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Evangelistic Approaches to the Fillipino Lowlander

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	THE NEED FOR AN EVANGELISTIC APPROACH TO THE FILIPINO LOWLANDER	1
	Introduction	1
	Defining the Problem	1
	The Procedure of the Study	4
II.	THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE	6
	The Pre-Spanish Era	6
	The Spanish Era	13
	The American Era	17
III.	DOMINANT INFLUENCES FROM THE CULTURAL HISTORY FOUND IN CONTEMPORARY FILIPINO SOCIETY	21
	The Filipino Family Today	22
	Religious Life Today	27
	Material Progress and Materialism	31
IV.	PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FILIPINO LOWLANDER	34
	Hospitality	34
	Loyalty	35
	Sensitivity	36
	Fatalism	39
	Regional Differences	41
V.	IMPLICATIONS OF FILIPINO CULTURAL PATTERNS FOR EVANGELISTIC APPROACHES	45
	Pre-evangelism and Communication	45
	Protestant-Roman Catholic Confrontation	48
	Approaching the Filipino Family	52
	Doctrinal Implications	54
	The Implications of Material Progress	56
	Implications for the Western Missionary	58
APPENDIX		60
BIBLIOGRAPHY		62

CHAPTER I

THE NEED FOR AN EVANGELISTIC APPROACH TO THE FILIPINO LOWLANDER

Introduction

When a person sets out to live in a foreign country, for whatever reason, he has the choice between two types of existence in his adopted land: he can either isolate himself from his surroundings, the community and culture in which he lives, and surround himself with the fellowship of his own family and others from his own native environment, or he can integrate himself into the thought and life of the community. However, to attain the latter, a goal for which he can only strive but not hope to achieve fully, he must, in some way or another, assimilate the culture of the people among whom he is living. It is out of such a concern that the writer chose this particular topic for investigation. Having lived in the Republic of the Philippines for five years as a missionary of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, the writer has felt a keen desire to understand the people among whom he has been living as well as to make the Christian Gospel revelant to their needs. Hence came the idea to make a study of the cultural characteristics of the Filipino people and to make an attempt to ascertain how the Christian Gospel might best be applied within their cultural framework. To delineate the scope of the problem, various questions must be asked.

Defining the Problem

The basic question connected with our study is: How can the Gospel be applied to the cultural background of the Filipino people? When the term "culture" is used in this study it is applied in its basic sociological sense, that is, "social heritage", or as it is defined by C. L. Hunt et alii in their work entitled Sociology in the Philippine Setting: "the sum total of the complex

social heritage of a group which is created and transmitted from one generation to another."[1] So as not to make this study too unwieldy one particular aspect of the application of the Gospel is under consideration, namely evangelistic approaches to the Filipino living in the lowlands. This at once points up the limitations of the study.

In the first place, the term evangelistic approaches is used in its broadest sense. The term implies not only determining the best way in which the Filipino can be reached initially with the Christian Gospel but also what factors ought to be taken into consideration for discovering and meeting his spiritual needs. From this arise such questions as: What can be learned from the Filipino's cultural background that will enable a more effective approach to him (a) as an individual, (b) as a member of a specific sociological group? What particular stance should be assumed by an evangelical Protestant missionary in working in a nominally Christian Roman Catholic country? What factors of Philippine sociological make-up need to be taken into consideration particularly for the Western missionary?

A major question is imposed upon the study, in speaking of evangelistic approaches when one considers the fact that the Philippines is known as the only Christian nation in the Far East.[2] This raises the problem: "What need is there for an evangelical approach to a people who are already Christianized?" Here, however, one must recognize that there are, as Gutherie points out, a mixture

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[1]Chester L. Hunt et. al., Sociology in the Philippine Setting, (Manila: Alemar's, c.1954), p. 2.

[2]Alexander Roces, "Our Spanish Cultural Heritage," (Unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines). Quoting Arnold Toynbee, the author notes that "in the whole of Asia there are only two predominantly Christian countries, Lebanon at the western end of the giant continent and the Philippines here, off Asia's eastern coast. In both countries, the Christianity is Roman Catholic . . . ." Cf. also Delfin Fl. Batacan, Looking at Ourselves (Manila: Philaw Publishing, c.1956), p. 7.

of Christianity and pre-Christian animistic beliefs in certain places all over the islands.[3] This particular blend of Catholicism and earlier beliefs has been called Folk Catholicism.[4] It is this particular group that would be the object of the evangelistic approach. And it is particularly this group that is embodied in the term Filipino Lowlander. While not venturing a guess at the actual percentage of the population involved in this grouping out of the eighty-three per cent of the Filipino population professing membership in the Roman Catholic Church,[5] the writer observes that this merging of earlier beliefs and the Roman Catholic faith varies from place to place and is closely related to the degree of urbanization.[6] Although many people profess Christianity in the lowlands of the Philippines, not all who make such a profession or are enrolled on the statistic table of the land are indeed practicing Christians. In other words, the Roman Catholic faith has not penetrated so deeply into the lives of the people as the statistics maintain, and that therefore, many of the lowland people of the Philippines remain unchristianized. Yet it is not the purpose of this paper to paint the Roman Catholic Church in the darkest possible colors. The strengths of the Roman Church in the Philippines have been pointed out by William Danker in his book Two Worlds or None.[7]

Thus the term Filipino Lowlander is meant to deal primarily with the adherents of Folk Catholicism to whatever degree the

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[3]George Gutherie, The Filipino Child and Philippine Society, (Manila: Philippine Normal College Press, 1961), p. 47.

[4]Priscila S. Manalang and F. Sionil Jose, "Religion in the Philippines," (Unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines).

[5]Ibid.

[6]Gutherie, Cf. also Manalang and Jose.

[7]William J. Danker, Two Worlds or None. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 91-119.

inhabitants of the lowlands practice this type of Christianity. Furthermore, this would exclude from the study the animistic tribal groups, found mainly in the mountains at northern Luzon and in Mindanao, which have received practically no Christian influence of any kind, and also the one to two million Muslims living primarily in the southwest part of Mindanao and the lower part of the Philippine archipelago. This study attempts to establish an evangelical approach to a people that is nominally Christian, an approach based upon the Filipino's own peculiar history as well as his cultural heritage.

Procedure of the Study

In a study of this type it will be necessary first of all, to examine the cultural background of the Filipino people. What historical factors have helped shape and mould their culture? What has endured from the aboriginal beginnings and what has been imported from abroad? The second chapter, then, will deal primarily with the pre-Spanish background of the Filipinos (treating mainly the aborigines, Malays, Indonesians, and the Chinese), factors of sociological significance under the Spanish domination, and lastly, the influences brought about under the American control of the islands.

The third chapter will attempt to bring together the dominant influences bearing upon the lives of the Filipino people as a result of this hybrid culture and their corresponding significance in contemporary Philippine society. Here the influence of pre-Spanish culture particularly in the form of a family-oriented society, basic animistic beliefs and superstitious practices can be observed. From Spain the Roman Catholic faith emerges as the dominant influence, together with the Filipinos' birthright as a nation, as an historical people. From America comes particularly the influence of material progress and its effects: materialism and conformity.

The fourth chapter will summarize some of the psychological characteristics of the Filipino people. Such common traits as hospitality, loyalty, sensitivity, and fatalism will be dealt with here. Since some of these mores vary according to geographical

locations, regional characteristics will be briefly examined in this connection.

The fifth chapter will describe some implications of this diverse cultural pattern for evangelistic approaches, touching upon the questions outlined in defining the problem. As an aid in helping the Western missionary to acquire anthropological background data the writer has included an adaptation of Eugene Nida's Customs and Cultures as an appendix to this study.[8]

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[8] Eugene A. Nida, Customs and Cultures (New York: Harper and Row, Publisher, c.1954), pp. 267-274.

CHAPTER II

THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE

The Philippine cultural background can be traced back to various national groupings which have played a significant role in moulding the thought life of the Filipino today. Among these are included the pre-Spanish era where four main influences can be seen: that of the aborigines or aetas, the Indonesian, the Malays, and in the area of commerce and economics, the Chinese. After these groups were already well established the influence of Spain, under whose dominion the Philippines existed for almost 400 years, came to the fore. Still later on the influence from America was introduced as a result of the ceding of the Philippines to the United States after the Spanish-American War. However, of these three basic groupings, (the Pre-Spanish, the Spanish, and the American), the pre-Spanish is probably the most significant as is supported by Robert Fox:

> Despite dramatic changes which have occured in the Filipino's way of life under the impact of Spanish and American influences (inappropriately described, I believe, as 'cultural conquest'), perhaps all of the basic influences have been adapted to a social and cultural base which is uniquely Filipino--a base which developed centuries before Magellan.[1]

It is this particular influence which concerns us next.

The Pre-Spanish Era

Fernandez informs us that the aetas are the aborigenes of the Philippines, that is, that as far as it is known, they have

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[1] Robert Fox, "Pre-Spanish Influences in Filipino Culture," (Unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila).

always lived there.[2] They are generally described as short, dark people with short and kinky hair. Fernandez points out two groupings, the Negritos living in the Zambales Mountains of Luzon and the Mangyan people living in northern Mindoro.[3] With the advent of the Indonesians and the Malays, these people have become a disappearing race fleeing deeper and deeper into the forests and mountains until today there are very few in existence.

It is generally thought that the Indonesians immigrated before the Malays, although the exact time is unknown.[4] Fernandez points out that they came in waves from the Asian mainland and islands to the southwest of the Philippines. He describes them as tall and slender people, having long and wavy hair and sharp faces. He traces remnants of pure Indonesian stock to the mountain people of Mindanao, Panay, Negros, and northern Luzon.[5]

However, this study is more concerned with the third group, with the Malays, who immigrated at a later time, probably after the Indonesians, to the Philippines. These people, too, are divided into two groupings, the primitive Malays and the civilized Malays. Fernandez tells us that the primitive Malays, like the Indonesians, are now found in the mountain areas, probably pushed back by waves of the more civilized brothers.[6] It is the more civilized Malays who are the ancestors of the present day Filipinos living along the

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[2]Leondro H. Fernandez, A Brief History of the Philippines, (Boston: Ginn and Company, c.1932), p. 1. Other historians point out the fact that this particular group might have come from the Asian mainland at a time when the Philippines was still connected to the mainland. Cf. George A. Malcom, The Common Wealth of the Philippines, (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, c.1936), p. 21.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Robert W. Hart, The Philippines Today, (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, c.1928), p. 16

[5]Fernandez, p. 3.

[6]Ibid.

coasts, the plains, and the river valleys,[7] the people called the Filipino Lowlander in this study. Both Fernandez and Benitz mention the fact that the Malays brought with them certain elements of Indian culture from the islands to the southwest of the Philippines, but particularly from the Island of Java, which was stronghold of Hindu influence.[8] In fact, the entire central area of the Philippines known as the Visayan Islands has been taken from the name of one of the Hindu-Malayan empires which came to power in the East Indian archipelago, namely the Shri-Vishaya,[9] a factor that ought not be overlooked when attempting to understand the lowland Filipino.

The above factors indicate that all evidence "points to a common racial origin with other peoples of East and South Asia."[10] Yet, as Carson points out, "Despite definite racial affiliations and many similarities in language and customs, the people of the different sections of the islands came to be characterized by a marked diversity."[11] He goes on to say, "It is not clear how much of this may have been due to variant streams of migrations and to what extent it was a matter of different environmental influences playing upon groups isolated from each other through the centuries."[12] This is mentioned here since a later chapter will discuss briefly the regionalistic differences of the Filipino people.[13]

But to go on to the main consideration of this study, what is the cultural contribution which these people have made to Philippine

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., p. 10f. Cf. also Conrado Benitez, History of the Philippines. (Boston: Ginn and Company, c.1940), pp. 18f.

[9] Ibid., p. 18.

[10] Arthur L. Carson, Higher Education in the Philippines. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 6.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Infra, p. 41.

life? In this connection no attempt will be made to trace certain cultural trends to a specific group discussed above, because, as previously mentioned, the concern of this study is primarily the Malays. However one cannot overlook the fact they were undoubtedly also influenced by the aborigines and the Indonesians.

In setting forth the cultural contributions of the pre-Spanish Filipino two aspects are of special interest: the family as the basic cultural unit and the religious characteristics of the people.

In an article entitled "Pre-Spanish influences in Filipino Culture" Robert Fox points out that the communities of the pre-Spanish Filipinos, called barangays by other historians and ethnologists, were separate social, political, and economic entities, based on kinship and blood ties rather than political ties. He says,

> Community life and social activities were organized on the basis of kinship and common economic and ritual interests. As in the barrios of today the pre-Spanish communities had weakly developed political structures. Most individuals in the small community were linked by blood ties, marriage, and ritual kinships, and it was these factors plus shared residence, common interests and experiences, and community-level ritual obligations which defined the community as a social unit--not political ties![14]

Not only was the community of the early Filipinos based upon ties of kinship, "the central social, economic, and ritual unit of pre-Spanish society was the elementary family of the father, mother, and children."[15]

Fox goes on to observe:

> The network of primary relationships extended to include the consanguineous kin of the mother and father--the bilaterally extended family (These are the basic units of Filipino society today). There were no clans or similar unilateral groupings for a person reckoned relationship[16] (as now) with both the paternal and maternal kin groups.

The next consideration is the matter of authority. Here Fox

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[14] Fox, "Pre-Spanish Influences in Filipino Culture."

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

notes that "leadership and authority was vested in the hands of the family heads, mature and older persons who were steeped in the wisdom of customary law and experience." As to the question of whether pre-Spanish Filipino society was matriarchal or patriarchal Fox points out that "relationships between husband and wife were remarkably equalitarian"[17] this being due in part to "the bilateral character of the family and kinship in which each spouse, after marriage, continued to maintain strong blood ties with their respective kinsmen."[18]

In pre-Spanish Philippine society not only the central position of the family with the seat of authority invested in the older heads of the family is of interest for this study but also the rank given smooth interpersonal relations:

> In interpersonal relationships, as individual was always cognizant of the self-esteem of another and avoided offending him, particularly if he were a non-relative. To bridge the social distance which arose between non-kinsmen (notably in these societies which centered their interests and localities on the family and kin-group) a striking pattern of reciprocal hospitality, generosity, and euphemistic speech developed.[19]

A summary of the concept of the family in pre-Spanish times would include the four following observations: the importance of kinship and blood ties, the family as the basic cultural unit, authority invested in the heads of the family, the importance of maintaining smooth interpersonal relations. In the next chapter an attempt will be made to show how these characteristics manifest themselves in contemporary Philippine society.

But first a look at the religious elements in the lives of the pre-Spanish Filipinos will be of value. Although, as many historians agree, Islam had already gained many converts among the Filipinos by the time the Spanish came (1521), the greater number of the

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[17] Ibid., Cf. also his article on "Filipino Family and Kinship," (Unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines).

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

Filipinos were pagan, and it is this particular group that is of concern for this study.[20] Philippine sociologists point out four main emphases of pre-Spanish religious life: the belief in spirits and deities, the use of charms, the use of religious mediums or functionaries, the concept of the after-life.

Both Fernandez and Fox mention the fact that the early Filipinos not only believed in a hierarchy of deities but also worshiped different kinds of spirits, most notably the spirits of their dead ancestors whom they called anitos.[21] As Fox observes:

> The principal ritual practices of the pre-Spanish Filipino were based upon beliefs in environmental-spirits, soul-spirits, and a hierarchy of deities. The myriad of environmental-spirits were potentially good or evil depending upon man's daily social relationships with them (e.g., if a person, even accidentally, chopped down a tree which was the abode of a spirit of his family, it would become angry and cause illness). Some spirits were per se malign, including witches. Daily life involved continual interactions with the soul-spirits of the dead, usually close relatives. These were social relationships in which the soul-spirits demanded respect and attention. Ritual practices were based, too, upon beliefs in a hierarchy of deities led by a ranking deity, not a "supreme deity", for each had specific and some independent functions. These deities controlled the weather, the success of the harvest, and other phenomena basic to man's survival.[22]

Another aspect of early Philippine culture was the use of charms. Here Fox informs us:

> The use of charms was widespread--to protect the wearer from illness, from malign spirits, to secure good luck in economic

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[20] Fernandez, p. 72.

[21] Ibid., p. 73. Fox, "Pre-Spanish Influences in Filipino Culture." Priscila S. Manalang and F. Sionil Jose in an article entitled "Religion in the Philippines," (Unpublished manuscript, circulated in mimeograph form, in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines), points out the contrast between the ancestor worship of the Chinese and the Filipino "cult of the dead" which they feel more adequately describes the early Filipinos' interaction with the souls of the recently dead rather than with the spirits of their remote ancestors.

[22] Fox, "Pre-Spanish Influences in Filipino Culture."

> activities, as well as to influence and control the behavior of others. The latter usage of charms was involved in the practice of witchcraft. An intrinsic power was attributed to the charms. They were invariably unusual or very rare objects.[23]

Fox also gives us a vivid description of the so-called priests and priestesses of this period:

> The mediums and religious functionaries (frequently women) were called upon to interpret omens and dreams and to divine auspicious occasions to marry, plant, travel, hunt, and to fight. They knew and related elaborate myths and ritual-epics which explained the origin of the people and their institutions and justified the beliefs and values which were held. The religious functionaries were generally aware and sensitive persons who had intellectualized the values of the society and, within the ritual framework, solved many of the social and psychological problems of their kinsmen and followers. Ritual beliefs were linked with social values, and the activities of the religious funtionaries reinforced custom law and jural decisions.[24]

Concerning the concept of afterlife, there are varying opinions. Fernandez says that the early Filipinos believed in "a place of rest where the good went after death," a place that they called Maca or Calualhatian, and that "the souls of the bad people went to Casanaan, a place of remorse."[25] Fox clarifies this further when he observes:

> The afterworlds of the early Filipino have often been described as "heavens" and "hells", however, the evidence does not support the position that the early beliefs clearly distinguished guilt and provided for retribution. The dead usually went to one of a number of sky worlds, their fate being determined principally by the cause of their death (e.g., women dying in child birth went to the sky world) and their social status, rather than by a concept of sin. The dead may have undergone trials before entering the afterworld in which their sins were judged by guardian deities and in which immediate punishment was involved but it is highly questionable that the dead faced a ". . . hell where they lived in perpetual torture amidst suffocating heat

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Fernandez, p. 73.

and blasting flames," Such a statement reflects a Christian bias, not an early Filipino belief.[26]

The foregoing gives us a view of the primary religious elements in the life of the pre-Spanish Filipino, the worship of spirits and deities, the extensive use of charms, the frequent employment of female religious mediums, and a belief in a variety of sky worlds to which the dead would go.

The pre-Spanish cultural background of the Filipino people has been influenced particularly by the Malayan immigrants. Although, for the purposes of this study the influence of Chinese culture in the pre-Spanish era is not so important, it is worth touching upon briefly, for, as Fernandez observes, "The Chinese have also greatly influenced Malay culture in general."[27] He goes on to note, however, that the influence was primarily economic rather than social or political and with this other historians agree.[28] To this day the Chinese living in the Philippines have not become thoroughly integrated into the social fabric of the country. This is mentioned, in passing, in order to point out that apparently no major sociological factors have been incorporated into Philippine life by the influence of the Chinese.

The Spanish Era

The first white man to set foot on Philippine soil was Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese sailing under the Spanish flag, who reached the islands in 1521 on his globe-girdling voyage in search of the Spice Islands.[29] In spite of the fact that Magellan was killed on

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[26]Fox, "Pre-Spanish Influences in Filipino Culture."

[27]Fernandez, p. 11.

[28]Cf. the chapter on commerce (VI) which includes a large section on pre-Spanish trade relations in Benitez.

[29]Hart, p. 18.

that first voyage, Spain sent subsequent expeditions to the Philippines, carrying with them Roman Catholic priests to convert the natives. In 1564, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi brought with him a group of Augustinian missionaries, the first Roman Catholic clergymen to remain in the Islands. Carson quotes a Filipina historian who points up the number of Roman Catholic orders that arrived in the Philippines with the coming of Spain:

> Zealous missionaries accompanied every expedition that left Spain for the Philippines. With Miguel Lopez de Legaspi came Augustinian missionaries. A few years later, in 1577, the Franciscan friars followed. The Jesuits, full of enthusiasm on account of their recent successes in Europe, arrived in 1581. Not to be outdone and attracted by the opportunities for missionary work, the Dominican order sent some of its members in 1587. The Recollects arrived in Manila in 1606.[30]

In spite of the fact that, within twenty years after Legaspi's arrival, nearly half the Filipinos had become Roman Catholic, a gradual deterioration in relations took place between the people and the priests, who had come to plant the cross beside the flag of the Spanish crown. The reason for this lies particularly in their political as well as spiritual domination and is aptly described by Frank Laubach in his book entitled The Seven Thousand Emeralds:

> The friars introduced European seeds, and taught the Filipinos to build roads, to make bricks, and to build better houses. They established schools and hospitals and homes for the orphans. The King of Spain recognized their enormous usefulness, and, especially because they knew the Filipino languages, depended upon them as the real powers behind the government.
>
> The friars were human, and they were in a backwash of civilization ten thousand miles from the eyes of Europe. Hardly knowing what was happening to them, they failed to progress, failed to guard their own conduct, and sank into drunkenness, luxury, and oppression. The early love and confidence of the Filipinos turned into distrust and at last sullen hatred.

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[30] Carson, quoting Encarnacion Alzona, A History of Education in the Philippines: 1565-1930, (Manila: University of the Philippines Press, 1932), pp. 17-18.

> Sixty years after the arrival of the friars, the Philippines had their first revolution. Each decade revolutions increased in number and in force.[31]

Finally, the suppressed resentment broke forth into a full-blown revolution that could not be put down, and encouraged by such national patriots as Rizal, Bonifacio, and Mabini, the Filipinos staged a war for independence at the end of the nineteenth century. The results of that revolution are now history. The United States entered the conflict because of the Cuba incident and when the Spanish-American war was over the Philippines was ceded to the United States.

Although a large segment of Roman Catholic Christians broke off from Spain religiously as well as politically and formed the Philippine Independent Church or Aglipayan Church under the auspices of Gregorio Aglipay, Hispanic Roman Catholicism has remained a vital force throughout Philippine history. As Alexander Roces observes:

> The strongest influence in this country . . . from the outside is Christianity--and that is the influence the Spaniards brought here. Filipino culture--like the culture of other civilized countries--is based on religion. It is based on Christianity, which came from Rome and was brought to the Philippines by the Spanish friars and conquistadors who planted the cross side by side with the Spanish crown.[32]

Gregorio Zaide, in his work on Philippine political and cultural history, enumerates some of the major contributions made by Spanish Catholicism:

> By the sign of the Cross, the people were brought to a higher plane of life and were united as children of One God. Their old tribal wars and feuds disappeared; their ancestral pagan practices gave way to a humane code of morals; and infanticide, human and animal sacrifices, and other brutal practices were abolished. Christianity, too, minimized intemperence, swearing,

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[31] Frank Laubach, The Seven Thousand Emeralds (New York: Friendship Press, 1929), pp. 30, 31.

[32] Alejandro Roces, "Our Spanish Cultural Heritage," (Unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines).

> and usary; discouraged adultery and polygamy; and raised marriage to the dignity of a holy sacrament.
>
> With the advent of Christianity, slavery vanished in the Philippines. By a bull issued in Rome on April 18, 1591, His Holiness, Pope Gregory XIV abolished slavery in the country . . .
>
> Finally, Christianity elevated the Filipino woman to a high social position, relatively the highest in the Orient.[33]

Showing the cultural contribution Spain has made in even stronger words, Roces quotes Nick Joaquin:

> To accuse the Spanish over and over again of having brought us all sorts of things, mostly evil, among which we can usually remember nothing very valuable "except perhaps" religion and national unity, is equivalent to saying of a not very model mother that she has given her child nothing except life. For in the profoundest possible sense, Spain did give birth to us--as a nation, as an historical people.[34]

With the advent of Spain at least some influence has been detected on the Philippine familistic system. In his article on "Filipino Family and Kinship" Robert Fox shows how the privileged jural and social position of the husband and father was due largely to Spanish influence. Quoting Hunt he informs us:

> It is really the fair-haired (sic) Spaniard with his code of Roman Laws who relegated the Filipino woman to the position of inferiority where the American found her. These laws seemed to confine the woman inside the home by forbidding her the right to transact business without the legal sanction of her husband, and removed from her the right to dispose of her own paraphernal property.[35]

Fox goes on to say that education was designed primarily for men and that the Spanish followed the German in ascribing the woman's sphere of action as Kirche, Küche, and Kinder (the church, the kitchen, and the children) adding that

> The separation of the sexes was emphasized. Young women were confined to the home, taught to hide and control their emotions and thoughts, and carefully chaperoned when with the opposite

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[33]Gregorio F. Zaide, Philippine Political and Cultural History Volume II (Manila: Philippine Education Company, c.1949), p. 79.

[34]Roces, "Our Spanish Cultural Heritage."

[35]Fox, "Filipino Family and Kinship."

> sex. After marriage, display of affection in public between husband and wife was forbidden.[36]

On the other hand,

> Families in the poblaciones and urban centers did approximate the Spanish and Church definition of the social role of the woman as well as the relationship between sexes, but the position of the woman in the barrio followed more the traditional pattern.[37]

While Spain has had some influence on the family, her greatest contribution to Philippine culture is Roman Catholic Christianity. The implications of this influence for today will be spelled out more clearly in the next chapter.

The American Era

The Philippines has had some sixty-seven years to incorporate some of the aspects of American culture since the Treaty of Paris ceded the Philippines to the United States on December 10, 1898.[38] Since that time educational, religious, and materialistic influences have subtly moulded the thinking of the Philippine people.

In 1901 a group of pioneer American teachers affectionately known as the "Thomasites" (because they traveled aboard the U.S. army transport "Thomas") arrived in the Philippines and, in the words of Zaide, "became the real harbingers of American culture and contributed immensely to the upbuilding of a new Filipino nation."[39]

About the same time that these first American teachers and their successors came the first Protestant missionaries also arrived on the scene. The Presbyterians are given credit for sending the first missionaries to the islands in 1899, followed by a host of

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Benitez, p. 378.

[39] Zaide, p. 295.

other Protestant denominations in the last half century. Many of these are described by Zaide in Volume II of his Philippine Political and Cultural History. Protestantism introduced separation of church and state and prison reforms, and continued the social work begun by the Spaniards. The emphasis on self-reliance and individualistic endeavor and other characteristics of the Protestant ethic have been absorbed to an extent by the Filipino people, especially those living in the urban areas.[40]

The democratic ideal, likewise, gained adherents during the American era. Its force was not only felt politically, but also carried over into the basic institution of the family. Here Zaide records that old customs inherited from Spain such as the kissing of the hands of the parents are fast vanishing among the young. He notes also the concept of equality, not only among brothers and sisters who formerly had to show their respect to older brothers and sisters, but also between men and women. The Filipinas became emancipated from the social and political restrictions of Spanish days under the American regime, and were allowed to work in factories and offices, to engage in business, to go to college, and finally were even given the right of franchise.[41]

In the book mentioned above Zaide devotes one whole chapter to the material progress made in the Philippines under the American regime and sums up his findings with a paragraph on the higher standard of living attained under America:

> Under America the Filipino standard of living was raised to a level higher than what it used to be during the Spanish times. The development of our national resources, the increase in agricultural production, and the growth of commerce and industry brought about greater prosperity. The national wealth increase, thereby enabling our people to live more comfortably and to enjoy the luxuries imported from abroad.
>
> During the American regime things that go with modern living were imported into our country. Concrete edifices of modern

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[40] Cf. D. Fl. Batacan, Looking at Ourselves (Manila: Philaw Publishing, c.1956), p. 12.

[41] Zaide, pp. 277, 278.

> architecture replaced the old fashioned Spanish homes. Electric lights took the place of antiquated oil lamps. Books and newspapers, as well as pianos, phonographs, radios, and fine pieces of furniture became a common sight in many a private home. Schools, colleges, and playgrounds, and hospitals, agriculture centers, and bazaars arose in towns and cities. The cockpits and the moro-moro plays declined in popularity, as new forms of amusement like movies, athletic competitions, musical concerts, and school programs have become the new media of recreation. Travel became a pleasure, for there came the automobiles, buses, railways, steamships, airplanes, and good roads. Modern postal system, the cable, the telegraph, the wireless telegraph, and the teletype have gradually improved communication. Labor-saving devices, such as the gas stove, the electric range, the elevator, the washing machine, the frigidaire, and the electric fan have made life more comfortable and enjoyable.[42]

That these material advances are gifts of a beneficent Creator brought about, at least in part, by a concerned people from abroad is true. But that they have not always proved to be in the best interests of the Filipino people is evidenced by the development of materialistic attitudes, attributable partly to the influence of America. Both the potentialities of material advancement for evangelistic approaches as well as the detriments to them will be drawn in succeeding chapters.[43]

By way of summary, the basic institution of Philippine society, that is, the family, derives from pre-Spanish times. Likewise the role of the animistic religion with its superstitious beliefs and practices was a major one in pre-Spanish society. The chief contribution of Spain has been Roman Catholic Christianity. From the United States comes the democratic ideal as it is bound up with the Protestant ethic, together with material progress and the development of materialism. The next chapter reveals how these cultural

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[42] Ibid. p. 274.

[43] Eugene Nida, Customs and Cultures (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, c.1954), p. 86, points out the importance of the acquisition of material wealth among the Ifugao of northern Luzon which indicates that not all materialistic influences in the Philippines have come from abroad.

influences combine to form the basis of Philippine sociological structure today.

CHAPTER III

DOMINANT INFLUENCES FROM THE CULTURAL HISTORY FOUND IN CONTEMPORARY FILIPINO SOCIETY

The present minister of education, Alejandro Roces, paints a picture of the national blend present in contemporary Filipino society when he says:

> Geographically and racially speaking, the Philippines is an Oriental country. But the Filipino's religious and political beliefs are anchored on Occidental cultures. Basically, the Filipinos of today are a blend of three influences--Malayan, Spanish, and American.[1]

The dominant influences of these three national groups have become bound up with one another in what has been called a "hybrid culture."[2] Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil explains what is meant by the "hybrid" character of Filipino culture today in the following quote:

> Our very appearance is so heterogeneous that foreigners are baffled and intrigued by the unpredictability of our physical characteristics. Our manner of dressing is too flamboyant to be truly Western, yet too subject to American mass-produced styles to be our own. Significantly enough, our national feminine costume is the traje de mestiza, or gown for a half-caste. Its modern version should perhaps be called Something-of-Everything Gown.
>
> Our speech, whether ludicrous or charming, is an elaborate example of cross-breeding. In it are recognizable a place-of-origin accent, Bicol perhaps or Ilocano; a peculiar sentence structure caused by our habit of thinking in the dialect and verbalizing in English, or the other way around; Spanish words and outdated Americanisms corrupted or revitalized. Our written English is no less a mixture of dialect, florid Spanish and Americanese.

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[1] Alejandro Roces, "Our Spanish Cultural Heritage," (Unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines).

[2] Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil, "The Hybrid Character of Contemporary Filipino Culture," (Unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines).

> Our feelings and thoughts are the offspring of repeated and thoughtless matings between cultures which are otherwise strangers to each other. We are Orientals about family, Spanish about love, Chinese about business and American about our ambitions.[3]

There is no doubt that the mixture of elements represented here points up this "hybrid" character of Filipino culture. Yet, as we have seen, there is one national influence that appears to be stronger than those imported from abroad, from the West. The dominant underlying influence is the Malayan. And this is supported by a number of sources. Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Oscar M. Alfonso write in an article entitled "A Short History of the Filipino People" that "the Filipino belongs to a mixture of races although basically he is Malayan."[4] Robert Fox, in his article on pre-Spanish influences, notes essentially the same thing:

> Though Filipino culture and society have usually been described as shaped and dominated by Spanish and American traditions, it is my belief that the basic values and institutions of Filipino life-ways were determined in a pre-Spanish setting.[5]

If this is true, we will want to look most carefully at those sociological characteristics which have come down from pre-Spanish times to see how they in many cases underlie the facade of Occidental influences. Most basic for our purposes in determining an evangelistic approach is our need to look at the basic cultural unit, namely the family, together with the religious beliefs and emphases.

The Filipino Family Today

The place of the family in pre-Spanish Philippine society,

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Oscar M. Alfonso, "A Short History of the Filipino People," (unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines).

[5] Robert Fox, "Pre-Spanish Influences in Filipino Culture," (Unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines).

as outlined above, is descriptive of what David Riesman has termed a "tradition-directed society," that is, a society that tends to follow the traditions set down by its predecessors.[6] In contemporary Philippine society, the family is still the basic cultural unit. Blood ties are still paramount, oftentimes to the detriment of broader units of social organization as is pointed out by Fox:

> The pervasive influences of the family still emphasize loyalty and support of the blood group and, therefore, minimize obligations to the broader units of social organization (the barrio, the town, the church, and the state).[7]

Agoncillo and Alfonso likewise point out the importance of family ties stating that "everything revolves around" the family.[8] Although the family unit includes both parents and siblings, Fox notes in another article that "generally speaking, family life centers on the children," the elementary family becoming formalized when a child is born to a couple.[9] Pointing up the emphasis on the children still further, Fox observes:

> The birth of a child forms the link between the families [of the parents]. Land and other properties are thought of as being held in trusteeship by parents for their children. Family funds are rarely, if ever, spent by the parents for their own wants. On the contrary, the family will plunge into debt for children . . . for their education, in cases of illness, or for a daughter who has been chosen queen for the barrio fiesta. Family capital and savings are the inheritance of children, to be divided equally among them. A common excuse for denying loans, even to relatives, is that the properties and money belong to the children. Because of this concern for children, it is not unusual to find indulged children in

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[6] David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, c.1961), pp. 11f.

[7] Fox, "Pre-Spanish Influences in Filipino Culture."

[8] Agoncillo and Alfonso, "A Short History of the Filipino People."

[9] Robert Fox, "Filipino Family and Kinship," (Unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines).

Filipino families, usually the youngest, despite the relatively firm pattern of authority.[10]

But while the children are the center of the family it is still the parents who make the decisions.

> The pattern of generation respect in Filipino society (being perhaps the primary factor ordering international respect,) gives decision-making powers to family heads and older individuals regardless of their acquired knowledge. Choices of alternatives are weighed in favor of tradition.[11]

If three generations are living under the same roof it is still the eldest in whom lies the seat of authority. Agoncillo and Alfonso point up this aspect in rather humorous vein:

> The father is the head of the family, but while he rules the mother governs. For it is the mother that reigns in the home: she is the educator, the financial officer, the laundrywoman, and the cook. But over and above the "ruler" and the "governor" are the grandparents, whose opinions and decisions on all important matters are sought. Will a new-born child be baptized? The grandparents are consulted and what they say carries much weight. Ignore them and you risk their stinging rebuke. Is the child sick? Will you call a doctor? Wait a minute, the grandfather thinks an herbolario is enough. He has reached his ripe old age without having known a doctor. Do you think you can reach his age? Why, then, should you risk the life of the child by calling somebody whose experience is limited to turning gadgets that he, an old man, does not understand? No, he will not allow his beloved grandchild to be touched by the medico! You wring your hands in sheer frustration, appeal to him in the name of modern science--and get a stern look or a verbal dressdown for your efforts. Such is the "tyranny" of the elders that the Filipino family, in spite of the inroads of modern civilization, has remained basically the same.[12]

Another aspect that plays a tremendously important role in this familistic society is the concept of collective responsibility. "The interests of the individual in Philippine society are secondary to those of the family. Marriage, for example, is seen as an

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[10] Ibid. The parenthetical phrase was added by the writer for clarification.

[11] Fox, "Pre-Spanish Influences in Filipino Culture."

[12] Agoncillo and Alfonso, "A Short History of the Filipino People."

alliance of two families, not simply of two individuals."[13] It isn't any wonder, then, that the members of the family feel responsible for one another. Here fox informs us:

> The Filipino family extends involvement and responsibility to all members. An offense against one member of the family is conceived of as a threat to the whole family. An unlawful or immoral act committed by one family member brings discredit to every family member. However, the family cherishes and protects the transgressor as a family member, even though the misdeed is not condoned, and any remark by a non-relative reflecting upon the behavior of the wayward member is considered a serious offense against the entire family.[14]

This aspect of collective responsibility is apparent not only in connection with the immediate family but also with other relatives. If one member of the family has more than another, he must share with that family member who has little or none. According to Agoncillo and Alfonso: "Since collective responsibility characterizes the Filipino family, it follows that the better-off member has to take care not only of his immediate family, but also of other relatives."[15] Thus, it is not an uncommon thing to see unemployed people seeking financial aid from their relatives. In this kind of situation, "to reject them is to court disaster: the poor relations will start a whispering campaign against the 'tight-fisted' relative."[16]

And this thought brings to mind an aspect of Filipino familistic society that was touched upon in the preceding chapter: the importance of interpersonal relations. "If there is anything that a Filipino fears it is the charge of being a 'bad' relative."[17] Rosalina A. Morales shows us its importance not only in the family but throughout all relationships:

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[13] Fox, "Filipino Family and Kinship."

[14] Ibid.

[15] Agoncillo and Alfonso, "A Short History of the Filipino People."

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

> More than anything else, the Filipino wants to get along, makisama, with others. It is very necessary to maintain good relations, to feel that one belongs, to be socially accepted. At the same time, one has to be careful not to make his friends feel left out, slighted or forgotten. This is especially true if one has been successful in some way. He has to be careful not to neglect his friends lest they feel he has become proud and consider them no longer worthy of his friendship. In this respect, one of the best compliments that can be said of another is that he hasn't changed--hindi nag-iiba. One who has, has become "very another now", ibang-iba na ngayon. That is why there seems to be so much backslapping and prolonged handshaking when friends meet.
>
> Conversely, one of the worst things that can be said of a person is that he doesn't know how to get along (hindi marunong makisama). Such a person "won't have anyone to see him buried."[18]

Thus an intermediary plays an important role also in Filipino relationships, especially when there is quarrelling between members of the family or between friends. "This tendency to refuse to straighten things or bring things to a head without the help of an intermediary is due to the desire to avoid direct unpleasantness" and is generally found among Filipinos today.[19]

Some Spanish and American influences in family life can be seen, it is true, and these undoubtedly vary from place to place. In the more urban areas one is likely to find more Occidental trends incorporated into Filipino folkways than in the rural areas. Spanish elements would include the stress on patriarchal authority in the family, while American elements would stress the emancipation of the Filipino woman and her right to equality. Still the basic concept of the family is built upon the pre-Spanish, Malayan foundations, and it is this, particularly, that is the dominant strain in contemporary Filipino society. There has been a greater absorption

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[18] Rosalina A. Morales, "Ugaling Filipino: An Introduction to Filipino Thought and Action," (Unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines).

[19] Ibid.

of Occidental culture, at least superficially, in the area of religion, as the next section indicates.

Religious Life Today

The object of this study is the Filipino Lowlander, that is, the Filipino of Malayan background, with his pre-Spanish religious beliefs together with the Roman Catholicism that he has inherited primarily from Spain. That is not to say, however, that there has been no religious influence at all on this group by America. Undoubtedly some of the religious values held by Filipinos today were in part contributed not only by American Protestants, but American Jesuits as well. Yet the basic religious values found today in the Philippines are primarily Malayan and Spanish, often times a blend of the two.

Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil speaks of this mixture of animistic and Christian beliefs when she observes:

> The modern Filipino's attitude towards religion is a particularly telling clue of Heterogeneity. Filipino Catholics, in general, profess a component of animistic belief, an unquestioning adherence to the dead forms of ritual or creed of the Roman Catholic Church, and a folksy Puritanism which can probably be traced to Monsignor Sheen and the American Jesuit.
>
> Thus, it is not at all unusual to come across a young couple who will cross themselves at an omen that could have jumped out of the pages of Pigafetta, attend a splendidly glittering procession or novena, and join a fashionable family counselling group in which one discusses in the same jovial YMCA manner, sex, grace and the TV rating of Msgr. Sheen.
>
> The best proof of this confusing three-way split is that American Catholics are shocked by the intemperance and casualness of Filipino Catholics; Europeans are baffled by their familiarity with God and his ministers; and the Ifugao in their natural state regard the lowlander religion as merely a step up the social and economic ladder.[20]

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[20] Guerrero-Nakpil, "The Hybrid Character of Contemporary Filipino Culture."

Other Philippine sociologists have labeled this religious blend Folk Catholicism,[21] and George Gutherie has devoted a chapter of his book on Filipino Society to this particular concept in a chapter entitled "Chalices and Chickens." Here he notes that whereas "among Manila's upper classes the Catholic Church is quite Spanish in form and spirit, . . . in remote barrios the crucifix and the credo are used to deal with the evil spirits."[22] In a thesis written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English at San Carlos University in Cebu City, Miss Elsa Yap has made a study of the religious elements found in Philippine plays.[23] Here, too, one can see the blending of pre-Spanish and Spanish Christian beliefs. For example, Miss Yap indicates how the concept of Divine Providence almost borders on fatalism as well as pointing out superstitious beliefs in spirits by various characters in her play. As an apparently devout Roman Catholic it is evident that Miss Yap has no intention of emphasizing these particular characteristics and yet in her analysis she recognizes them as being present. Likewise, another student of the marriage customs of the rural areas of the Province of Cebu points out these same pre-Spanish concepts in connection with Christian marriage as it is celebrated today.[24] Thus in almost

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[21] Fox, "Pre-Spanish Influences in Filipino Culture."

[22] George Gutherie, The Filipino Child and Philippine Society (Manila: Philippine Normal College c.1961), p. 47. Cf. also examples given by W. J. Danker, Two Worlds or None (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House c.1964), pp. 119f. Eugene Nida in Customs and Cultures (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers c.1954), pp. 143f. discusses this practice in South American countries.

[23] Elsa Yap, "The Religious Elements in the Philippine Plays Written in English," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, The University of San Carlos, Cebu City, Philippines, March 1960), passim.

[24] Lourdes Reyes Quesumbing, "A Study of the Marriage Customs of the Rural Population of the Province of Cebu," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of San Carlos, Cebu City, Philippines, 1956), pp. 86f.

every area of religious life, one can find this blending between animism and Roman Catholicism. In his observation of Folk Catholicism, Fox contends that "spirits still inhabit the proximate environment and influence the daily life of the people; charms are still believed to be dependable."[25]

Aside from the admixture of animism and superstitious practices, there are other reflections of this religious blend. One of these is family-centered worship. Hunt tells us:

> One receives a general impression that religious interest in the Filipino family is almost more family-centered than church centered. At the least, one could say that the strong familistic tendency found in the traditional Filipino family system also has a noticable influence on religious life. There are several patterns of behavior which seem to support this view. The first pattern is that whenever some big family event is occurring in the parish church, such as the wedding, baptism, or burial of a relative, even the most anti-clerical members of the kinship group are generally present for the church ceremonies. This would seem to indicate, therefore, that they will go to church for <u>family</u> reasons, though ordinarily they would not attend religious services.
>
> Another pattern of a different nature, but which also indicates the familistic attitude, is the widespread incidence of family shrines in Filipino homes. Thus, one may find that a family has so set aside a part of their house that they have a veritable little chapel in the house. Certain family members will pray regularly at these home shrines and tend them with great care, though they may rarely go to church. Again, therefore, one would say that this shows a family-centered religious attitude. Interestingly enough, these family shrines are far fewer among American Catholics than among Filipino Catholics. Moreover, those Catholics in the United States who do possess these shrines often have a much less elaborate type.
>
> Still another type of behavior which seems to support these views is the importance placed on the All Saints' Day ceremonies. The tremendous flocking of people to the cemeteries on this day seems to show that family relations are considered to be of prime importance even after death.[26]

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[25] Fox, "Pre-Spanish Influences in Filipino Culture."

[26] Chester L. Hunt, <u>et. al.</u>, <u>Sociology in the Philippine Setting</u> (Manila: Alemar's, c.1954), pp. 75, 76.

Hunt's point with this quote is, of course, the predominance of the pre-Spanish familistic pattern in Filipino religious life today. In both the case of the family shrine and in connection with the All Saints' Day observance both of which are at first glance definite Spanish Catholic importations, there is reason to believe that we still see here a dominant influence from the Malayan religious observances. This belief is supported by Fernandez who tells us that the pre-Spanish Filipinos had no special place for worship and therefore celebrated their religious festivals in the house of the chief. This home of the chief where the festival (pandot) was being celebrated, was called a simbahan, the same word that is used for a church building today.[27]

The adaptibility of the Filipino people is attested time and time again by sociological observers who agree with Robert Fox that the basic Filipino values and institutions are pre-Spanish and that the changes which have occurred due to Western influences have been adapted and reshaped to local patterns of doing, believing, and thinking.[28] It is in keeping with this principle that Manalang and Jose note the following in connection with Philippine religious life:

> It has often been stated that the greatest contribution of Spain to Philippine culture was the introduction and extension of Catholic Christianity. On the other hand there are claims that the Spanish administration set up organized religion on an understructure of ignorance and fear. The inadequate number of missionaries may have precluded a more intelligent execution of conversion. At any rate it is safe to statethat in the case of Filipinos who have already believed in numerous spirits and sky-worlds the transition to faith in one God with three persons and an assembly of saints must have been relatively easy.[29]

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[27] Leandro H. Fernandez, A Brief History of the Philippines (Boston: Ginn and Company, c.1932), p. 74.

[28] Fox, "Pre-Spanish Influences in Filipino Culture."

[29] Priscila S. Manalang and F. Sionil Jose, "Religion in the Philippines," (Unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines).

The religious factors in Philippine society today are attributable mainly to Malayan and Spanish influences and little mention has been made about the American influence on Philippine religion. The establishment of a Protestant church which embraces about five percent of the population is certainly evidence of this, but, as indicated, the object of this study is not the Protestant population. This study concerns itself with the Filipino Lowlander, many of whom have the orientation of animistic beliefs and Roman Catholicism described above. And yet, there have been various influences from America, influences in the area of education, politics, and commerce, and likewise in the area of religion.

Material Progress and Materialism

Certainly, as some writers have pointed out, the presence of a Protestant witness is causing the dominant church, the Roman Catholic, to strive to be her better self. But beyond Protestantism the Filipino people have absorbed something from America that cannot be labeled as having to do with the Christian religion, but which certainly reflects a religious attitude. Social progress and material advancement have also left the mark of materialism. And it is this influence that is also being incorporated into Philippine society. Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil shows this particular imported influence on the Filipino teen-ager:

> Having been born during World War II, he spent his most susceptible years immersed in the drum-beating Americanism of the post liberation era. His first impressions were of the omnipresence and inevitability of "stateside" things and ideas. His speech was largely formed from GI slang; the songs his mother sang to him were snatches from American wartime dance halls. He practically and often literally cut his teeth on the end products of the American Way of Life.
>
> The burdens of the Filipino teen-ager's Americanism are materialism and conformism. He has a corroding admiration for wealth; money, he believes, is both God and power; and success is intelligible only in terms of material values and economic power. He admires skill before intelligence, and productivity before creativity. High wages, social security, material comforts are the bases of his utopia.
>
> In addition, he has a passion for normalcy or the state of being just like all the others. His desires and aspirations

> are forever tempered by his need for approval and popularity. His patterns of behavior are in a sociologist's phrase "other-directed". He dreads the thought of ever being one of a minority. His private (and often public philosophy) is predicated on the infallibility of numbers. Next to a rich man what he would most like to be is a regular guy.[30]

The preceding quote gives the impression that the materialistic influence left by America on the Philippines has been great; yet one has to recognize that the writer is probably speaking particularly of the urban areas. Whether there is as predominant an influence as this writer would indicate or not the same influences are drawn by other Filipino authors. When speaking of the peculiar (unfavorable) traits of the Filipino people in his book Looking at Ourselves, Attorney Batacan generally sees American influences in a materialistic setting.[31] The materialistic influence is definitely there and is observable throughout the Philippines.

Yet material advancement does not necessarily mean that the only result is an unfavorable one. Material progress, stimulated by the American era, has also meant the introduction of certain forms of mass media to which the Filipino people did not have access before. The Philippines has not been too far behind in keeping up with Western countries when it comes to such evidence of material advancement as radio and television. While these forms of communication are not used as extensively as in more highly developed countries, they are definitely coming more into the center of Philippine life. At the time of this writing, for example, most people throughout the Philippines have access to a transistor radio; television is just being introduced in some of the major cities.

Mass communications are mentioned in this connection because these also might provide an avenue of approach to the Filipino

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[30]Guerrero-Nakpil, "The Hybrid Character of Contemporary Filipino Culture."

[31]Delfin Fl. Batacan, Looking at Ourselves (Manila: Philaw Publishing, c.1956), See Chapters 1, "Mind Your Own Business" and 2, "Keeping up With the Santoses."

people, and any evangelistic approach must not overlook possible mass evangelism techniques. This is especially true regarding the use of the drama. In the thesis in which she analyzes various contemporary Philippine plays Miss Elsa Yap observes that "the drama flowered until it became the favorite diversion of the Filipinos and the chief channel through which Christian teachings were diffused."[32] While the drama in itself does not derive from the American influence in the Philippines, but was used extensively even in pre-Spanish times, its use has been given new impetus through the media of mass communications in the era of material advancement under America and since 1946 when the Philippines gained its independence. And this also may have particular implications for evangelistic approaches to the Filipino Lowlander.

These three main national influences: the more predominant one, the Malayan, together with the Spanish and American, present a picture of contemporary Philippine culture. And yet, in all this a clear-cut picture of the Filipino himself, the various personality traits that make him what he is, has not yet been brought into focus. Thus the psychological characteristics of the Filipino will be drawn in the next chapter.

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[32]Yap, "The Religious Elements in the Philippine Plays Written in English," p. 2.

CHAPTER IV

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FILIPINO LOWLANDER

Certain of the customary behavior patterns or folkways in contemporary Philippine society fall into a special category because they have taken on a moralistic value, and are termed "mores" by sociologists.[1] These include basic codes of behavior and delineate, as Hunt observes, "the right or proper" way to behave.[2] Four of these psychological characteristics having ethical values will be considered in this chapter: Hospitality, Loyalty, Sensitivity and Fatalism. In connection with these rather broad categories, the reader will find related traits also considered. At the end of the chapter, the section dealing with regional characteristics will touch upon psychological characteristics that are not included under the four categories presented.

Hospitality

"Among our admirable qualities as a race, our traditional hospitality is easily our finest shining virtue." These words by Delfin Batacan, author of Looking at Ourselves,[3] a study of Filipino personality traits, are echoed by foreign observers as well:

> Even before the United States came to the Philippine Islands by accident of war, Dean C. Worcester, speaking as a scientist made the following observation which evidently pictured existing conditions at the time: "The foreign traveler cannot fail to be impressed by the Filipino's open-handed and cheerful

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[1] Chester Hunt et. al., Sociology in the Philippine Setting (Manila: Alemar's, c.1954), p. 7

[2] Ibid.

[3] Delfin Fl. Batacan, Looking at Ourselves (Manila: Philaw Publishing, c.1956), p. 5

> hospitality. He will go to any amount of trouble and no little expense in order to accomodate some perfect stranger who has not the slightest claims to him."[4]

Although peoples all over the world can be described as being hospitable, Agoncillo and Alfonso tell us that Filipino hospitality is unique:

> Are you a stranger who have lost your way? Knock at the door of even the humblest yokel and he offers you his home. In other climes you might be suspected of being a hoodlum or a poseur. Consequently you might be looked upon with suspicion. Call it naivete, but the Filipino opens his heart to you, a complete stranger, and offers you the best in his kitchen and bed chamber. He makes the bed for you and asks you, usually with a profusion of apologies, to make yourself feel "at home," while he, the host, sleeps on the cold floor. He prepares water for your morning ablution, waits upon you at the table, and makes life worth living for you.[5]

Pointing out that such a pattern of entertainment is not only restricted to visitors, George Gutherie notes that fiestas, baptisms, weddings, and funerals as well as the "blow-out," the urban expression of the same ceremonial hospitality, are occasions for such an overwhelming demonstration of attention.[6]

Loyalty

Related to hospitality yet at the same time retaining a quality all its own is the trait of loyalty. Although deeply rooted in the familistic background this particular characteristic is not restricted to members of the same family, but extends to relationships between friends and social groups. Moreover,

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Oscar M. Alfonso, "A short History of the Filipino People," (Unpublished manuscripts in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines).

[6] George Gutherie, The Filipino Child and Philippine Society (Manila: Philippine Normal College Press, 1961), p. 110.

> friendship is sacred and implies mutual help under any circumstances. A friend is expected to come to the aid not only of a personal friend, but also of the latter's family, A man's friend is considered a member of the family and is expected to share its tribulations as well as its prosperity and happiness. It is almost unthinkable for the Filipino to betray his friend, and if there be such a one, he becomes a marked man: ostracism is the lightest punishment that can be meted out to him.[7]

Closely connected to loyalty is the concept of utang na loob, a system of contractual obligation which results when one person has done a favor for another. What is involved in such a giving and receiving of favors is brought out by Gutherie:

> One does not dispense or receive favors without full awareness of the obligation entailed. These favors may include finding a job, arranging an introduction or getting a permit for the recipient. But this is not just a matter of giving a favor and receiving one in return. Favors are not returned like borrowed articles. Instead a relationship is established in which no one keeps count and the return is not in kind but in other matters such as political support.[8]

In such a way, within the frame-work of the concept of utang na loob, loyalties are established and maintained.

Sensitivity

Filipinos are highly sensitive people out of which has developed a sense of personal dignity as well as such desirable traits as courtesy and politeness. Batacan sees this characteristic as firing the Filipino people with ambition and enabling them to rise and demand the respect and equality of other races, in spite of subsequent criticisms of it in the latter part of his book.[9]

As already indicated, the common Filipino characteristic of politeness also is related to his sensitive nature. Gutherie notes,

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[7]Agoncillo and Alfonso, "A Short History of the Philipino People."

[8]Gutherie, p. 122.

[9]Batacan, p. 6.

for example, that sensitivity for the feelings of others is one of the premises which is not spoken, but which is very influential in his decisions.[10]

> Related to the pattern of respect for older persons is the pattern of deference and politeness toward others. This is built into the language as shown by the use of po and ho and the paki prefix of verbs which is used when asking permission. More generally the language encourages an indirect approach to others through the use of third person constructions in speaking to a person.[11]

Sensitivity, commonly known as amor proprio, does not always manifest itself favorably. How easily Filipinos can become offended is also treated by Attorney Batacan:

> We often see that even innocent comments, constructive criticisms given by friends in all candor and sincerity, brotherly suggestions and ratherly counsel designed to guide us and made with the noblest of intentions, tend to excite us and we act unfavorably. We feel offended and our feelings are deeply hurt. We often mistake admonition for accusation; we mistake advice for ridicule; and the moment others laugh when we err we immediately feel humiliated and suddenly think of racial disparity or social inequality. We quickly suspect that our fellow men are laughing at us when in reality they are laughing with us. And so the laughter, wholesome and provocative, and which others considers good medicine because it really is, is considered an insult. Forthwith our anger rises, our temper boils, our temperature soars, our fists clench, our tongues commence to spout invectives, and we are ready to resort to the arbitrament of pugilism. Then with all innocence, we cutely excuse our unpleasant manners by calling our behavior: amor proprio.[12]

This particular aspect of Filipino behavior is also the reason for certain attitudes in interpersonal relations that are not understandable to the Westerner. Because of his sensitive nature the Filipino will not, for example, accept casual invitations. For this gives the impression that the one inviting him is really not so interested in having him accept. He prefers and will react favorably

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[10] Gutherie, p. 119.

[11] Ibid., p. 118.

[12] Batacan, pp. 45, 46.

to "strong invitations," invitations that are repeated two or three or more times.[13]

Because the Filipino is concerned about the feelings of others he will generally accept the other person's invitation or point of view weakly instead of proffering a flat rejection or refusal. In connection with invitations received Miss Morales points up the sensitivity of the Filipino who finds it difficult to answer an absolute "no.":

> When the Filipino says "I'll try to come" it usually means one of three things:
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> 1) I can't come but I don't want to hurt your feelings by saying "No."
> 2) I'd like to, but I'm not sure you really want me to come. Please insist that I do.
> 3) I'll probably meet you between eight and nine but I'll not say "Yes." Something may prevent me from coming.[14]

Likewise, criticisms are generally couched in euphemistic language to avoid hurting the person towards whom they are directed. As Miss Morales points out, "the motivation for euphemisms is not simply the desire to please, to get along, but also the reluctance to embarrass, hiyain the other person."[15]

Hiya, the concept of embarrassment ("shame" in Filipino English), is equivalent to the idea of "loss of face" which Westerners traditionally associate with Orientals. It is very important for smooth interpersonal relations that embarrasement be avoided as much as possible. This is seen, for example, in the giving and receiving of favors:

> It is so important for the person asking for a favor not to be "shamed" that both parties are careful not to offend and to appear offended. If the favor can't be granted, it's the person

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[13] Rosalina A. Morales, "Ugaling Pilipino: An Introduction to Filipino Thought and Action." (Unpublished manuscript in the Department of Parish Education Library of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Manila, Philippines).

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

> who cannot oblige who apologizes for his failure to do so. He makes it clear that it is not because he does not want to, but there are factors beyond his control which make it impossible for him to oblige.
>
> This carefulness not to offend or hurt the other person's feelings is such that when one cannot give a beggar alms, for instance, he asks to be forgiven--Patatawarin po.
>
> The following Tagalog saying proves how important it is not to be shamed--Hindi baleng huwag mo akong mahalin, huwag mo lang akong hiyain, literally "It doesn't matter if you don't love me as long as you don't shame me."[16]

While sensitive, the Filipino is not as desirous of approval as is, say, the American. He merely wants to be accepted:

> It is desirable to get along, to be accepted, to belong. (The American, it is said, wants more than acceptance. He craves for approval, to be liked as well as accepted, and this desire likewise influences his speech and behavior). It would be nice to be approved of, too, but the Filipino often settles for acceptance. As long as he does not suffer open disapproval or rejection, it's alright with him.[17]

Fatalism

Together with hospitality, loyalty, and sensitivity, fatalism is considered another basic psychological characteristic of the Filipino people. The implications of this characteristic are bound up in the Tagalog word Bahala na, a term which defies precise translation, as is brought out by Agoncillo and Alfonso:

> Can you go through that wall of fire? Bahala na. Are you sure you can convince him to give up his plan of leaving home? Bahala na. There are dangers ahead; don't be so foolish as to rush in where angels fear to tread. Bahala na. This is the last morsel we have; where do we get tomorrow's food? Bahala na. Don't gamble your last centavo; you might go home with pockets inside out. Bahala na. He is big and strong; can you fight him? Bahala na.[18]

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Agoncillo and Alfonso, "A Short History of the Filipino People."

Batacan points out that this phrase has counterparts throughout the islands, not only in Tagalog, but also in many of the other dialects:

> the Tagalog beliefs known as talaga ng Diyos (ordained by God) and utos ng Tadhana (decree of fate), together with their Illocano counterpart of gasat (destiny) and the Visayan adoption of the Spanish suerte (luck) abundantly supplement the already fatalistic outlook or Bahala na.[19]

The real flavor of this particular characteristic of the Filipino is brought out in several Tagalog phrases. For example when times are bad, when there is trouble in his life the Filipino would say Talagang ganyan ang buhay, that is, "Life's really like that." Or Minsan mapaibabaw, minsan mapailalim, that is, "Life's like a wheel; sometimes one's up, sometimes, one's down." Another phrase indicates his apparent lack of ambition or concern for what the American calls "getting ahead.": Ang kapalaran ko di ko man hanapin, dudulog lalapit, kung talagang akin, which means "Even if I don't look for my fortune, it will come if it is meant for me."[20]

Two directions are prominant in this characteristic. The first of these is resignation. "When things go wrong one shrugs and accepts it. There is nothing one can do about it, so why worry."[21] Batacan indicates the Bahala na attitude often takes the form of procrastination. He goes on to point out that, for the individual, "it is a roadblock to iniative and productivity" and "when carried on a national scale, it is a monstrous hindrance to social progress and brings about national decay."[22] He cites also the Mañana habit in the same connection.[23]

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[19]Batacan, p. 28.

[20]Morales, "Ugaling Pilipino: An Introduction to Filipino Thought and Action."

[21]Gutherie, p. 116.

[22]Batacan, p. 25.

[23]Ibid. p. 24f. Mañana is the Spanish word for "tomorrow" and has reference to the practice of procrastination.

The second direction is that of lack of discouragement in the face of difficulties. Agoncillo and Alfonso see the Bahala na attitude as a factor in keeping the Filipino mental attitude healthy.[24] But at the same time Gutherie observes that it can also lead him to an over-optimism, citing as an example undertaking a project with inadequate means.[25] Closely associated with this is the Ningas Cogon complex which Gutherie describes: "Just as the cogon flames brilliantly but only briefly when ignited, so do many undertakings."[26] A study of the psychological characteristics is complicated by the fact that regional differences, based at least in part on the geographical divisions, also prevail. A brief consideration of these will also be of value in showing the implications of an evangelistic approach.

Regional Differences

Agoncillo and Alfonso speak of the regional differences of the Filipinos as arising out of the familistic background and are thus extension of family ties.[27] Further, in pursuing the policy of "divide and conquer" the Spaniards pressed Filipinos of a particular region into service against those of another region, thus also accounting for the spirit of "regionalism" seen so often in athletic contests or political campaigns.[28] The following brief analysis will point out that certain characteristics found in one area of the Philippines are not necessarily duplicated in another.

Our first consideration is the Illocano who, while living mainly

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[24] Agoncillo and Alfonso, "A Short History of the Filipino People."

[25] Gutherie, p. 116.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Agoncillo and Alfonso, "A Short History of the Filipino People."

[28] Ibid., p. 59. Cf. also Batacan's discussion of regionalism.

in the northern area of Luzon, can also be found throughout the Philippines.

> From the north comes the Illocano or Samtoy, as he wants to be called. An excursion into the northern region reveals that the Samtoy has spilled into the non-Illocano provinces of Abra, Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya, northern Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, Zambales, and a part of Tarlac. The Illocos region is hemmed in on one side by forbidding mountain ranges and on the other side by the sea, so that economic opportunities are limited. The small piece of land that he cultivates is not sufficiently fertile to yield abundant crops. Such an environment could only produce adventurous, industrious, hardy, patient, and frugal people. Economic pressure forces him to migrate to some greener valleys either in Mindanao or in Hawaii and continental United States. There because of his patience, industry, frugality, he carves his fortune and most of the time succeeds. He is not one to stay put in a locality if better opportunities in some land beckon. It is for this reason that one finds the Samtoy everywhere in the Philippines.
>
> Hardy and frugal, patient and industrious, the Samtoy almost always succeeds in his chosen profession. His frugality is proverbial and compares favorably with that of the Scot. It has been the custom of the Filipino to foot the bill if he happens to invite his companions to, say, a dinner or a round of drinks. It would be difficult for the Samtoy, under the circumstances, to dig into his pockets to take charge of the situation. This is because he earns his money the hard way, and he is not one to nullify his efforts by being a spendthrift.
>
> Nature not being so kind to him, the Samtoy finds his surroundings not conducive to humor. Anybody sees humor in such a kind of environment is a born humorist. The Samtoy is not a born humorist. He takes life seriously and considers it an object of struggle. That is why he appears sluggish and shy, and creates the impression that he is getting ready to wrestle with the surrounding forces. He takes time in deliberating and appears hesitant in his manners. . . .
>
> The Samtoy is a lover of his culture and takes pride in cultivating it. He instinctively resorts to it in conversing with a fellow Samtoy, and is not bothered by the fact that he has a non-Samtoy for a companion. Of all Filipinos, he has the best chance of survival.[29]

Proceeding south from the geographical location of the Samtoy brings one into the Tagalog region which comprises the provinces of

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[29] Ibid.

"Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Bataan, a small part of Tarlac, Rizal Laguna, Cavite, Batangas, Quezon, and the islands of Marinduque and Mindoro."[30] Agoncillo and Alfonso observe that the historical accident that makes Manila, the former political capital and the center of cultural and commercial life, the heart of the region also makes the Tagalog feel superior to the rest of the Filipinos. In their Short History they describe the Tagalog in this way:

> He is neither frugal nor extravagant. His code of ethics is strict, his pride fierce. The ties that bind him to his home are so strong that, unlike the Samtoy or the Visayan, he prefers to stay put in his homeland to migrating to greener valleys to carve out his fortune. The result is that among the Filipinos he has developed the strongest tendency to live with his parents or in-laws even after his marriage.
>
> Less concerned with his environment than his Samtoy brother, the Tagalog enjoys the finer things of life. He is at once a lover and a born poet. But unlike the Samtoy whose poetry is sustained epic, the poetry of the Tagalog is lyrical. He is a dreamer and takes the slightest opportunity to burst out into declamation.[31]

In the southernmost part of Luzon lies the Bicol region and again Agoncillo and Alfonso provide a description of the Bicolano:

> The Bicolano is known for his even temper and religiosity. Kindly like the Visayan, he views life with studied calmness and seldom shows his rough edges. But, like the Visayan, he knows how to enjoy life and to take its offerings with philosophical equanimity. He is fond of spicy food and no food is good to him which is not liberally sprinkled with spices, particularly red pepper. Whether this predilection is a sign of bravery or of the ability to suffer is difficult to ascertain. One thing, however, is definite: when the Bicolano is not enjoying mundane life to the hilt he is contemplating it in the church or seminary. Many Filipino priests come from the Bicol region.[32]

Finally, in the islands south of Luzon, the Visayan peoples are located. The Visayan

> is a happy-go-lucky man more interested in the here and now than in the past or future. He exceeds the Tagalog in his love of

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

> the finer things of life, so much so that, in contrast with the Samtoy, he is ready to spend his last peso to enjoy life to its last drop. Because he is not compelled by his environment to work half as much as his Samtoy brother, the Visayan is a spendthrift. But like his brother in the north, he is adventurous and is afflicted with wanderlust. The Visayan girl, unlike her Tagalog sister, can leave home without compunction to follow the gleam of adventure. For this reason she is more self-reliant than the Tagalog.
>
> The Visayan is a hedonist. Give him a jug of tuba and a piece of dried fish and he will sing the wilderness into paradise. He is a lover like the Tagalog, but he expresses his consuming passion in music, not in poetry. Thus, armed with a banduria, a ukelele or a guitar, he forgets his sorrows, even his hunger, if he is poor, by carressing the strings of his musical instrument and singing to its accompaniment. He may not know the difference between a do and a mi on paper, but he can put together the notes of the scale to produce lilting, coquettish music.[33]

The preceding observations bring out the fact that the Illocano is industrious and frugal in contrast to the Visayan, while the Visayan and the Bicolano are known for their even temperament. The Tagalog differs from all three with regard to his strict code of ethics and his tendency to remain close to home. These differences intimate that the psychological characteristics of the Filipino are not everywhere alike and that also provincial and geographical differences must be taken into consideration when considering the implications of applying the Gospel to the lives of the people of a given locality.

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[33] Ibid.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS OF FILIPINO CULTURAL PATTERNS FOR EVANGELISTIC APPROACHES

The Filipino's cultural pattern is a unique one, moulded as it has been by the Malayan, Spanish, and American influences. There is no doubt that other countries and national groupings have also played a minor role in shaping the thought and life of the Filipino people that are not brought out in the scope of this study. The purpose of this study has been to examine the dominant cultural characteristics and these have been set forth in the preceding chapters. In all of this the main consideration of this study has not yet been brought into focus: namely, the evangelistic approaches to the Filipino lowlander. Suggested approaches will now be set forth on the basis of an examination of the Filipino's cultural background and cultural traits.

Pre-evangelism and Communication

In a sense, this entire presentation has been concerned with communication, with pre-evangelism. It is an attempt, by means of an examination of the culture in which the Filipino lives, to determine the best way of reaching him, serving him, meeting his needs, with the Gospel: the news of God's great redemptive act in sending His Son as the Christ, as the Lord and Savior of all peoples throughout the world.

In his book The Miracle of Dialogue, Reuel Howe states that communication takes place when there is a meeting of meaning between two or more people.[1] This points up the importance of rapport between the participants in a dialogue, a rapport that must be

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[1]Reuel Howe, The Miracle of Dialogue (Greenwich, Connecticut: The Seabury Press, c.1963), pp. 22, 23.

established within the context of the cultural milieu of the people involved.

What has been described as the most elementary psychological characteristic of the Filipino people, namely hospitality, makes it easy to establish rapport with them. The Filipino opens his house to his guest and is eager to please. He enjoys having company and looks forward to return visits of those whom he considers to be his friends. What is more, the Filipino discusses religious topics with little embarrassment. In such an atmosphere the soil is easily tilled in preparation for the planting of the seed of the Word.

At the same time, one must be fully cognizant of the barriers to communication that exist between people of the same cultures. Howe lists five: (1) the barrier of language where the same words, having wide ranges of nuances and variations born of individual associations and experiences, can have a different meaning for different persons, (2) the barrier of images where what another says has to filter through what we think he is like and therefore what we think he is saying, (3) the anxieties that the participants bring to the conversation that keep them from speaking and responding to one another with meaning, (4) the barrier of defensiveness, such as self-justification or projection, and (5) the barrier of the holding of contrary purposes.[2] If the person attempting to reach the Filipino is a Western missionary these barriers are, of course, greatly multiplied.

Because of the important position given smooth interpersonal relations in Philippine society communication with the Filipino would take on a somewhat different aspect than the candor and frankness of the American approach which the Filipino might easily interpret as a personal affront. This does not mean that the content

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[2] Ibid., pp. 26-31. Cf. Also Warren H. Schmidt, "The Churchman and the Social Sciences" in Toward Adult Christian Education (River Forest, Illinois: Lutheran Education Association, 1962), pp. 28f. Schmidt cites six messages that are involved in the conversation whenever two persons communicate.

of the conversation would necessarily be different. It does mean, however, that the method employed in communicating the content must be within the context of the Filipino's cultural experience for a real meeting of meanings to take place.

When one speaks of the importance of developing rapport in reaching anyone for whatever reason, he is open to the charge of exploitation.[3] Rapport is not developed for the purpose of exploitation, however, rather it is developed so that a real meeting of meanings can take place. DeWire says:

> The Christian is not eager to be put on a pedestal as an example to follow, is not eager to "create" another in his own image. He sets an example not of what the other can become if he tries hard enough, but of full trust that where two or three meet in the name of Christ, something can happen to the lives of all the participants.[4]

In approaching a person with the evangel it is, of course, our desire that the person's thoughts and attitudes and way of life be completely changed by it. But the actual changing is not the task of the Christian; it is the task of the Holy Spirit. The Christian's task is to communicate as effectively as possible the content of the evangel through the language of words and relationship so that the person might reach a responsible decision with regard to that content, so that he can say a responsible "Yes" or "No."[5] It is Howe's contention that

> Communication is successful when either a responsible negative or affirmative response has been made. A decision to say No is as much a part of dialogue as a decision to say Yes. Most of us, however, feel that our communication has failed unless it elicits an affirmative decision, one that is in agreement with our point of view.[6]

The cultural background of the Filipino lowlander with its

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[3]Howe, p. 37.

[4]Harry A. DeWire, The Christian as Communicator (Philadelphis: The Westminster Press, c.1961), p. 99.

[5]Howe, p. 57.

[6]Ibid.

emphasis on hospitality readily lends itself to the development of rapport where real communication can take place. It is in such an atmosphere where the Spirit can work most effectively, creating and sustaining faith in the hearts of those who accept His witness.

Protestant-Roman Catholic Confrontation

What has been said about communication is true whether it is on an individual level between two persons or whether it is on a larger scale between groups such as Christian denominations. The question naturally arises: What is to be the evangelical Protestant's stance over against the individual Roman Catholic, and secondly, What is to be the attitude of the Protestant Church over against the dominant Church? These are not easy questions to answer. And yet it is within the scope of this study to at least attempt an answer, because the Roman Catholic Church is definitely a major factor in the Filipinos' cultural heritage.

When dealing with the position of the Protestant Church over against the Roman Catholic, a position which shall be set forth first on the denominational level, several factors must be taken into consideration. Some of these, such as the assimilation of animistic beliefs and practices into the superstructure of the Roman Catholic faith, have already been mentioned in preceding chapters. The fact that, for many people in the Philippines, Christianity is merely a veneer superimposed upon a predominatly pagan philosophy of life is not something that can be passed over lightly. Yet in all of this one must seek to determine the position of the Roman Catholic Church. Is the Roman Church satisfied with the status quo? Is it doing anything to rid itself of the image that it has not only in the Philippines but also in Latin and South American countries where Hispanic Catholicism accompanied the conquistadors? One would have to say that, whether it is partially the result of the "new climate" in the Roman Catholic Church today or not, there are changes taking place which indicate that today's Catholic Filipinos are not satisfied with the image of Folk Catholicism, as is evidenced by the effectiveness of Roman priests in winning people back to the church

as well as the emphasis on good secondary schools and colleges.[7]

Another factor is that the Protestant Church has much to learn from the Roman Catholic, and, at least in some instances, the Roman Church is willing to share her acquired knowledge with her Protestant brethren.[8] When considering the entire gamut of Protestant Churches represented in the Philippines most denominations can learn a great deal from the dominant church in the area of the dignity and decorum of worship. It is the Ateneo de Manila's Institute of Philippine Culture and Anthropology that has made the most detailed study of Philippine culture and it is from this particular source that the writer of this study obtained his materials. The Ateneo is a Jesuit institution. Likewise, the Protestant Church can learn a great deal from the Roman Catholic emphasis on catholicity, the application of the Christian religion not only to all people, but also and especially to the larger realms of public life, to areas of education, economics, and politics, realms which Protestant churches have often considered as secular.

Yet, strangely enough, it is precisely in the area of catholicity where the Protestant church can also witness to the Roman Catholic. The everyday life of the individual Filipino tends to become compartmentalized. Oftentimes there is no application of his religion to his daily activities, his eating and his drinking, his occupation and recreation. John Mackay, in his examination of the Protestant stance over against the Roman Catholic Church in Latin and South America points up this need:

> Two things are needed by Christian evangelists in Latin America today: they must bridge the gulf between religion and conduct by the high quality of their lives; they must bridge the gulf

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[7] William Danker, Two Worlds or None (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), p. 105.

[8] Ibid., p. 127. Professor Danker notes that the Philippine Acculteration Conference held in Baguio City which is attended by both Roman Catholics and Protestants has a preponderance of Roman Catholic scholars by virtue of their length of time in the Philippines.

> between religious thought and other thought by taking religious ideas out into the open air, and there proving that they are worth while being considered for their own sake, and not merely as a part of a ceremonial act.[9]

In this way the Protestant can help to restore some of the catholicity to the Roman Catholic Church that it has previously lost.

Again, all of this points up the need for dialogue, for communication between the denominations. Howe observes that

> Churches that really have much in common that should bind them together nevertheless find conversation for unity unbelievably difficult because of the differences that separate them. Here again, misconceptions of each other block both address and response.[10]

As dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and other Protestant denominations is promoted the evangel will penetrate into the lives of the greatest number of people with the minimal amount of hindrance due to hostile interdenominational relations.

Through dialogue, then, the Protestant stance over against the Roman Catholic begins to take shape. There is a reason for the Protestant witness in the Philippines, and not simply because the Protestant Church is the "true" Church over against the "false" Roman Catholic. Protestantism is happy to observe the "new climate" that is recognizable in the Roman Church, a climate which is the result of a return to Biblical study. It is this emphasis that the Protestant Church ought to encourage in the Philippines, pointing the Roman Church back to the first source of its theology. Thus, the Protestant Church is to act as an ecclesiastical gadfly, spurring Philippine Catholicism to a re-examination of its past as well as a reshifting of its future emphases in accord with the new impetus given Biblical studies in other sectors of the Roman Church, thus performing what W. J. Danker has called a "ministry of stimulation."[11]

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[9] John Mackay, The Other Spanish Christ (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 267.

[10] Howe, p. 19.

[11] Danker, p. 106.

But if the Protestant Church is to assume this posture it must be willing to carry on dialogue and to encourage the Roman Church to do the same. Such an attitude will constitute a radical change from what has taken place in the past.

From the confrontation between denominations we turn to the confrontation between individuals. How should the individual Protestant confront the nominal Roman Catholic, the adherent of Folk Catholicism? Again, the answer is not an easy one.

If the Protestant Church is in the Philippines merely for the purpose of enhancing its own statistics, it is in danger of exploiting the people to whom it has come to minister. Such an approach would certainly smack of the institutionalization of the Church as is indicated by Mackay's observations concerning Latin America:

> The principal concern of every lover of Latin America should be not whether the Continent will become Protestant, as we with our institutional-mindedness understand Protestant, but that it shall become Christian. Protestantism is in the making, it has not yet wholly found itself. Christianity is an ultimate, an ultimate which is in Christ.[12]

A Protestant approach to the individual Filipino will lead him to a confession of Christ as <u>unique</u> Savior and Lord, not on a par with Mary or other of the canonized saints of the Roman Catholic Church. It is not the task of the Protestant Church to make him a Christian, to make him conform to a particular dogmatical structure. The task of "Christianizing" is the task of the Holy Spirit. It is the task of the Protestant Church to present a Biblical witness to the Christ through which the Spirit of God can and does operate. The Spirit of God who has entered a person's life and remains there will also convince that person of his own ultimate denominational position, whether that be to remain in the Roman Church and to "speak of the things which he has seen and heard" in that denomination or to join the ranks of the Protestant fold. The task of the Protestant Church is to present an understanding of the evangelical

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[12]Mackay, p. 264.

position in such a way that the individual can make a responsible decision, a responsible "Yes" or a responsible "No." In either case he is prepared for Christian witness.

The Protestant stance, then, should be a positive rather than a negative one. But by saying this one can not overlook the fact that in many, perhaps in most cases, conversation will be carried on in an atmosphere that is highly charged with the Protestant-Roman Catholic conflict. Thus a constructive approach can in no wise disregard or overlook differences. On the contrary it meets them head on, but within a framework of desire for closer understanding and, potentially, at least, resolution of the conflicts that exist. This is true of both individual and denominational approaches.

The over-riding task of the Christian individual and the Christian Church is witness, that is, "mission." Christians are charged with a mandate; their task is to be ambassadors, representatives of the most high God. They need only be faithful to this mandate, and in so doing manifest their faithfulness to God. The Spirit of God will achieve results, whether that be in the Roman Catholic Church or the Protestant denominations.

Approaching the Filipino Family

Our examination of the Filipino familistic pattern points up the fact that prior consideration must be given to a family approach rather than to an individual approach. Donald McGavran, in his book The Bridges of God shows the contrast between an individualistic Western approach to conversion and the need for a more corporate approach in Oriental society:

> Among those who think corporately only a rebel would strike out alone, without consultation and without companions. The individual does not think of himself as a self-sufficient unit, but as part of the group. His business deals, his children's marriages, his personal problems, or the difficulties he has with his wife are properly settled by group thinking.[13]

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[13]Donald McGavran, The Bridges of God (New York: Friendship Press, 1955), p. 12.

Although, in a certain sense, every person must ultimately confront the Christ personally, the Church's approach in reaching people does not have to be individualistic. McGavran goes on to point out that in societies where group thinking is predominant, when a group reaches a decision, every person has had a share in that decision.[14] So an approach to families rather than the individual does not necessarily preclude the individual's personal responsibility in making that decision.

In addition, the group approach is the most successful answer to ostracism. The individual convert is particularly susceptible to boycott by the group but when the whole family is involved ostracism becomes difficult.[15]

A recognition of the heads of the family as the chief decision-makers of the group would imply a need to emphasize mission activity among this group or at least an attempt to involve them in any Christian discussions. Any planned meeting with younger persons should not bypass an invitation to the parents and other members of the family.

The Barangay or community concept carried over from the pre-Spanish society and still manifested in the barrio fiesta would point up the need for church-wide activities on the community basis. The needs of contemporary Philippine society would seem to be met more wisely by a congregational penetration into the immediate community than by drawing individuals or groups from a distance to a centrally located church building.

Hand in hand with the Barangay concept goes the idea of collective responsibility. That the emphasis on the family binds individual responsibility up with the family but is lost entirely when out of the sphere of the family or closely-knit community has been observed. Hence it would seem wise to lay special emphasis on the doctrine of the community of believers or fellowship of the

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[14] Ibid., p. 96.

[15] Ibid., p. 20.

saints. This should carry over from the congregational and denominational levels to the Christian Church at large.

The idea of home-centered worship of the pre-Spanish has been retained in Spanish Catholicism. As indicated, family shrines are much more common and elaborate in the Philippines than in Western countries. Thus the establishment and maintenance of family altars and the promotion of family worship would be in keeping with the sociological characteristics of the Filipino people. Special services connected with home dedication, marriages, baptisms, funerals, would serve to bring in not only the members of the congregation but other relatives as well and would also be in keeping with their previous cultural patterns.

Doctrinal Implications

The understanding of Filipino culture is basic for applying Christian teaching to the lives of the people whether this is done by the Western missionary or the Filipino National. While it is the Western missionary who is the most subject to this danger, the national pastor is not exempt because of the regional differences throughout the Islands.

The content given to specific doctrines or concepts is, of course, determined by ideas that have been handed down from generation to generation. Thus, when the Filipino hears the word "spirit" he is apt to think of the "soul-spirit" of a recently deceased relative, or the "environmental-spirit" that lives in the nearby tree. Oftentimes the Roman Catholic concept of the "saints" are superimposed upon the earlier, pre-Spanish idea. An awareness of these previous beliefs is necessary to divest the word "spirit" from meanings that are not in accord with Scripture. If these animistic beliefs are disregarded the danger is that they will be assimilated into Christian beliefs as has been the case so often in the Roman Catholic Church and which it generally recognizes. Certain seasons of the church year may lend themselves to dealing with these emphases in Christian worship. In the above-mentioned example the festival of All Saints' Day would provide an excellent opportunity for the

Scriptural presentation of "spirits," "the Holy Spirit," the abode of the spirits after death and the like.

One particular belief that seems to play a major role in Philippine life, namely fatalism, must be viewed together with all of its ramifications, in contrast to the Christian teaching concerning Divine Providence. In preaching and instruction strict differentiation must be made between "fate" and the "will of God" which is so often equated to it in Philippine life.

Likewise, recognition of superstitious elements in the everyday lives of the people will help determine our presentation of the doctrine of divine providence and preservation. The widespread use of charms must be dealt with so that the Filipino Christian sees God as a God who has his ultimate welfare at heart regardless of his possession of any material object that might still be used as a fetish for manipulation. This is true not only of personal charms but also public shrines which beckon people, promising special favors to those who worship there.

The power given to mediums and functionaries in pre-Spanish animism finds its counterpart in the Roman Catholic clericalism emphasized in the Philippines. Such previous patterns would seem to point up a need for re-emphasis of the universal priesthood of believers and the encouragement of the laity to be the laos, the people of God, in every facet of life.[16]

Another belief that cannot be bypassed is the attitude toward the afterlife. Pre-Spanish religion stressed the sky-worlds as the abode of the dead, their destiny determined by the cause of their death. The idea of the dead undergoing trials as a result of their performance in life could very easily be assimilated into the Roman

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[16] Cf. Hendrik Kraemer's, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1958), p. 42f. passim, which is the most basic work on the role of the laity in today's mission. Cf. also Harry Coiner's article on "The Role of the Laity in the Church," in Toward Adult Christian Education edited by Donald Deffner (River Forest, Illinois: Lutheran Education Association, 1962).

Catholic concept of purgatory. Hence special stress should be given to the Christian doctrine of death and afterlife.

Marriage and burial customs present another area in which great care must be exercised in determining those folkways which do not militate against Scriptural teachings and those which must be discarded as being alien or unfaithful to Christianity. Many of these are bound up with pre-Spanish beliefs and have been handed down through oral tradition.

The whole realm of stewardship is another area which must be viewed in accord with prevailing cultural patterns. In this area, particularly, there would evidently be a diversity of approaches depending upon the geographical location involved. Regionalistic differences would have to be taken into account here especially. For example, the emphasis on the Christians' use of time, energies, abilities, and material blessings as applied to the Illocano would differ considerably from the emphasis placed upon this Christian teaching as applied to the Visayan.

The above references to doctrinal implications could be expanded in great detail. The important thing for us to note is that failure to apply Christian teachings to the culture of the people is in reality failure to reach them at all. Any evangelistic endeavor which remains unaware of or disregards the cultural context is in vain.

The Implications of Material Progress

The preceding chapters have pointed out the strides made in material progress under the control of the United States and since Independence. These strides are evidenced in many ways: not only in the multiplicity of gadgets and appliances, but also in the area of literature and the arts, education, and particularly in the use of mass media. Some of these advances open up possibilities of approaches in reaching the Filipino with the evangel.

This is true especially of radio and television. The importance of the drama in Philippine life even from pre-Spanish times has been observed. This has been the most important medium through which

religious ideas were channeled to the people. Today radio and television provide marvelous opportunities for the use of the drama. Members of congregations might be encouraged to make a radio tape or to give a live presentation on television of a Scriptural narrative or a play with a religious emphasis. The "soap opera" is among the programs most frequently heard by the common people and the least utilized in terms of evangelistic approaches.

Education is related to material progress, and has increased in importance not only because of the impetus given it through American political domination but also because of the Roman Catholic emphasis on a strong school system. In some cases at least non-sectarian private colleges welcome classes on ethics and social issues taught by qualified clergymen. This avenue is one also that should be utilized in reaching the country's youth, who will one day constitute the educated leadership of the Philippines.[17]

Material progress, as has been observed, has not always produced good results; it has also provoked a greedy desire for material gain. Materialism is a major force existing particularly in the urban areas today. At her best, the Church distinguishes between desire for legitimate material needs and greedy desire for personal and material gain. As the Church explores possibilities for economic involvement she minimizes the danger of "closing up her bowels of compassion" to the man in material need. At the same time she is true to her task when she does not squelch the iniative and responsibility of the people to provide for their own needs, but rather points up material possessions as instruments given man by God for the implementation of the Kingdom and the ultimate glorification of God.

The democratic form of government which has been incorporated into Philippine political life as a result of the ceding of the Philippines to the United States has been absorbed by many evangelical

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[17] Joel Nederhood's observations, in his book entitled The Church's Mission to the Educated American (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), concerning the importance of reaching the educated in America, can also be applied to the Philippine scene.

groups into the polity of the church as well. That this is not a natural outgrowth of Philippine culture but something that has been transplanted from abroad is evident. A possible solution has been found by the United Church of Christ in the Philippines which has combined "episcopal, presbyterian, and congregational elements in its formal organization and its actual functioning."[18] As Nida points out,

> This is not purely the result of a calculated attempt to satisfy all groups involved. It is an inevitable outworking of the various elements of social structure which combine to form Philippine society, which on the local level has a good deal of community participation, but also recognizes strong leadership of elders (a pattern in indigenous Filipino culture), and the pattern for centralization of power (a heritage of Spanish occupation.)[19]

Thus the cultural patterns have implications for every area of Church life and activity. There is no part that remains untouched. Every phase of the Church's existence is uniquely associated with the soil around her. As she is faithful to the mysteries entrusted to her she will not only recognize her position over against culture, but will also do everything in her power to communicate with it.

Implications for the Western Missionary

Much of what has been said in this last chapter has had reference, at least indirectly, to the Western missionary. A great deal of what was said, however, is also valid for the national worker. This last section directs itself primarily to the Western missionary who in his desire to serve his Lord in a foreign land seeks to understand the folk among whom he is living.

The entire presentation points up the necessity for a study of culture in which the missionary finds himself. For the missionary

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[18] Eugene Nida, Customs and Cultures (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, c.1954), p. 132.

[19] Ibid.

in the Philippines this would mean the undertaking of a careful study of the three main national groupings: the Malayan, the Spanish, and the American together with an evaluation of the contributions of each to contemporary Philippine culture.

As the Western missionary becomes intimately acquainted with the psychological characteristics of the Filipino people and seeks to understand them, he will recognize that they differ from his own not so much in kind but in rank and importance. Included here is an understanding of the importance of smooth interpersonal relations so that the missionary does not unintentionally alienate those he is trying to reach. Included also is an understanding of utang na loob, the system of contractual obligation so that both he, and the people he is attempting to reach, know what to expect from one another. An understanding of fatalistic attitudes and the tendency towards either resignation or ephemeral enthusiasm in the face of obstacles or projected plans is also included in an acquaintance with the Filipino people and their ways. As he immerses himself in the language of the people he has come to serve he will not only be able to converse with them in their native tongue but will also see their cultural characteristics emerge all the more clearly.

But all of the knowledge of cultural patterns that the missionary could possibly attain would have no meaning at all if there were not the most important element of all: identification with the community, an identification which, in the words of John Mackay, covers "not only working hours but social hours as well."[20] The missionary must find his very recreation in achieving more intimate and sympathetic contacts with the people he has come to serve. When the word from abroad becomes indigenous flesh, it will not fail to obtain a hearing for the eternal Word that it presumes to echo.[21]

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[20] Mackay, p. 265.

[21] Ibid.

APPENDIX

Suggested Sources for Western Missionaries in Gaining an Understanding of Philippine Culture

Some of the suggestions advanced below are general and have been adapted from a similar appendix in Eugene Nida's Customs and Culture,[1] although the writer has also attempted to show where source materials which speak specifically to the Philippine scene can be located.

General Reading. The following books, if read in the order given, will provide one with a graded approach to cultural anthropology:

1. Clyde Kluckhohn, Mirror for Man (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, c.1949).
2. Ruth Bendedict, Patterns of Culture (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961).
3. George Peter Murdock, Our Primitive Contemporaries (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954).
4. A. L. Kroeber, Anthropology (New York: Harcourt, 1958).
5. Melville J. Herskovits, Man and His Works (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1960).
6. Robert Redfield, The Primitive World and Its Transformations (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, c.1953).

A list of periodicals would include the following:

1. American Anthropologist (Published six times a year by the American Anthropological Association, Menesha, Wisconsin).
2. Oceania (A journal devoted to the study of the indigenous peoples of Australia, New Guinea, and the Islands of the Pacific Ocean, published by the Australian National Research Council, Sydney, Australia).
3. Anthropos (Published by the Anthropos Institute, Frieburg, Switzerland).
4. Practical Anthropology (Published by Robert B. Taylor, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, with the express purpose of helping missionaries better to understand the anthropological problems of their fields).
5. The International Review of Missions (156 Fifth Avenue, New York City).

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[1] Eugene Nida, Customs and Culture (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, c.1954), pp. 267-274.

6. South-east Asia Journal of Theology (6 Mount Sophia Singapore 9).

7. Philippine Studies (Published quarterly at Post Office Box 154, Manila).

8. Philippine Social Science and Humanities Review (Published by the University of the Philippines, Dillman, Rizal).

9. Journal of East Asiatic Studies (Published by University of Manila, Manila).

Philippine source materials of various types can be located in the Pope Pius XII Library, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri. The Philippine mission file in the library of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, contains a bibliography of books and articles available in the library on the Philippines. Chicago University has materials from the Philippines, including college theses, etc., on microfilm.

On the Philippine field students will find a great deal of sociological material by writing to the following sources:

1. Officer-in-charge.
   Community Development Research Center
   University of the Philippines
   Dillman, Rizal

2. The Director
   Institute of Philippine Culture
   Post Office Box 154
   Manila

3. The Coordinator of Research
   Social Science Research Council
   University of the Philippines
   Dillman, Rizal

4. The Director
   Ateneo Guidance Center
   Padre Faura, Manila

5. The President
   Philippine Sociological Society
   Post Office Box 154
   Manila

Other source materials in the Manila area can be located through the National Council of Churches, 941 Epiphanio de los Santos Avenue, Quezon City.

The Department of Parish Education of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (4461 Old Santa Mesa) has available Filipiniana books and papers for the orientation of new missionaries, some of which are included in the bibliography of this thesis.

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