says quite explicitly that "as long as the Church lives in the world the dangers of clericalism and professionalism will always be present. The Lutheran Church in the Philippines is no exception."<sup>17</sup>

By way of conclusion and summary, we are inclined to agree with Morthole that the dangers of clericalism in the Lutheran Church in the Philippines are real. Our brief history of the development of this phenomenon beginning with post-apostolic times and our brief analyses

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<sup>15</sup>Donald Morthold. "Letter addressed to the Rev. Norbert Becker," dated January 22, 1965, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 2

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

of its presence in some Philippine church bodies bear this out. In addition, our findings in Chapter Five indicate that the Philippine social and cultural setting is one in which forms of clericalism can easily evolve. In a country where people are very conscious of democratic procedures it is not likely that the crass forms of clericalism usually associated with the hierarchial system would evolve. Indeed, we discovered that in its policies and government the Lutheran Church in the Philippines is consciously guarding against such abuses of authority. Although in the late 1950's serious consideration was given to introducing an episcopal form of church policy, the church has not yet adopted such a policy, apparently for fear of the abuses to which it might be subject. No doubt the greater danger lies in what we have described in Chapter One as "professionalism," the more subtle form and probably more common form in most church bodies today. In addition, as long as the church is in the "mission" stage, receiving aid in the form of personnel and funds from abroad, paternalism as described in Chapter One will continue to be a threat to genuine lay activity.

On the positive side, the Lutheran Church in the Philippines has in its favor a strong Scriptural and Lutheran emphasis on the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers. It also has the advantage of the tradition of thorough indoctrination of catechumens preparing for membership in the church. Not the least of its advantages is the awareness in the church of the need for genuine lay activity. So far as we are aware, the Lutheran Church in the Philippines is the first

church body of its size to have established a Department of Lay Training. The lay training programs as carried on by this Department and by individual missionaries and pastors are an optimistic note. In some areas of Mountain Province it is customary that at least twice annually lay leaders from outstations gather for a week of intensive training. Ordinarily two clergymen serve as instructors in these brief institutes, which are sponsored at the initiative of one or more local congregations. Capable laymen also serve as institute instructors as they are able.

It is encouraging to note that after a very limited training as described above, laymen are willing to assume positions of leadership and responsibility, chiefly as evangelists, teachers, and leaders of worship. In the Hungduan area of Mountain Province, for instance, after a small group of laymen had attended a one-week institute they began to conduct regular weekly religious classes in five new villages.<sup>18</sup> Lay members only recently Christianized were given the privilege of electing their teachers. In a number of instances, during the furlough of a missionary, lay leaders have carried on the work of the church successfully for periods of up to one year with little supervision by neighboring clergy. This is an indication not only of the willingness of laymen to accept responsibilities but also of the confidence of the clergy in the laity's ministry.

It is a common practice, especially in the rural areas, that young people conduct Sunday Schools or religious classes for children

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<sup>18</sup>"Abatan Institute Trains More Teachers from Mountail Trail," PL, XIV, No. 2 (July 1964), 18.



and adults in a number of outstations with only the little supervision the missionary can give. We have reason to believe that as long as opportunities for evangelism and expansion of the church continue to be almost unlimited, this circumstance itself will help the church maintain a high view of the laity. Since the saturation point is not even remotely envisioned, it is not likely that the ministry of the laity in the area of evangelism is thought of as a stop-gap measure until more clergy are available. Rather, there is evidence that this ministry of the laity is regarded as the normal Christian activity which must continue indefinitely.

A major concern was indicated in Chapter Three, where we concluded that the clergy themselves are in a key position to promote a correct view of clergy and laity. This would seem to place special responsibility not only on all future clergy of the Lutheran Church but also on those responsible for the training of the clergy. Specifically, the seminary and its Board of Control must be alert to the problems of which we have treated in this thesis. They must gear the church's theological training program toward an understanding of what the Church is and therefore also toward an understanding of the universal priesthood and ministry of believers. The Church's clergy and leaders must be alerted to the dangers of clericalism and to specific pitfalls to be avoided. In this connection, frank discussions on the matter of social and cultural values would seem to be of great value. Above all, the church's leaders must be trained to look to the Lord of the Church for the grace of humility needed to carry out their special

function as leaders among equals in the Body of Christ.

The limitations of this present study suggest at least two lines along which continued investigations might profitably be made. The one is the analysis of lay activity and clergy activity in other church bodies in the Philippines, notably some of the more aggressive Pentecostal groups of American origin and some of the smaller indigenous groups, such as the Espiritista. These groups have not been included in the present study chiefly for lack of written materials pertaining to them. If information on these groups becomes available, a study might yield valuable results.

A second possible study would be one related to the new and different forms the ordained ministry is beginning to take in some of the less developed nations. Church leaders in Southeast Asia and elsewhere seem to be aware that, chiefly because of economic reasons, the traditional form of pastor-and-congregation may need to be replaced by different and more practical structures. There is reason to believe that new and different forms of the ordained ministry may affect the extent to which the laity is involved in priesthood and ministry. A profitable study might be made in this area of clergy and lay activity.

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