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DECLARATION

I, Christopher D. Sabanal, hereby declare that this thesis and the work that it contains have been entirely written by me. I further declare that no part of this thesis has been previously submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signature __________________________

Date ______________________________
ABSTRACT

In the Philippines, as in the US and UK and elsewhere, evangelical conversion is normally regarded as a ‘turning’ from a life ‘without Christ’ towards a life of ‘faith in Christ’. Traditionally, the potential convert is invited to ‘accept’ or ‘receive’ Christ as personal lord and saviour. Once a decision to ‘accept’ is indicated, the individual is considered ‘born again’ or ‘saved’, whereupon he or she is expected to manifest behavioural signs, such as participating actively in a ‘Bible-believing’ church, while adapting to its distinct ethos. This conversion, however, has not generally led to a commitment to issues of economic or social justice. In the years 1946-1986, Filipino evangelicals have tended to neglect the social question. This is consistently shown in their general silence during the 1972-81 martial law, the 1983 murder of Aquino and the 1986 people power revolution. Historically and theologically, this particularly conservative social disposition may have been influenced by a lopsided emphasis on aggressive evangelism and a general evasion of social questions, especially by US evangelical missionaries who carried the ‘baggage’ of the fundamentalist-modernist debate of the 1920s and 1930s. This theological orientation seems to have been perpetuated, one way or other, by their Filipino converts.

That there are in the Philippines examples of previously socially-disengaged evangelical converts who eventually moved towards a socially-engaged path, however, seems to indicate the possibility of a theological re-orientation within this Christian tradition. This study tackles this particular ‘conversion’ or re-orientation within, not away from, the evangelical tradition, with the goal of shedding some light on the nature and possibility of a ‘second conversion’ towards a socially engaged posture.

To explore this phenomenon of interest, the study identifies four different trajectories of change exemplified by particular theological pilgrimages travelled by Filipino evangelicals during their adult years. The first trajectory is about the development of a social conscience which benefited from an active involvement in an international evangelical student movement. The second represents a largely noncritical exposure made possible by a protracted career in medical missions that led to a similar awakening to social injustice. The third involves an evangelical who ended up accommodating Marxist social analysis. And the fourth concerns how an underprivileged evangelical managed to attain a second, more critical, perspective on poverty, leading to a commitment to combat economic injustice. These trajectories are explored through extensive interviews with each of the four subjects.

Though necessarily limited in scope, the value of this study lies in its potential to gain some insights into factors that have the potential to ‘convert’ or ‘transform’ minds and ideological postures. It thus suggests that, at least in contexts of social and economic polarisation, the evangelical Protestant tradition may not be so inescapably tied to social and political conservatism as is often assumed. The study ends by drawing some wider conclusions about the possibility of a second conversion within the evangelical Protestant tradition.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The combined intellectual generosity and pastoral care expressed by individuals in the Philippines, Scotland, the United States, and elsewhere – many of whom remain unmentioned here – had made the writing of this thesis not only possible but also deeply meaningful.

I should begin by acknowledging that the seeds of this thesis were initially cultivated in the many face-to-face and Facebook conversations with my teacher at Asian Theological Seminary in Manila, Professor Lorenzo C. Bautista, whose writings have profoundly influenced the direction eventually taken by this study. But it would not have been possible for this study to expand into its current form without the expert supervision of the Director of the Centre for the Study of World Christianity, Professor Brian Stanley, who had carefully read and made critical interventions that saved me from many potential embarrassments. There is no way I could repay Professor Stanley’s keen insights, attention to detail, and contagious dedication to serious scholarship.

I also thank another key supervisor, Dr. Elizabeth Koepping, who, in the early stages of my research, read with astuteness my initial (and often very rough) drafts. In addition, Dr. Koepping, when she was in Edinburgh, had regularly opened her spacious flat in Bruntsfield to postgraduate students who usually enjoyed not only a variety of delectable meals but also some of the more intellectually stimulating conversations which surely had a positive impact on me.

During my viva, and shortly after, a further stage of fine-tuning, which in many ways contributed to the final shape of this thesis, was made possible through the critical-yet-sympathetic interactions with my examiners Dr. Paul Weston and Dr. Alexander Chow. Looking back, I can hardly imagine how I could have further sharpened the original form of this thesis had it not been for their discerning comments and, I should add, their much-needed recommendations.

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Many of our friends and family and colleagues at Asian Theological Seminary, whose names are impossible to enumerate here, have also contributed one way or the other in the beginning and at various stages of my studies. I am forever indebted to them.

Finally, this study would not have seen the light of day without the efforts and sacrifices of my wife, Annelle, who risked her health in raising funds, and in investing precious time with our two little boys: and these she did while also completing a PhD research work in Biblical Studies.
<table>
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABCCOP</td>
<td>Alliance of Bible Christian Communities of the Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATS</td>
<td>Asian Theological Seminary</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCP</td>
<td>Baptist Conference of the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>BTC</td>
<td>Baptist Theological College</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAMACOP</td>
<td>Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPBC</td>
<td>Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCA</td>
<td>Christian Conference of Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNL</td>
<td>Christians for National Liberation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>Communist Party of the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>DBC</td>
<td>Diliman Bible Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCBC</td>
<td>Diliman Campus Bible Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBC</td>
<td>Faith Baptist Church (Quezon City)</td>
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<td>FEGC</td>
<td>Far East Gospel Crusade</td>
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<tr>
<td>FMS</td>
<td>Flying Medical Samaritans</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICCC</td>
<td>International Council of Christian Churches</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFES</td>
<td>International Fellowship of Evangelical Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFI</td>
<td><em>Iglesia Filipina Independiente</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>InterVarsity</td>
<td>InterVarsity Christian Fellowship - Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCCP</td>
<td>National Council of Churches in the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPA</td>
<td>New People's Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCEC</td>
<td>Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches</td>
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<tr>
<td>TMFI</td>
<td>Tribal Mission Foundation International</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCCP</td>
<td>United Church of Christ in the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMC</td>
<td>United Methodist Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCC</td>
<td>World Council of Churches</td>
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<td>WEA</td>
<td>World Evangelical Alliance</td>
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<td>WEF</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Now I shall tell of things that change, new being
Out of old since you, O Gods, created
Mutable arts and gifts, give me the voice
To tell the shifting story of the world
From its beginning to the present hour.

Ovid

As Gregor Samsa woke one morning from uneasy dreams,
he found himself transformed into some kind of monstrous vermin.

Franz Kafka

Long before Ovid – we may presume – and probably long after Kafka, the fascinating theme of metamorphosis remains one of the central themes of the human experience. Without suggesting parity with the classic works of Ovid and Kafka, this study can still be catalogued among the diverse attempts dealing with the theme of change. It should be emphasised at the outset that this study is not about biological change as in the classic caterpillar-to-butterfly metamorphosis, but is more about the human capacity to evolve because of or in spite of certain historical limitations such as being entangled within the conventional or conservative tendencies of theological or religious traditions. How – if we may use a metaphor – did some birds, who have always been known for their ‘tradition’ of flying, learn to swim like a fish?\(^1\) In a similar vein – and now

\(^1\) I am borrowing, out of context, Edicio dela Torre’s metaphor which he applied to adult education for social sustainability. Edicio dela Torre, ‘Birds Learn to Swim and Fish Learn to Fly: Lessons from the Philippines on AVE for Social Sustainability’, in Peter Willis et al (eds.), *Rethinking Work and Learning: Adult and Vocational Education for Social Sustainability* (Netherlands, Dordrecht; New York: Springer, 2009), 225-35.
turning to the central research question of this study which this chapter will now begin to unpack: how and why did a small minority of ‘conservative evangelicals’\(^2\) in the post-war Philippines, adherents of a Christian tradition that is widely known for prioritising a narrowly defined theological understanding of Christian mission, focused on evangelism and apparently largely unrelated to social questions, end up becoming deeply socially engaged while continuing to locate themselves within the evangelical community?

To appreciate the wider significance of this research question, this chapter will unfold in four sections. First, it will briefly survey the general historical context in which this question can be broadly located. It will then proceed to discuss, in section two, the nature and scope of the central question. This will be followed, in section three, by an extended discussion of the key methodological issues raised by the nature of the question, including an account of the research process. The chapter ends by clarifying the goals of the research while also introducing the interpretative framework of the thesis.

1. A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH

In the 1970s, when various forms of liberation or contextual theologies began to emerge in different parts of the globe, an originally small-scale but discernible development towards what has been termed a ‘transformational’

\(^2\) What is meant by term ‘conservative evangelicals’ will be discussed briefly below (pp.6-8) and will be unpacked in chapter 1 within the context of the twentieth-century unfolding of Protestantism in the Philippines.
understanding of the Christian gospel, also known as ‘holistic’ or ‘integral’ mission, gradually surfaced in some sections of conservative evangelicalism in Latin America, and, as I will highlight in this study, the Philippines.\(^3\) This historical development in these two contexts may not be surprising. The Philippines – aside from being a multi-ethnic Southeast Asian archipelago of more than 7,000 islands, dispersed towards the north of Indonesia, east of Vietnam, and south of Taiwan – also share several commonalities with Latin America, in spite of being separated by the vast ocean of the Pacific.

From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, the Philippines, like many regions in Latin America, were once part of the Spanish empire.\(^4\) Like Latin America, the archipelago remains the home of a Catholic majority of around 70 to 80 million\(^5\) which is the third largest national Catholic population in the world, next to Brazil and Mexico.\(^6\) A long history of resistance against Iberian

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imperialism until the nineteenth century is also shared by both contexts. But, it was not all about resistance. For instance, as the historian Resil Mojares has shown, “colonial education [under Spain] expanded despite material and ideological constraints.” This meant that even prior to the US annexation of the Philippines in 1898, European Enlightenment thought had already made an impact on a steadily growing number of Filipino intellectuals who became more visible in the generation of Jose Rizal (1861-1896). In other words, education, modernisation and democratisation, which are usually considered as the specific contributions of the US expansionists in the twentieth century, had already been anticipated by the remarkable developments in the Islands during what Horacio de la Costa calls ‘the formative century’ referring to the years 1760-1860. But the arrival of Protestantism in the twentieth century was certainly a unique contribution of the US, although only a fraction of Filipinos (relative to the population) have become Protestants.

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7 Surveying the years 1857-1918, O. L. Evangelista has argued that the Philippine Revolution against Spain (1896-1898) and the US (1899-1902) was the first Asian nationalist political revolution, although there were various local or regional forms of anti-colonial resistance before, against Western Imperialism. See Oscar L. Evangelista, ‘The Philippine Revolution (1896-1901) Within the Context of Asian History: A Comparative Study of Anti-Colonial Movements in Asia, 1857-1918’, Asian Studies 42:1-2 (2006): 119-32.

8 Resil B. Mojares, Brains of the Nation: Pedro Paterno, T.H. Pardo de Tavera, Isabelo de los Reyes and the Production of Modern Knowledge (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006), 419.

9 Mojares has developed this more fully in his chapter entitled ‘The Rise of an Intelligentsia’. See Mojares, Brains of the Nation, 419-66.


11 There is a tendency among Protestants in the Philippines to celebrate the arrival of US expansionists and missionaries as bringing in modernisation and social transformation – see for instance Anne C. Kwantes, Presbyterian Missionaries in the Philippines: Conduits of Social Change, 1899-1910 (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1989). But there are also studies by Protestants
Finally, like Latin America, the Philippines also struggled with authoritarian rule in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly during the presidency of Ferdinand Marcos who famously declared martial law in 1972, which is an important political background as we shall see in chapter 1. Overall, the experience of colonisation, political repression, poverty and the struggle for self-determination – all fundamental themes shared and experienced by these two contexts since the colonial period – were crucial factors in transforming both these contexts into fertile grounds for the cultivation of forms of ‘liberation theologies’, or what in the Philippines has been emerging as the ‘theology of struggle’ movement among the more radical Catholics and Protestants since the 1960s.

But, as noted above (pp. 1-2), the general focus of this study concerns an ‘evangelical’ phenomenon, that is, a certain impulse within the conservative Protestant tradition – in the 1970s and later – to nurture and embrace a holistic or integral view of Christian mission.

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Before discussing this phenomenon (which is important for clarifying the research question), we must first confront the problematic term ‘conservative evangelicals’ which we first encountered above (p.2). The term is quite problematic precisely because in the years following the Second World War – this study deals with the years 1946-1986 – “the story of evangelical Christianity”, as the historian Brian Stanley has convincingly argued, “became more diverse in terms of geographical distribution, cultural orientation and theological emphasis than it had been in any previous era since the origins of the evangelical movement in the early eighteenth century.”

Awareness of this apparently increasing diversification of the evangelical tradition, therefore, signals the need to clarify how the term ‘evangelical’ is going to be used in this study.

By ‘conservative evangelicals’ or simply ‘evangelicals' in the Philippines, I am referring to Filipino/Filipina converts into a type of conservative Protestantism, converts whose ‘conversions’, which is another problematic term as we shall see below, became possible through the efforts of mainly fundamentalist (not mainline Protestant) missionaries largely originating from the US rather than ones coming from the UK and elsewhere. The US

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15 The term ‘fundamentalist’ here does not connote the acts of terrorism which became associated to the term after 9/11. The historical nuances of this US fundamentalist evangelical Christianity, particularly as the movement continued to unfold in the 1930s and 1940s, is discussed in detail in Joel A. Carpenter, Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

16 For a useful discussion of the various styles of evangelical Christianity in English-speaking contexts in the post-war period, see the second chapter of Brian Stanley’s The Global
provenance of this pietistic missionary influence is particularly important for understanding the Filipino evangelical style of Christianity in the years 1946-1986. This style mirrored to a greater or lesser extent that of the US fundamentalists in three respects. First, it displayed a strong reactionary and separatist tendency, as shown in their resistance to ecumenism, Catholicism, and anything that bore the slightest resemblance to ‘communism’, including the ‘social gospel’ movement in the first half of the twentieth century, and the ‘liberation theology’ movement in the second half of the twentieth century. Second, it adopted a generally gloomy view of the unfolding of world history which they have tended to interpret through the lens of a ‘premillennial’ or ‘dispensational’ eschatology, which considers the world as we know it as hopelessly doomed. Third, it gave uppermost priority to what they consider as the urgent task of ‘evangelism’, essentially involving the verbal proclamation of the ‘gospel’, which tended to interpret and to present the death of Christ on the cross largely in terms of a vicarious or a penal substitutionary theory of atonement, that Jesus Christ died to rescue ‘sinners’, the aim of which is to lead people towards personal ‘conversion’ from a life that leads to spiritual death and hell to one that inherits ‘eternal life’. This primarily ‘vertical’ understanding of Christian conversion was not normally construed (at least in the years immediately after the Second World War) to have a ‘horizontal’ dimension in leading the convert to a commitment to issues of economic or social justice:

Diffusion aptly entitled ‘Evangelicals’, ‘conservative evangelicals’ and ‘fundamentalists’ (pp. 27-60).
Christian discipleship was understood as a quite separate process from that of conversion, and received less emphasis.\(^{17}\)

Returning to the post-war evangelical phenomenon that began to nurture a holistic view of mission, a phenomenon which we identified as the focus of this study (pp. 1-2 & 5), I shall now proceed to note two basic observations. The first is that most of the available literature on the topic has focused on the Latin American context, and in particular, on the contributions of the Ecuadorian C. René Padilla (b. 1932), the Peruvian Samuel Escobar (b.1934) and the Puerto Rican Orlando Costas (1943-1987).\(^{18}\) Such a focus might unintentionally have already reinforced an unspoken assumption that a holistic or integral understanding of the Christian gospel originated in the Latin American context. While not entirely inaccurate, this assumption, if unchallenged, can be misleading because in the history of conservative evangelicalism, as Brian Stanley has argued, the inclination towards holism or social activism was in many ways anticipated (albeit in a limited way) in the nineteenth-century Anglo-American tradition of evangelical social reform as well as in the subsequent social gospel movements on both sides of the Atlantic prior to the First World War.

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\(^{17}\) This vertical understanding of conversion as linked in particular to evangelism and church multiplication, but with little reference to the horizontal dimension pertaining to the duty of converts to engage social issues was characteristic of missionaries in the church growth school such as Donald McGavran. See Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, [1970] 1980). This view has in some ways been shared by the selected subjects of this study.

War. However, in a regrettable turn of events especially after the two world wars of the twentieth century, the ‘great reversal’ – describing a US evangelical or fundamentalist phenomenon developing in the years 1900 to 1930, when “social concerns”, in the words of George Marsden, “dramatically disappeared or were at least subordinated to others” – contributed to shaping a generation or more of evangelical missionaries who entered Latin America and the Philippines, especially after the Second World War. This post-war and predominantly pietistic and socially-disengaged evangelical mission would eventually be critiqued, particularly in the 1970s, by some of this tradition’s own Latin American converts who notably had earned their PhDs in Europe: Padilla (University of Manchester); Escobar (Complutense University of Madrid); and Costas (Free University of Amsterdam). Studies focusing on these highly trained evangelicals, therefore, are of obvious importance for such key figures were some of the main Third World articulators who were particularly visible and audible in international conferences such as the (First) International Congress on World Evangelization held in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974.

Our second observation is that the amount of attention given to these more visible and audible Latin American figures has tended, perhaps


21 Salinas, Latin American Evangelical Theology, 17-20.

22 For a brief account of these Latin American contributions during the 1974 Lausanne Congress, see Brian Stanley, The Global Diffusion, 164-7.
unintentionally, to obscure their less visible and audible counterparts in Asia, Africa\textsuperscript{23} and even in Latin America itself. Thus, while fully acknowledging that there is, undoubtedly, a development towards holism and social activism among Latin American conservative evangelicals, this study seeks to explore – and this is my first claim to scholarly originality – a parallel pattern in the Philippines.

While this development among conservative evangelicals in post-war Philippines is also acknowledged by Filipino evangelical writers such as David S. Lim and Al Tizon,\textsuperscript{24} their studies have been more about historical and theological reflection on what they have called ‘transformational evangelicals’ or ‘Transformationists’. Both Lim and Tizon have claimed that the roots of ‘transformational’ thinking in the Philippines can be traced back to certain leaders – they frequently mention Isabelo Magalit and Melba Maggay – associated with the InterVarsity movement, particularly in the University of the Philippines (Diliman Campus) in the 1970s.\textsuperscript{25} Without disputing such a claim (which this study, to a certain extent, confirms), it is worth noting that these aforementioned studies are not concerned with problematising the coming into

\textsuperscript{23} For example, we do not often hear the development and contribution of what P. Walshe has identified as ‘a minority of Evangelicals and Pentecostals’ (in the 1980s) who questioned and challenged the prevailing theologies which tended to maintain the status quo regarding the issues of apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa. See Peter Walshe, ‘South Africa: Prophetic Christianity and the Liberation Movement’, \textit{The Journal of Modern African Studies} 29:1 (March 1991), 40.


\textsuperscript{25} Lim, ‘Consolidating Democracy’, 241-2. Tizon has given more space to this development in chapter 7 of his book \textit{Transformation after Lausanne}, 153-166.
being of these socially-engaged evangelicals. This thesis attempts to tackle this question – which again forms part of my first claim to intellectual originality – which I shall now attempt to clarify further.

2. THE RESEARCH QUESTION: THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The central research question to be discussed in this section overlaps with the post-war Philippine context, in the years 1946-1986 to be more precise, when the country witnessed the influx of a second wave of largely US evangelical missionaries.26 It was a period when the Philippines, as were many other countries in Asia and Europe, were faced with the enormous problem of post-war reconstruction, a critical period exacerbated by the unfolding of the 20-year presidency of Ferdinand Marcos (1965-1986), and culminating in the dismantling of his authoritarian rule during the famous people power revolution in February 1986. Although many of the economic and social issues arose and prevailed during this specific period, it should be emphasised that Filipino/Filipina converts27 to this conservative form of evangelicalism had consistently tended to neglect the social question in much of the post-war

26 As we shall see in chapter 1, the first wave of US Protestant missionaries arrived after the 1896-98 Katipunan revolution against Spain, and in the decade following 1899.

27 The Filipino converts mentioned here refers more concretely to ‘conservative evangelicals’ whose churches are, one way or other, related to the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC). But in general this also includes non-PCEC evangelicals who are theologically evangelistic, but socially disengaged, meaning that while they tend to show a strong impulse for evangelism understood in terms of soul-winning, they have not been quite keen to tackle the socio-political issues of their context. This will be unpacked in chapter 1.
This neglect, which to some extent was reinforced by their US evangelical mentors, became even more conspicuous in their general silence during the 1972-1981 martial law, the 1983 murder of former senator and foremost opposition leader Benigno ‘Ninoy’ Aquino Jr. (1932-1983) and the 1986 people power revolution. While identified and partially tackled in some recent studies, such an apparent extension of the US ‘great reversal’ in the Philippines (and probably elsewhere) has not yet been fully explored.

On the other side of this issue, a curious development, which is apparently more difficult to explain, had also emerged: that in spite of this generally socially-disengaged evangelical disposition, some of these Filipino evangelicals had begun to take up a more socially-engaged stance. This has led Al Tizon (following David S. Lim), to identify them as ‘transformational evangelicals’ or ‘Transformationists’, to distinguish them from the majority who did not seem to prioritise social and political involvement. This trend has therefore underscored the central research question of this study, namely: how did some of these initially socially-disengaged evangelicals come to embrace a more holistic understanding of the Christian gospel, moving them towards a

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30 See fn. 24.
commitment to issues of economic or social justice, without moving away from their self-identification with the conservative evangelical tradition?

As I will argue in chapter 1, this re-orientation from a socially-disengaged position to one that is socially engaged is a theologically challenging step to make for conservative evangelicals. As late as the year 1989, for example, the Filipino evangelical theologian David S. Lim (b. 1953), who is associated with the evangelical network called the International Fellowship of Evangelical Mission Theologians (INFEMIT), and former Dean of Asian Theological Seminary (ATS), one of the leading evangelical institutions in Manila, expressed concern that the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) “does not seem to have been affected by the [1986] revolution at all”, implying that even the magnitude of the political events leading up to the February 1986 people power revolution had not been sufficient to move conservative evangelicals to confront social justice issues. “Her leaders,” Lim complained, “continue to focus only on evangelism and church planting, without any in-depth discussion of the practical implications for balanced or holistic growth of new converts.”

Unlike the studies on Latin America and the Philippines cited above, this thesis is not primarily concerned to provide a generalised historical interpretation or reconstruction of the origin and development of holistic or integral mission in the 1970s. Nor is it the aim of this thesis to provide a theological assessment of

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31 For a brief discussion of INFEMIT as well as of the list of names and institutions associated with the network, see Al Tizon, ‘Evangelism and Social Responsibility: The Making of a Transformational Vision’, in Margun Serigstad Dahle, Lars Dahle and Knud Jorgensen (eds.), The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 177.

32 Lim, ‘Church and State’, 31.
evangelical contributions to a holistic understanding of the Christian gospel. Instead, this study is an attempt – and this is my second claim to intellectual originality – to tackle the central research question by exploring a series of autobiographical narratives or testimonies of evangelical theological pilgrimages which aims to shed light on how previously socially-disengaged evangelicals ended up becoming socially-engaged while remaining within the evangelical tradition. To explore this phenomenon of interest, the study will select four different trajectories of change exemplified by particular theological pilgrimages travelled by four Filipino evangelicals during their adult years.

The first trajectory, to be tackled in chapter 2, is based on the story of Isabelo Magalit (b. 1940) and is about the development of a social conscience which benefited from an active involvement in an international evangelical student movement, the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES).

The second, based on the story of the mission doctor Joel Ruiz (b. 1938), which will be examined in chapter 3, represents a progression, made possible by a protracted career in medical missions, from a largely noncritical exposure to questions of human deprivation to a similar awakening to social injustice.

The next trajectory, in chapter 4, is based on the story of a community development worker Fermin Manalo Jr. (b. 1957), an evangelical who ended up accommodating Marxist models of social analysis without abandoning an essentially evangelical faith.

The final trajectory, in chapter 5, which is based on the story of a countryside Baptist pastor Jerry Carian (b. 1947), concerns how an
underprivileged evangelical managed to attain a ‘third’, and more critical, perspective on poverty, leading to a commitment to combat economic injustice.

The focus on these selected evangelical subjects within the evangelical tradition suggests an essential delimitation of the scope of this study. On the one hand, it indicates that this thesis is not a study of non-Christian religious or secular conversions – which is obvious. On the other hand, it also indicates that this thesis is not going to be a study of re-orientation or conversion away from the evangelical tradition and/or towards other non-evangelical (e.g. liberal Protestant or Catholic) traditions. Instead, this study explores a re-orientation within the evangelical tradition, a re-orientation which one might tentatively call a ‘second conversion’ towards a commitment to issues of economic or social justice. Such a ‘second conversion’, as I will discuss below, is no less radical than their initial religious conversion, referring to their initiation into the evangelical tradition. We will return to this concept in the final section below.

Though necessarily limited in scope, the value of this study lies in its promise to gain some insights into factors that have the potential to ‘convert’ or ‘transform’ minds and ideological postures. It thus suggests that, at least in contexts of social and economic polarisation, the evangelical Protestant tradition may not be so inescapably tied to social and political conservatism as is often assumed. But the main goal/s of exploring the processes involved in the

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movement from a previously socially-disengaged evangelical stance to one that is socially engaged can be framed in three closely related questions. First, can we identify any common pattern of re-orientation in the four selected trajectories? Second, does it make sense to describe such a re-orientation in terms of a ‘second conversion’ taking place within the evangelical Protestant tradition? Third, does an in-depth study of these trajectories of change suggest that elements within the evangelical tradition itself at least contained the potentiality of generating change within that tradition? We will return to these questions in the concluding section of this chapter.

3. KEY METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES RAISED BY THE NATURE OF THE STUDY

The formulation of what is now the central research question was finalised in the first half of 2012, after the researcher had reviewed the recorded narratives from fieldwork, the recording of which took place in the years 2008-2011. Having formulated and finalised the central research question, it then became possible to select the four evangelical subjects of this study between the second half of 2012 and the first half of 2013.

This summary of the research process has thus raised two crucial issues which must be dealt in this section before we can proceed further. The first issue concerns the rationale behind the final selection: how, and why this study ended up with these four evangelical subjects, and not others. The second issue concerns the interpretation of the recorded testimonies or autobiographical
narratives. I will discuss these two broad issues under four sub-headings: purposeful sampling, screening process, kwentuhan, and interpretation.

**PURPOSEFUL SAMPLING**

It must be noted, first, that this study began with a two-fold curiosity of which I – prior to becoming a researcher – came to be more and more conscious in the years 2003-2006, while I was doing my MDiv in Biblical Studies at Asian Theological Seminary (ATS). On the one hand, I came to realise that evangelicals in general, not only the Philippine version (and here I also had in mind the US evangelicals), tended to be socially disengaged, while, on the other hand, it was also evident that some evangelicals were socially engaged. Looking back, it appears that this two-fold curiosity must have been impressed upon me by the ATS environment. At that time, ATS – which is an evangelical and interdenominational theological institution in Manila, where evangelical and Pentecostal leaders from various parts of the country, as well as from Asian (and from time to time African and Western) countries, come to do advance training in theology and mission studies – had already established a reputation of upholding the theme of ‘transformation’ evident in its curriculum which aims to nurture a holistic understanding of the Christian faith.\(^{34}\) It was precisely this ethos as well as the interdenominational composition of the seminary which made it possible, if not inevitable, to observe the two contrasting evangelical inclinations particularly with regard to the social question. But more importantly, this two-fold curiosity was particularly nurtured during several

*kwentuhan* sessions (sustained and open-ended conversations)\(^{35}\) with a theology professor at ATS, Lorenzo C. Bautista (b. 1950), who had published, in 1996, a useful chapter which offered a broad historical and theological assessment of the Catholic, mainline Protestant, and the evangelical Protestant churches in the Philippines from the 1980s to the first half of the 1990s.\(^{36}\) One of his key points, which remains pertinent for conservative evangelicals today, concerns the question of “how the evangelistic task relates to earthly realities”, proposing that evangelicals “have to respond” (implying that evangelicals were not always ready to respond) “to the Philippine situation where poverty and disasters stare them in the face.”\(^{37}\) At the same time, Bautista also hinted at an emerging ‘minority section’ within the evangelical tradition, “one which makes the underprivileged of society as the eminent focus of ministry in ways that bring out the theme of the cross in most authentic ways.”\(^{38}\) My research interest has gravitated towards identifying and exploring more about evangelicals who may fall within this ‘minority section’.

However, what has become the central research question of this study was not yet clear at this stage. In 2007, for instance, I merely had an impulse to learn more about this minority section. At any rate, my curiosity led me to read more about research in the social sciences, which was not entirely new to me,

\(^{35}\) A fuller discussion of *kwentuhan* as a research approach will be discussed below (pp. 27-32).


\(^{37}\) Ibid., 195.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 190.
having been introduced to the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur in the seminary. I slowly realised that my curiosity was essentially concerned with the study of ‘human documents’ – a hermeneutic problem which is the concern of both Gadamer and Ricoeur. I also started to expand my readings to include Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino Psychology) in the tradition of Virgilio Gaspar Enriquez (1942-1994), a pioneering Filipino intellectual with a PhD in Social Psychology from Northwestern University, who spent the rest of his career in rediscovering indigenous concepts and conceptualising culturally appropriate ways of approaching and studying Filipino cultures.\footnote{See Rogelia Pe-Pua and Elizabeth Protacio-Marcelino, ‘Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino Psychology): A Legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez’ Asian Journal of Social Psychology 3 (2000): 49-71.} Sensitised by these preliminary encounters and readings, I sought ways to move out of my comfort zone and to bring myself closer to “living human beings,” as the sociologist Ken Plummer put it, “accurately yet imaginatively picking up the way they express their understandings …providing an analysis of such expressions, presenting them in interesting ways, and being self-critically aware of the immense difficulties such tasks bring.”\footnote{Ken Plummer, Documents of Life 2 (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), 2.}

These overlapping experiences, exposure and, later, readings in qualitative research helped me to realise that what I needed was more of a ‘purposeful sampling’\footnote{M. Patton describes ‘purposeful sampling’ as the careful selection of information-rich cases. See Michael Patton, ‘Two Decades of Developments in Qualitative Inquiru: A Personal, Experiential Perspective’, Qualitative Social Work 1:3 (2002): 272-3.} rather than a probability-based or statistically-driven random sampling. The four evangelical subjects selected for this study were
chosen because they are information-rich cases “from which one can learn a great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry.”

In other words, they were selected because their testimonies appeared to point to themes that are likely to have significance beyond their individual life stories. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that the question of how representative they may be can only admit of a provisional answer at this stage. These four individuals stood out as remarkably atypical of the tradition from which they came. They may in time prove to be the forerunners of a gathering trend, but it is too early to tell.

Although I was aware of the idea of purposeful sampling in 2007, it did not make the process of selection easy. First, I realised that this demanded that I spend a significant amount of time to immerse myself within the evangelical tradition. Fortunately, I did not have to start from scratch since I was already a part of the evangelical community since 1998. This (in 2007) meant that I had to recall and reflect upon my previous encounters with socially-engaged evangelicals (including non-evangelicals), hoping to find ways to re-encounter them in the near future. In other words, this meant revisiting my pre-research ‘immersion’ within the evangelical tradition during the years 1998-2007. In addition, I would also encounter newer potential subjects as I commenced the actual recording of their testimonies in the years 2008-2011. By the end of June 2011, my purposeful sampling had expanded into four clusters which suggested at least four possibilities of how the research might proceed.

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Cluster A included four evangelical women: (1) Melba Maggay, who was one of the founders of the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture (ISACC) in 1978; (2) Thelma Galvez-Nambu who started in 1992, a holistic ministry specialising on women who were forced into prostitution;\(^43\) (3) Norma Liongoren, who, while running an art gallery since 1981, has been deeply immersed in her advocacy of community development with an overarching vision to enrich Filipino/Filipina culture and living traditions;\(^44\) and (4) a certain social worker, whom I cannot name here, who – I later discovered in 2011 – was seriously involved in the mishandling of funds in a number of organisations with which she worked, thus, questioning the integrity of her social ethic, and making it difficult for the researcher to justify her inclusion in the final shortlist.

Cluster B included a mixed group of evangelical and Pentecostal men: (1) Nestor Ravilas, a former Assemblies of God (Pentecostal) church worker and later President of Penuel School of Theology, an interdenominational and evangelical school of formation among the marginalised which was established in the 1980s; (2) Sunil Stephens, who grew up in a Plymouth Brethren home in South India, but whose critical social awareness only began to emerge while studying theology in the Philippines in the 1980s; (3) Lorenzo Bautista, Professor Emeritus at Asian Theological Seminary, who, as mentioned above, was critical of the lack of social involvement among evangelicals in the Philippines. He was already a student activist in the late 1960s before becoming an evangelical in


1974; (4) Gary Granada, who was in the 1970s an active member of the Philippine InterVarsity movement. As a performer and songwriter, Granada has expressed his social activism mainly through his compositions. He later became the chair of an ecumenical group of social activists known as KAALAGAD;\(^45\) and (5) the Filipino-Chinese Raineer Chu, who was sacked by an evangelical student organisation in Manila in the 1980s because he decided to work among the poor, which – from the point of view of the leaders of the organisation – “was not Christian ministry.”\(^46\)

As mentioned above, the central research question of this study was only finalised after reviewing the recorded narratives in 2012. As such, during the initial stages of ‘data gathering’, that is, the recording of narratives in the years 2008-2011, I thought that it might be useful, as well, to gather the narratives of Catholic thinkers and social activists who were considered as part of the ‘theology of struggle’ movement in the 1970s. This group formed Cluster C and included (1) Edicio dela Torre, who was one of the founders of the Marxist- and Maoist-influenced movement known as Christians for National Liberation (CNL). Dela Torre, though initially a conservative Catholic priest, ended up joining the armed struggle against the authoritarian rule and was incarcerated twice;\(^47\) (2) Karl Gaspar, who was a social activist in Mindanao, was also


\(^{46}\) Raineer Chu, Kwentuhan 1 (3 April 2009), clip 6/6.

incarcerated during the Marcos dictatorship;\(^{48}\) (3) the Redemptorist priest Juvenal 'Ben' Moraleda, who, like the evangelical Gary Granada in Cluster B, was also a leading figure of the socially-engaged ecumenical group KAALAGAD; and (4) Enrique P. Batangan, who, aside from being involved in a socially-engaged pastoral work during the authoritarian rule, was one of the key Catholic thinkers who articulated the nature and practice of Basic Christian Communities in the Philippines.\(^{49}\)

Cluster D was composed of the four evangelical subjects whose trajectories are the focus of this study: Isabelo Magalit, Joel Ruiz, Fermin Manalo and Jerry Carian.

The ultimate reason for selecting the four subjects under Cluster D had to do with the final formulation of the research question in 2012 as well as the basic approach employed in the recording of the testimonies, which I call the 'kwentuhan' approach. Before discussing the kwentuhan approach, I shall first turn to discuss the screening process and why it became necessary to focus on the four testimonies of the aforementioned evangelical subjects, while, for the purposes of this study, largely ignoring the others.


\(^{49}\) Some of his articles on building basic Christian communities can be found in *Faith and Social Change: Basic Christian Communities in the Philippines* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1985). The book misprints the author's name as “Peter Batangan”.

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SCREENING PROCESS

Because the central research question which was finalised in 2012 concerns an exploration of the trajectories of conservative evangelicals in the Philippines, I had to ignore, first, the subjects from both the Catholic and mainline Protestant traditions in the Philippines. This meant deliberately disregarding, for the purposes of this study, the Catholic participants in Cluster C, and by extension other important figures in the mainline Protestant churches such as the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) theologian Levi V. Oracion\(^{50}\) and the United Methodist Church (UMC) theologian Emerito P. Nacpil (b. 1932).\(^{51}\) This distinction between ‘mainline Protestant’ and ‘conservative evangelical’ will be tackled in chapter 1.

Second, because the central question that came to be formulated is concerned with tracking the movement from an initially socially-disengaged to a socially-engaged posture while remaining within the evangelical tradition, it was thus necessary that I should ignore some of the participants in Clusters A and B. For instance, based on the narratives of Melba Maggay (Cluster A) and Lorenzo

\(^{50}\) A student of Paul Tillich at the University of Chicago, Oracion later became the secretary of the theological and ideological studies of the World Council of Churches’ (WCC) Commission of Churches’ Participation in Development in the years 1985-1992. His understanding of a holistic faith is recently articulated in Levi V. Oracion, *Rumors of a Divine-Human Synergy in Our Midst: Towards a Faithful Rejoinder to the Ministry of Jesus of Nazareth* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers; UCCP, 2010).

Bautista (Cluster B), it was clear that both were already socially engaged, that is, they were part of particular Marxist-inspired student activist movements prior to their conversion to evangelicalism, which is not exactly the type of trajectory that this thesis seeks to explore. It was also necessary to postpone an investigation of the stories of Thelma Galvez-Nambu and Norma Liongoren because in the case of Galvez-Nambu, the narratives that were recorded were not sufficient (there were only two kwentuhan sessions in 2009, and then in 2011 she and her husband had to spend their sabbatical in the US). In the case of Liongoren, whom I met once in her art gallery in 2008, the challenge was to find the right schedule which at that time was not possible. The fourth unnamed female participant (Cluster A) was the first to be dropped from the list because of the issue I already mentioned above. Looking back, the lack of a rich narrative account with my female participants was an unfortunate outcome because there was a time in the years 2008-2011 when I contemplated doing a study on these four evangelical women. But, for various reasons already mentioned, it had to be deferred.

Finally, the rest of the subjects under Cluster B also had to be temporarily set aside for reasons of practicability or space. Gary Granada, who continues to treasure his InterVarsity roots although his journey has led him towards a pluralistic commitment against violent forms of hierarchism that threatens democracy and diversity, could have been an interesting subject. I had several conversations with Granada in the years 2003-2006, when he was still the chair of KAALAGAD. However, during the actual ‘data collection’ years (2008-2011), Granada spent his time in Dapitan (Mindanao), which made him geographically inaccessible.
None of the four subjects selected for this study has written a full-blown autobiography, and it is likely that at least these four main subjects will never write one in the foreseeable future. It should also be noted that none of them approached me, or anyone whom I know, to publicise their mission or whatever it was they were doing. While there certainly was an element of fortuitousness in the sense that I had not initially searched for them, my prior immersion in the evangelical community, in Negros (1998-2003) and in Manila (2003-2007), turned out to be the necessary precondition of these encounters. It should be mentioned that these individuals are not the blow-your-own-trumpet type, which should reveal something positive about their personality: that whether their efforts will go noticed or not, they had already proved to be conscientious enough in pursuing the vocation into which they have committed themselves. As such, they are some of the less visible ‘players’, or, as one might put it, ‘silent workers’, who would not make it to the daily news, for there is nothing sensational in what they do. It is therefore not surprising that such ordinary individuals are practically absent from printed sources. And this has raised the methodological problem of how to gather the much-needed and ‘valid’ – that is subject-oriented not researcher-oriented – primary materials for the study of the phenomenon of interest. The method chosen was to use a distinctive Filipino model known as the Kwentuhan.
KWENTUHAN

In 2007, after some reflection, aided by my readings in hermeneutics and qualitative research, it was deemed essential to utilise a culturally appropriate and unobtrusive approach that in the Philippines is called ‘kwentuhan’. In ordinary usage, kwentuhan can have a wide range of connotations ranging from ‘idle chatter’ to a conversation that is much more intimate, honest and candid between, for instance, lovers. By employing kwentuhan as a research strategy, however, it should be noted that I am referring here to a sustained, open-ended, and free-flowing conversation between interlocutors – as opposed to the formal, semi-formal, structured or even the usual less structured interviews – in which the subject does much of the telling, while the researcher is mostly a ‘passive’ listener, whose main job in the initial stages at least is to follow, as closely as possible, the unfolding of the subject’s narrative. But before the subject can do much of the telling, there is a fundamental condition or mode that must be developed and maintained in order for the subject to be free to recount his or her story without inhibition, a mode which signals a sincere desire, on the part of the researcher, to go the ‘extra mile’ in the process of understanding more fully the story of the subject. Such a mode – which I shall call the kapwa mode – can be

52 In developing his descriptive philosophy of religion, the philosopher Merold Westphal, who also draws from the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Ricoeur, talks about the need for the “skill of a good listener” along with the models of the ‘painter’ and ‘actress’. Merold Westphal, God, Guilt, and Death: An Existential Phenomenology of Religion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 9-12.

53 The term kapwa, a key concept of the Filipino personality, is variously translated as ‘shared identity’, ‘shared self’, or ‘together with the person’, to denote a strong sense of connectedness and ‘feeling one with’, for instance, the other. Since the 1970s, this core concept has been continually revisited and developed in the fields of Filipino psychology and Filipino ethics. Using the concept of kapwa as the mode of the kwentuhan approach, however, is a point
likened to an engine or spirit without which the kwentuhan approach is bound to fail. In this sense, the kapwa mode is not a tool or instrument that one mechanically adds to the kwentuhan approach, instead the kapwa mode should be construed as the heart of the kwentuhan approach, a mode that must be deliberately and continuously worked out throughout the entire research process.

This kapwa mode, which is more than merely establishing rapport, is essentially a culturally-sensitive mode that allows for the intentional use of the researcher’s intuition in encouraging the generation of a free-flowing account, including, the researcher’s overall sensitivity in following, respectfully and patiently, the unfolding of the narrative in accordance with the subject’s own pacing, and, in interpreting the narratives, thoughtfully and responsibly, as they present themselves at various stages of the research. This kapwa mode, which I hope will be demonstrated clearly in the main chapters of this study, serves as the matrix that should encourage a dynamic engagement with the biographical case studies, enabling the researcher to inhabit the stories with a sense of wholeness, without which the research might easily devolve into an atomistic and isolated exercise.

More concretely, this kwentuhan style of researching, which enabled the recording of the subjects’ narratives in the years 2008-2011, owed much to my 1998-2007 pre-research encounters with the ‘subjects’ who, at that stage were not yet my research subjects as there was no research project in the first place. 1998 was the year of my initiation into the evangelical community. 1999-2003 were

that I owe to the ATS theologian Lorenzo C. Bautista, who has been developing this kapwa-oriented approach in the last thirty years or so.
the years during which I came to know Jerry Carian, who became my teacher in theology in Negros. 2003-2005 were the years during which I encountered Isabelo Magalit when he was still the president of ATS. In 2005, I came to meet Fermin Manalo during an ATS theological forum. And finally, 2003-2006 were the years during which I encountered Weng, who was my classmate in the seminary, and who introduced me to her father, who was none other than the mission doctor Joel Ruiz.

As one can imagine, the success of the kwentuhan style of researching hinged on the quality of relationship with the subjects. It must be mentioned here that such an approach did not automatically work with those I newly encountered in the years 2008-2011, probably because the relationship was still in its infancy. In other words, this partly explains why the outcome of the kwentuhan with some of my initial participants did not yield a rich narrative account compared to the four selected evangelicals eventually selected for this study. It should also be noted that the quality of the researcher’s existing relationship with the four selected subjects contributed towards a degree of attainment and maintenance of a kapwa mode that enabled the researcher to sit with the subjects for several hours without feeling the need to utter a word while remaining comfortable throughout the entire session. Likewise, as evident in the rich narratives that were recorded, the selected subjects apparently found

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54 I remember that Manalo and I discussed how the interpretation of Jesus’s death in terms of ‘vicarious atonement’ came to dominate among evangelicals, and why Jesus’s death, which can be read as the ultimate consequence arising from a thoroughgoing commitment to love God and neighbour (at least in the Synoptic Gospels – Mark, Matthew and Luke), seems to have been obscured by an evangelical tendency to emphasise or favour a theory of ‘vicarious atonement’.
themselves in such a condition where they were free to narrate their stories without feeling inhibited and/or distracted either by the researcher’s general silence, or, indeed, by the researcher’s actual presence. The ‘storehouse’ of unquantifiable and unrecorded pre-research kwentuhan, in the years 1998-2007, turned out to be an advantage because, apart from providing an invaluable base of information, it also allowed my selected subjects to consider the 2008-2011 ‘data gathering’ stage as though it was a natural continuation of our prior conversations. The only major difference is that in the 2008-2011 kwentuhan, the subjects knew that their stories were to become available to the public for scholarly scrutiny, to which they agreed. During the 2008-2011 kwentuhan – the setting of which was usually in the comfort of their own homes – there was no time pressure imposed and the subjects were free to call off the kwentuhan according to their wishes. The minimum time spent was three hours for each session, although it was usually more. On some occasions, as in the case with Ruiz, the kwentuhan extended from 2 pm till midnight, and was only interrupted by dinner.

The use of pre-fabricated questionnaires was not deemed necessary because the aim of the kwentuhan was simply to allow an unrestricted flow of the subject’s testimony. This approach was also informed by an assumption that whatever trajectory their lives might have it must be allowed to emerge naturally through their own testimonies. It should be noted, once more, that the central question of this study was not finalised until 2012, which means that the minimal prompts or questions that the researcher posed to the subjects during the
2008-2011 kwentuhan were variations of the question ‘Can you tell me more about the story of your life?’

While, at first glance, the kwentuhan approach may seem to be no more than a standard semi-structured approach to ‘data gathering’, it is, on closer inspection, a way of shifting the weight towards the subject. In other words, the kwentuhan approach is not so much about the researcher fully armed with his prefabricated questionnaire or research agenda which he dumps unilaterally on the subject. Rather, it is more about the researcher taking the stance of the listener, refusing prematurely to impose his/her research agenda, except for the basic agenda to gather the story of a life. While this approach runs the risk of wandering off track precisely because the subject is allowed freely to narrate on his or her own terms, in his or her own time, such an approach also carries with it the advantage of opening up horizons of which the researcher might have been completely unaware prior to the conversation.

Unlike the standard structured and semi-structured interviews which are often highly regulated and researcher-oriented, the kwentuhan is subject-oriented, the subject being much more in control of the flow of the conversation; the researcher, with his or her minimal promptings, ensuring that the subject’s story unfolds in the subject’s own terms, as well as in the subject’s own time. This should highlight both the distinctiveness and appropriateness of the method in generating ‘authentic’ or subject-oriented narratives, which are the primary materials mirroring the subjects’ thought processes to be analysed in the main chapters of the thesis, the richness of which cannot possibly be gathered using
standard social scientific methods, which one might collectively describe as a ‘tourist approach’, wherein the researcher, more or less, acts like a tourist who comes and leaves after a relatively brief encounter with the subject.

Follow-up questions that were directly related to the interest of the central research question only came to be asked in a later series of kwentuhans (2013-2014) as the ongoing analysis and the writing of the first drafts commenced. All the narratives generated by the kwentuhan were recorded using a portable video recorder and were uploaded in an oral history software known as Stories Matter, a free software designed by oral historians “which allows for the archiving of digital video and audio materials”\(^{55}\) thus providing an alternative way of preserving conversations and narratives that avoids the loss of orality arising from traditional transcribing methods. The most helpful feature of the software, in the experience of this researcher, is that it allowed for the creation and annotation of clips and indices, along with an efficient system of locating particular clips containing the material most pertinent to the specific research interest, while preserving the flow and context of the original narratives. However, because of the bewildering amount of data generated by the kwentuhan, it became necessary to formulate a theoretical framework not simply to manage the unruly narratives, but more importantly to sharpen the focus and direction of the analytical task of the study. This theoretical framework will be introduced below (pp.45-48).

\[^{55}\text{http://storytelling.concordia.ca/storiesmatter/announcing-stories-matter-v-1.6e/about-stories-matter} \text{(accessed 15 May 2015).}\]
What the *kwentuhan* generated, in the absence of full-length written autobiographies, were emerging forms of autobiographical discourses, or testimonies of evangelical theological pilgrimages. Following Harold Rosen, an autobiographical discourse “embraces all those verbal acts, whether they be whole texts or parts of texts, whether they be spoken or written, in which individual speakers or writers or two or more collaborators attempt to represent their lives through a construction of past events and experiences.” More fundamentally, as Rosen has proposed, “autobiography [in this more inclusive sense] is the rendering of memory into discourse.” It is important to note that autobiography, and testimony in particular, which renders memory into discourse is always a cultural production inevitably shaped by a variety of pre-existing textual resources and social contexts, and therefore must not merely be considered private or too individualistic. Rosen writes:

Memories must be saturated with social meanings as soon as they are turned into texts, spoken or written. They may have been formulated already in inner-speech but when they are externalised they must draw on memories of existing texts. These resources can be seen at every linguistic level and they are all a social creation. Every text is a complex intertwining of social meanings encoded in language. This can be seen in

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57 Ibid., 99.
the central device of autobiography – narrative, with its own strategies, tactics and conventions, many of which are available to everybody.58

As a cultural production, the testimony – which must not be divorced from its own cultural and historical context – can therefore be generated by means of certain culturally-specific tools, which is precisely the point of the kwentuhan approach already discussed above. In short, such complex cultural contexts and processes involved in shaping human memory form the basic condition that makes the testimony, and autobiographical discourse in general, possible.59

However, the generation and recording of the testimony is not yet, in itself, a solution for understanding the processes of religious re-orientation. In fact, it raises a very serious methodological problem. When studying, as this thesis intends to do, processes of re-orientation or ‘conversion’ “can one rely,” as Chester inquires, “on the accounts that converts themselves provide of their experience? Do they give accurate information about the event or process of conversion and its consequences?”60 The approach taken here in the study of how evangelicals have moved from being socially disengaged to becoming socially engaged raises exactly the same issue of the extent to which testimonies – grounded in autobiographical memory, and generated in the kwentuhan – can

58 Ibid., 132.

59 For an extended discussion of the social and cultural dimension of autobiographical memory, see Rosen, Speaking from Memory, 130-35.

be considered as a reliable descriptor and indicator of human change processes. “Nothing is more fully agreed,” Karen Fields reminds her readers, “than the certainty that memory fails. Memory fails, leaving blanks, and fails by filling blanks mistakenly…” Jean Peneff also adds a warning that autobiographical discourses – Peneff used the term ‘life-stories’ – “can be a way of excusing ourselves in public, an effective means of building an enhanced self-image.” Furthermore, from a more social constructivist perspective, the claims of converts about their conversion experiences “have ultimately to do,” as Peter Stromberg suggests, “with the possibility that a particular language [which converts use in their conversion narratives] may bring about self-transformation,” which in effect doubts the claim of the convert. And finally, on the revisionist tendency of memory, R. Samuel and P. Thompson write: “Memory requires a radical simplification of its subject matter. All recollections are told from a standpoint in the present. In telling they need to make sense of the past. That demands a selecting, ordering, and simplifying, a construction of a coherent narrative whose logic works to draw the life story towards the fable.”


62 Quoted in Ibid., 32.


It is inevitable that memory, which makes possible forms of autobiographical discourse in general, is already a retrospective reading of the past, partly shaped and reshaped by the subject’s current wishes, commitments and context. If this study were a study in history with the goal of ascertaining objectively verifiable information about the past, then the autobiographical discourse could not be considered a reliable source in this sense. But if the goal of the study is to gain a critical understanding of the crucial determinants of change using the point of view of converts themselves, at a particular stage in their adult lives, then the task of analysing their testimonies, which were generated and recorded through the *kwentuhan*, and which contain the essential but often neglected personal accounts of re-orientation, would seem to be a most fitting approach. “[We] must not forget,” asserts Paul Ricoeur in his 2004 book which is concerned with what he calls the problematic of the representation of the past, “that everything starts, not from the archives, but from testimony, and that, whatever may be our lack of confidence in principle in such testimony, we have nothing better than testimony, in the final analysis, to assure ourselves that something did happen in the past, which someone attests having witnessed in person, and that the principal, and at times our only, recourse, when we lack other types of documentation, remains the confrontation among testimonies.”

Inevitably, the subject’s testimony may present us with accounts containing various degrees of factual errors, retrospective glosses, particular distortions and biases. Again, this is a legitimate historical issue. But, on the

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other hand, these ‘errors’ may also offer the researcher the chance to observe and analyse the unique workings of the culture-bearer’s thought processes, the easily ignored perspective, which is exactly the main interest in studying how human minds and their ideological postures can change. The key, therefore, is to attempt to establish patiently and to analyse carefully the ways in which each one of the selected subjects or culture-bearers have strung together the various elements, factors, and experiences that might have shaped and redirected the trajectories of their lives.

This is not to say that we naïvely accept the subject’s testimony at face value. On the contrary, we must engage, through some kind of hermeneutic, the testimonies in question. What follows is a description of the hermeneutic approach which is in line with the kapwa mode to be adopted and employed in this study.

As soon as the testimonies of the subjects were verbalised in the context of the kwentuhan in the years 2008-2011, there was already a hermeneutical issue involved arising from the different historical horizons between the much older subjects, most of whom were beyond their 60s or 70s, and the significantly younger researcher, who was only in his early 30s. It must be admitted therefore that even at this early oral stage when the testimonies were being generated, the researcher could not claim that he was able fully to understand the unfolding story of the subject(s). At a later stage, in the years 2013-2014, a further development occurred when the subjects’ testimonies gradually came to be
‘textualized’, or, as Ricoeur put it, ‘fixed by writing’,\textsuperscript{67} thus effectively escaping the first-order reference of the previously spoken discourse in the original context of the 2008-2011 \textit{kwentuhan}. By escaping the first-order reference (which is an inevitable ‘moment of distanciation’),\textsuperscript{68} the now-textualized biographies have effectively breathed a life of their own, therefore opening up a second-order reference, which Ricoeur calls ‘the world of the text’\textsuperscript{69} which is precisely the material to be interpreted. At the end of the day, because of this inevitable process of distanciation, what we are offered for particular analysis and interpretation is not the mind or soul of the actual author of the testimony, nor is it merely a narrative reduced to a static structure or system of abstract language, but a particular narrative discourse, \textit{the matter of the text}, as Ricoeur (following Gadamer) put it, “which belongs neither to its author nor to its reader.”\textsuperscript{70} This crucial interpretative task demands that the interpreter should exert effort in attaining and maintaining a \textit{kapwa} mode as already discussed above (pp. 27-30), which I propose is a fitting hermeneutical approach that is open and ‘non-violent’ in its attempt to represent the inner logic of the testimonies, while at the same time being ‘dialogical’ in challenging both the illusions of the implied


\textsuperscript{68} Paul Ricoeur, ‘Phenomenology and Hermeneutics’, in Ricoeur, \textit{From Text to Action}, 32-33.

\textsuperscript{69} Paul Ricoeur, ‘The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation’, in Ricoeur, \textit{From Text to Action}, 81-83.

\textsuperscript{70} Paul Ricoeur, ‘The Task of Hermeneutics’, in Ricoeur, \textit{From Text to Action}, 71; ‘Phenomenology and Hermeneutics’, 34-35.
subject and those of the implied researcher in the construction and analysis of the narratives in question.

4. THE GOALS OF THE THESIS

We shall now return, in this concluding section, to discuss the main goals of the thesis initially sketched above in three interrelated questions (see p.16). The first goal is concerned with identifying whether any common pattern emerges from a careful examination of the four selected biographical case studies. As such, this study seeks to move beyond merely tracking the possible variations which can be drawn from the selected trajectories. At the same time, it also seeks to move beyond simply providing examples of a particular re-orientation or re-conversion within, and not away from, the evangelical tradition.

The second goal, which is closely related to the first, pertains to the extent to which it may or may not be useful to describe this process of re-orientation in terms of ‘second conversion’. Indeed, before discussing the term ‘second conversion’, we should acknowledge here that it is also valid to use the concept of ‘conscientization’ as an alternative heuristic device to describe the change experienced by our subjects. Conscientization, as developed by the Brazilian educationalist, Paulo Freire, is a pedagogical strategy, which is deliberate and systematic in raising awareness of the social, economic, and political contradictions in the person’s context with the aim of introducing “women and men to a critical form of thinking about their world.” In chapter 4 (pp. 201-2,

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204), we will observe in the story of Manalo a quite self-conscious appeal to the notion of conscientization as Manalo describes the impact of the direct influences on him by the Marxist teacher, by the Catholic social activists, and by his own reading of Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In chapter 5 we will similarly note evidence that a form of conscientization can be found in the story of Carian (pp. 252, 258) particularly in his awakening into the problem of economic poverty, which he had not initially thought to be a major problem immediately after his conversion to evangelical Christianity. However, I submit that the introduction here of the term ‘second conversion’ is appropriate given that the predominant theological context of the selected evangelical subjects was largely influenced by a US fundamentalist or conservative evangelicalism of a pietistic type, in which the notion of conversion occupied a central place. For such a re-orientation towards active Christian social engagement to succeed a radical change akin to a religious conversion must have taken place. Indeed, Manalo himself described his experience of radical theological change as both a conscientization (as mentioned above) and as a ‘second conversion’ (pp. 190, 197) in the exact sense described in the previous sentence. It remains the case that Magalit, Ruiz and Carian continued to employ the term ‘conversion’ in a much narrower sense referring more specifically to their initial conversion to evangelical Christianity. It is therefore worth noting here that the subjects of this narrative study referred to the fundamental changes of re-orientation that took place after their initial evangelical conversion in a number of different ways. Magalit (chapter 2) spoke of a rediscovery of the holistic nature of the Gospel as part of the ongoing process of Christian discipleship. Ruiz (chapter 3) described
his re-orientation as a result of ‘living in the Spirit’ and as part of a dynamic process of ‘obedience to God’s design’. Carian (chapter 5) implicitly explained his transformation as the consequence of a conscious day-to-day attempt to ‘gain Jesus’: an active response to the renewed understanding and re-appropriation of the meaning of the Incarnation of Jesus, who is now in each of the faces of the marginalised. While the subjects’ inherited understanding of ‘conversion’ (with the exception of Manalo) tends to limit the application of the idea of conversion to their initial evangelical conversion experience, there remains a plausible case (as most clearly exemplified in Manalo’s story) that the changes that have taken place after their initial conversion to evangelical Christianity may legitimately be described using the notion of ‘second conversion’.

But, for the purposes of this study, what is ‘conversion’, and by extension, ‘second conversion’? Before proceeding to the third goal, it seems necessary first to move into a brief excursus on the ideas of conversion and indeed second conversion. Whether in the 1901/2 Gifford Lectures of William James, or in the more recent writings of Lewis Rambo, the study of conversion is the study of the ‘dynamics of human change processes’ which, as Anthony Blasi might add, do not necessarily have to be a religious phenomenon. While it may be agreed


that “[t]he study of conversion is the study of change”, it is not always clear, however, what the term ‘conversion’ means. This problem of trying to pin down the meaning of ‘conversion’ arises from the fact that there are, as the study edited by Robert Hefner (1993) suggests, various forms of conversion, each of them “influenced by a larger interplay of identity, politics, and morality.” Moreover, being in many ways culture-bound, conversion, as Andrew Buckser and Stephen Glazier (2003) have proposed, has a complex and elusive character, which “highlights the interaction, and in many cases, the tension, between individual consciousness and the structural requirements of community life”. Such complexity highlights, as Buckser and Glazier have rightly noted, the need for a careful ethnographic study, which their volume seeks to offer.

Within the fields of theology, missiology and world Christianity – the fields in which this study is located – Christian conversion, as Andrew F. Walls has noted, may refer to a particular movement to the Christian faith “on the part of people previously outside it.” However, it may also refer, Walls has also noted, to a “critical internal religious change in persons within the Christian


77 Andrew Buckser and Stephen D. Glazier (eds.), The Anthropology of Religious Conversion (Lanham; Boulder; New York; Toronto; Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), xii.

community.”” We should note here that the word ‘critical’ is important in developing and understanding the possible usefulness of the concept of ‘second conversion’ within the evangelical tradition. It is important because it suggests that we are dealing here, not merely with normal processes of religious change or development, but with a crisis or disjunction within an individual’s religious pilgrimage, involving “both epistemological and pragmatic challenges to the existing cultural order”, thus, moving the convert in a fundamentally new direction. By introducing the idea of ‘second conversion’, therefore, this study points to the element of rupture required for this new orientation to emerge: evangelicals begin to both think and act in fundamentally new ways that challenge the existing social order within evangelical communities. While it may be argued that the term ‘second conversion’ strongly indicates the idea of a total discontinuity with the religious past, there are those, such as Andrew F. Walls, who have argued that on the contrary ‘conversion’ is more about a re-orientation towards a new goal rather than a total replacement of what was there before. Conversion therefore holds discontinuity and continuity in tension. This study adopts Walls’s notion.

This study is not the first to tackle the idea of ‘second conversion’, as a brief survey of the recent literature will show. Andrew F. Walls’s chapter on ‘The Multiple Conversions of Timothy Richard’, for example, already finds in

79 Walls, ‘Converts or Proselytes’, 2.
80 Cf. Hefner, Conversion to Christianity, 319.
the story of this late nineteenth-century Welsh Baptist missionary to China the same theme of ‘second conversion’ (although the exact term is not used), from an exclusive preoccupation with conventional evangelism to a style of Christian mission “that took China seriously” 82 in tackling issues of famine, structural reform, religion, peace, etc. Another historical study by Lian Xi, The Conversion of Missionaries (1997), “explores the unraveling of nineteenth-century missionary mentality and the emergence of liberalism among American missionaries in China” in the years 1907-1932. 83 With a somewhat different slant, Arun Jones’s Christian Missions in the American Empire (2003), more specifically in his fifth chapter, also expounds on the theme of ‘second conversion’ (again, the term is not exactly used) among the American Episcopal missionaries in northern Luzon in the Philippines, that is, a conversion from a mission strategy premised on the dissemination of Western civilisation to one that sought to retard the materializing influence of Westernization and promote indigenous cultural values. 84 Finally, Lida Nedilsky’s Converts to Civil Society (2014) employs the term ‘conversion’ as “key to understanding how [a mixed group of committed Hong Kong Christians] become committed to the public sphere” 85 particularly after Hong Kong’s return to Chinese sovereignty on 30 June 1997. Nedilsky also uses


85 Lida V. Nedilsky, Converts to Civil Society: Christianity and Political Culture in Contemporary Hong Kong (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2014), 26.
the term 'second conversion' (at least twice)\textsuperscript{86} to describe the movement from an initial conversion to Christianity to a second-stage conversion to civil society, which is the point of her third chapter.\textsuperscript{87} This brief survey of recent literature which tackles the theme in a variety of contexts suggests that there have been several attempts to develop the idea of ‘second conversion’, a shared theme of re-orientation towards a more socially-engaged form of Christianity, which this thesis also seeks to explore.

What is absent, however, in the above-mentioned studies – and this is my third claim to intellectual originality – is an attentive listening to and detailed analysis of the extended testimonies of converts themselves. By using the kwentuhan approach to study the subjects’ understanding of their own theological or spiritual pilgrimages, and what we may now tentatively (albeit largely hesitantly) call their 'second conversion', this thesis departs from the standard social scientific interview method and participant observation employed for instance by Lida Nedilsky,\textsuperscript{88} whose study only allows a brief focus on a certain individual at the end of each of her main chapters.\textsuperscript{89}

However, because of the rich and disorienting amount of data generated through the kwentuhan, as already mentioned above (p.32), there arose, therefore, the need to formulate a theoretical framework in order to sharpen the focus and

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 28, 90.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 65-95.

\textsuperscript{88} See Nedilsky, \textit{Converts to Civil Society}, 22-26 for a discussion of her method.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 61-63, 92-95, 131-33, 171-2.
direction of the analytical work. Far from being a Procrustean solution to force the stories to fit a monolithic frame, the theoretical framework of the thesis will be employed here as a way of identifying and discussing what might turn out to be the important factors of re-orientation or ‘second conversion’ in keeping with the first goal of identifying a common pattern discernible in the four selected biographical case studies. In turn, the examination of the selected testimonies through an engagement with the adopted theoretical framework will then prepare the way for the discussion of the second goal which is concerned with the critical assessment of the extent to which these factors involved in the process of theological re-orientation can be spoken of using the notion of ‘second conversion’. I shall now briefly introduce here the eight specific features of this thesis’s theoretical framework without suggesting that theological re-orientation or ‘second conversion’ should strictly and necessarily follow the order of these points as enumerated.

1. Following Andrew Walls’s idea of conversion, ‘second conversion’ within the evangelical tradition is also a turning or re-orientation of what is already there, and is not necessarily a total replacement or absolute rupture.  

2. Like all conversions, ‘second conversion’ is always a process, even though it may be precipitated or punctuated by crisis episodes. The stories to be explored in this study are stories of a process even as they may also

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90 It should be noted here that the development of the theoretical framework of this thesis owes much to discussions with my supervisor, Professor Brian Stanley.

contain crisis points that help to shape each of the particular trajectory of change.

3. The seeds of ‘second conversion’ are anticipated in a growing sense of dissatisfaction or disappointment with the existing fundamentalist or evangelical frameworks, which are beginning to lose their plausibility or explanatory power. Sometimes this plausibility crisis can be provoked by a particular traumatic episode.

4. External agents can play a crucial role in ‘second conversion’. There is usually at least one ‘missionary’ or ‘evangelist’ who first presents the potential convert with the new message, which at least may open up the possibility of a fundamental theological re-orientation.

5. There is normally, but not invariably, some form of crisis that triggers a decisive turning point.

6. ‘Second conversion’ also involves an identifiable shift in beliefs and values. Old beliefs and values will not necessarily disappear but they are supplemented and re-interpreted by a newer set of beliefs and values drawn from the new convert community or ideology.

7. ‘Second conversion’ manifests itself in a new set of practical commitments in life. This is observed in those instances when the convert begins to engage in actions which were not visible before.
8. It also manifests itself in an expanded (or possibly an entirely new) set of associates; the convert places himself or herself in a different, or at least an expanded community.

Again, it should be emphasised that these points or features are intended simply to function here not in the sense of dictating and coercing the stories to form a static uniform shape, but only in so far as they can provide a useful interpretative framework to discuss the extent of a common pattern of theological re-orientation arising from an in-depth study of the testimonies. The Conclusion to the thesis will return to this crucial issue in order critically to assess the extent to which the four case studies exemplify some or all of these eight points. And while we have here tentatively (with some hesitation) suggested that this re-orientation may be understood in terms of a ‘second conversion’, the Conclusion to this thesis will also return to this exact question to discuss more fully whether it may or may not make sense to use the notion of ‘second conversion’ as an appropriate depiction and explanation of the theological re-orientation examined in the four evangelical theological pilgrimages.

Finally, in exploring the balance between discontinuity and continuity involved in this process of re-orientation, the third goal of this thesis involves an attempt to shed light on whether or not the trajectories under investigation suggest the potential of the evangelical tradition itself to generate change from within, partly because of its inherently activist nature. For instance, the evangelical tradition in the nineteenth century, as D. W. Bebbington has argued,
demonstrated the capacity to widen the scope of issues deemed to be appropriate objects of evangelical action once it became clear to evangelical Christians that such issues could be identified as either ‘sinful’ or ‘obstacles to the gospel’, and therefore were the legitimate objects of Christian social or political action.\footnote{D. W. Bebbington, \textit{The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and politics, 1870-1914} (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 14-15; idem, ‘The Baptist Conscience in the Nineteenth Century’, \textit{Baptist Quarterly} 34.1 (January 1991): 13-24.} Do the selected trajectories suggest something similar to this nineteenth-century pattern, or do they tend to suggest something else?

But before we can proceed to explore and discuss the biographical case studies themselves, a specific historical background which locates these four trajectories of change is necessary. This is the concern of the next chapter.
“Evangelicals”, writes the historian Brian Stanley, “in the years immediately after 1945 were not generally distinguished by their commitment to issues of economic or social justice.”¹ This general observation, theoretically limited to the English-speaking world on both sides of the Atlantic, is – as we shall see – largely affirmed by the conservative evangelical experience in the Philippines in the years 1946-1986.

In the previous chapter, I briefly discussed the conservative evangelical tradition in the Philippines which is the background of the selected subjects of this study (pp.6-8). In this chapter I will extend the discussion on this important background by situating the emergence of conservative evangelicalism within the larger canvas of the story of the turn-of-the-twentieth-century birth and the subsequent growth, diversification and divergence (particularly after the Second World War) of Philippine Protestantism. The goal of this chapter is to understand better the story of conservative evangelicalism and its apparent neglect of a commitment to issues of social justice in the years 1946-1986.

At a crucial juncture during the globally important decade of the 1960s, an interesting development began to unfold in the story of the Protestant movement in the Philippines. Influenced by inescapable global waves of fundamentalism and modernism, conservatism and activism, Philippine Protestantism began to diverge into two distinct styles of doing church and mission as exemplified in the emergence of two major non-Roman Catholic church councils, namely, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) in 1963, and, the more theologically conservative Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) which, it should be noted, first emerged as the Philippine Council of Fundamental Churches (PCFC) in 1964.\(^2\)

To understand more fully the style of conservative evangelicalism’s lack of social engagement in the Philippines, an evangelical style that came to be more theologically or ideologically related, it should be noted, to the PCEC than that of the NCCP, this chapter will unfold in three sections. Section one will first examine the beginnings of Philippine Protestantism and its eventual divergence, in the 1960s, into NCCP and PCEC branches. Section two will look at some important responses by NCCP- and PCEC-related evangelicals to the authoritarian regime of the then president Ferdinand E. Marcos (1972-1986) which in effect will highlight the general silence of Filipino/Filipina conservative evangelicals throughout the martial law period. Lastly, section three will delineate some of the key features of the more socially conservative

evangelicalism, an evangelical style of doing church and mission which should help in understanding the point of departure of the pilgrimages of the selected evangelical subjects of this study. This section will end with some indications of a growing concern for issues of social justice among sections of conservative evangelicals highlighting, in the process, an emerging subgroup which David S. Lim and Al Tizon have termed transformational evangelicals (p.10).

1.1

**Philippine Protestantism and the Formation of Non-Roman Catholic Church Councils in the 1960s**

The divergence of Philippine Protestantism into two major church councils occurred in the 1960s, as the Second Vatican Council began to stress *aggiornamento*, and, as the World Council of Churches (WCC), in Professor Stanley’s words, “appeared increasingly to be defining the mission of the church in terms of humanization and political liberation”.

Established in 1963, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), which is the first of two non-Roman Catholic church councils that emerged during this period, has maintained connections with the

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WCC and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), while in 1968, the leaders of what later became the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC), which is the second major church council in question, found themselves trapped in a heated debate on whether or not this emerging council should be “a Fundamentalist-separatist Council or an evangelical ecumenicity”. These two conservative, and conflicting, Christian blocks within the PCEC were initially eager, according to a report, to join global networks such as the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) on the one hand, and, the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) – later renamed the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) – on the other. The early exit of one of the founding leaders of PCEC, Rev. Antonio Ormeo Sr., who was then the pastor of the fundamentalist First Baptist Church in Manila, seemed a crucial factor for the PCEC’s eventual affiliation to WEF, and not to the fundamentalist-oriented ICCC.

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5 CCA is formerly the East Asia Christian Conference which was inaugurated in Malaysia in 1959. For a brief history see http://www.cca.org.hk/about/history.htm (accessed 23 June 2015).


9 Lim, ‘Consolidating Democracy’, 239.
To understand more fully the PCEC, and its apparent neglect and gradual rediscovery of social and political engagement, we need first to look into the formation of the older Protestant council, the NCCP. The founding church bodies of the NCCP include the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), the United Methodist Church (UMC), the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC), *Unida de Cristo*, which is now, *Iglesia Unida Ekyumenikal* (United Ecumenical Church), *Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas* (IEMELIF, Philippine Evangelical Methodist Church), the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP), and the first major Filipino nationalist church, the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (IFI, Philippine Independent Church).  

Except for the IFI which had a Roman Catholic origin, the aforementioned NCCP-founding churches had, in varying degrees, links to mainly American Protestant missions arriving at the turn of the twentieth century. The UCCP, formally established in 1948, was a result of the coming together of churches established by missionaries of the Presbyterian,  
Congregationalist,  
Methodist,  
Disciples of Christ, and the United Brethren

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10 For a list of their current member churches see: [http://nccphilippines.org/about-us/](http://nccphilippines.org/about-us/) (accessed 5 December 2014).


12 “The Congregationalist strain in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines” writes Sitoy, “comes from the mission in Mindanao of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM)”. See *Several Springs*, 32.

13 Methodist here refers in particular to the Methodist Episcopal Church, which, as Sitoy notes, “was the largest Methodist body in the United States.” Although fractured by a
denominations who arrived in the decade following 1899. What are known today as the United Methodist Church (UMC), the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC), and the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP), along with non-NCCP churches, namely, the Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines (CAMACOP) and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (SDA), share with the UCCP a common past in that they all originated in the first major arrival of largely American Protestant missions in the Philippines. A most important achievement of their missionaries was the establishment of the Evangelical Union on 25 April 1901. “The primary goal of the Evangelical Union…” writes the church historian T. V. Sitoy, “was to bring about [a spirit of comity, unity, and cooperation] that would eliminate rivalry and effect harmony among its constituent bodies.” Comity, in the words of another historian, David E. Gardinier, “involved a territorial distribution along geographical lines in order to maximize the use of missionary personnel and funds while avoiding the difficulties that arose from competition”, which was a celebrated initiative


15 Sitoy notes that the “The Baptist mission which came to the Philippines in 1900 was that of the Northern Baptists” in the USA. See Sitoy, *Several Springs*, 38.


17 Ibid., 11.

inspired by the initial efforts of Protestant missions in Japan (1859) and Korea (1886). Although the Episcopalians, the CAMACOP (then known as the Christian and Missionary Alliance or CMA), and the SDA did not join the Evangelical Union, “the first two faithfully abided by the comity agreement on territorial division.” While sharing a common desire to uphold comity, the Episcopalians did not join the Evangelical Union, for it was said that its first bishop, Charles Henry Brent (1862-1926), thought “he could not join any union that excluded the Church which had been in the Islands for some three hundred years” – referring to the Roman Catholic Church, whose parishioners the Evangelical Union seemed keen to evangelize. Lastly, IEMELIF (established in 1909) and Unida de Cristo (established in 1932), having Methodist and Presbyterian roots respectively, emerged out of nationalist-inspired splits, which tried to resist American control, a move not entirely different from that of the largely Catholic IFI (established in 1902)

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19 Sitoy, ‘Comity and Unity’, 6-7.

20 Ibid., 15.


24 Sitoy, Several Springs, 386-9.
which sought to develop a truly Filipino church, free from foreign domination, whether Spanish or US.\textsuperscript{25}

*Per* Sitoy’s general historical evaluation, “the American Protestantism introduced into the Philippines [at the turn of the twentieth century] was largely an Anglo-Saxon evangelical faith, seen through the American religious experiences of the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries. Though tending to be generally conservative in theological outlook, up to about 1950, it was almost exclusively of the mainline Protestant heritage of the Reformation.”\textsuperscript{26} But apart from this general conservative outlook, Sitoy argues that there was an evangelical emphasis “on service to others, an influence of the [social gospel], or the rediscovery in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century of the social dimensions and implications of the Gospel”.\textsuperscript{27} This, which Sitoy attempts to reconstruct in chapters seven and nine of his book on early Philippine Protestantism, and more specifically on the history of the UCCP, “was the rationale for the Protestant medical, education, and social work.”\textsuperscript{28} In a more recent study, the social anthropologist Melba Maggay seems to reinforce Sitoy’s historical reading, when she writes: “There was then no divide between the spiritual and social side of mission, between evangelism and social action. The early

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\textsuperscript{26} Sitoy, *Several Springs*, 41.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 69.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 69. See in particular, chapter seven entitled ‘The American Board Mission in Mindanao’ and chapter nine, ‘The Formation of the United Evangelical Church’.
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missionaries,” she continues, “saw themselves as bringing an [evangelical Protestant faith], by which they meant a living relationship with Christ that inevitably issues in the practice of justice and personal righteousness. The split between evangelicals, or that branch of Protestantism which tends to emphasize personal salvation, and liberals, or those who tend to underscore social responsibility, did not come until much later. This division”, Maggay continues, “was to surface in a more pronounced way among [post-war] missionaries, a legacy of the shockwaves that emanated from the fundamentalist and modernist controversies that occurred in the US in the 1920s and 1930s.”

In the 1960s, slightly over half a century after the first Protestant missionaries arrived in the Philippines, major trends began to emerge on the global stage of the Protestant movement. One of the most important developments was the integration of the International Missionary Council (IMC) with the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1961. This is important because the processes involved, before and after the integration, which in many ways were informed by recent memories of the two great wars, opened new opportunities for leading Protestant intellectuals, both theologians and missionaries, to rethink more seriously the nature and relationship of church and mission. This key theological trend – the climax of which unfolded

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during the Uppsala Assembly in 1968 – had serious consequences which instead of reinforcing the intended ‘visible unity’ only contributed to the further fragmentation that plagues evangelicals to this day. “Uppsala 1968,” reacted the renowned Anglican Bishop Stephen Neill (1900-1984), “did nothing significant except to produce a number of hastily compiled reports, which no one will ever read except church historians.” 31 There were, of course, some efforts as shown in the career of the Church of Scotland missionary, Lesslie Newbigin (1909-1998), who sought to avoid the dangerous polarisation of viewpoints leading to extreme “social radicalism” against other views tending to encourage “complacent pietism”. 32 From the USA, a somewhat sympathetic though still conservative response came from a missionary of the Reformed Church of America, Harvey T. Hoekstra. Describing himself a minister and insider, Hoekstra applauded the WCC at Uppsala for calling attention to what he described ‘these necessary and urgent challenges’. “It was good,” he wrote, “that Christians were challenged at Uppsala to pour their energies into making the world a better place. Christians,” he declared, “should always be at the forefront of all efforts to recognize the enormous complex issues – issues that not only circumscribe our possibilities today, but that determine the kind of world those yet unborn will inherit.” He declared further that “[w]e need shaking out of our small, comfortable, complacent worlds. We must be conscious of the sobs and cries


32 See Mark T.B. Laing, From Crisis to Creation, 205.
of people who in poverty, hunger and desperation believe nobody cares. Christians must realize that non-participation in the struggle is to be a partner in others’ social crimes.”

At the same time, however, Hoekstra emphasised that Christians who were conscious of what transpired in Uppsala “felt they had been grievously betrayed”. Now shifting to a more conservative critique, he wrote:

the Uppsala Assembly cannot be thanked for what it failed to say. In its intense emphasis on the horizontal relationships, the vertical dimension and the power of the Gospel to change those who hear and believe into new people in Christ was scarcely mentioned. The challenge to repentance and new birth into the Kingdom of God through belief in Jesus Christ for people everywhere was notably absent. Pity and compassion for the millions upon millions who have never validly heard of Jesus Christ, God’s only appointed Savior, was a missing element. Nowhere mentioned was the intent of God that through the proclamation of the Gospel his salvation could reach to the ends of the earth. The great unfinished missionary and evangelistic task of the churches appeared to be deliberately omitted.

We cannot be sure if Hoekstra’s thoughtful albeit more conservative reaction is representative of the views of American conservative evangelicals who, on the whole, as Mark Laing notes, “were more critical of the WCC (and more distant from it) than their British counterparts.” At any rate, this


34 Ibid., 81-82.

35 Laing, From Crisis to Creation, 57.
ecumenical development may have sparked a feeling of *déjà vu* particularly for those evangelicals who were, as Laing rightly notes, “[haunted] by memories of the [social gospel movement].”\(^{36}\) What is termed the ‘social gospel’ – a loose and diverse movement, historically an offspring of the evangelical tradition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – “had become equated”, in the words of Professor Stanley, “in the fundamentalist-evangelical memory with a doctrinally effete liberalism”\(^ {37}\) which is an inherited polarised reaction that hardly gives full justice to the more nuanced thoughts of articulate ‘social gospel’ advocates like the Baptist pastor Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918).\(^ {38}\) The period roughly between 1870 and 1920 saw the strong-but-apparently-diminishing influence of the ‘social gospel’ movement among evangelicals so that even those who gravitated towards the conservative tendencies of D. L. Moody (1837-1899) and preachers like him, apparently regarded social concern as essential, albeit, secondary to the task of soul-winning.\(^ {39}\) It is worth pointing out that most of the early American evangelical missionaries who came to the Philippines in 1899 and the years immediately after, saw it proper to address some of the social issues they faced

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 51-52.


in the country even though most of them tended to be imperialistic and triumphalistic in their approach to the native cultures.\textsuperscript{40} However, the rise of the ‘holiness’ movement since the 1840s (particularly in the US) and of a ‘premillennialist’ eschatology\textsuperscript{41} especially after the devastating effects of the First World War may have been among the crucial factors which undermined the ‘social gospel’ movement. By the 1920s, the ‘social gospel’ movement’s strong emphasis on social concern, which was usually grounded in a ‘postmillennialist’ eschatology\textsuperscript{42} and increasingly powered by a more liberal theology, was gradually viewed with suspicion by the more conservative evangelicals, thereby creating a seemingly unbridgeable polarisation. As a result of this fundamentalist-modernist conflicts in the 1920s and 1930s, major splits in American denominations, notably Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians became inevitable,\textsuperscript{43} foreshadowing the “schism” after the 1968 Uppsala Assembly. Conservative evangelicals or fundamentalists,\textsuperscript{44} formed


\textsuperscript{42} In contrast to premillennialist eschatology, the postmillennialist eschatology generally holds that the world is getting better. And when a perfect order is achieved, then Christ will come again.


\textsuperscript{44} According to the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals (ISAE), the term fundamentalism, in the North American historical context, is derived from “…The Fundamentals (1910-1915), a twelve-volume set of essays designed to combat Liberal
their own denominations that sought to combat the perceived ‘liberal’
influences which they believed have tainted the older institutional churches. In
the process, social concern (increasingly associated with the liberal agenda)
came to be relegated in the agenda of these fundamentalists, a development
which was vigorously critiqued by Carl F. H. Henry in his 1947 book The
Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism.

In the Philippines, a parallel trend – with similar conservative reactions
– became more evident in the 1960s onwards. What began as the Evangelical
Union (1901) established by the ‘older’ evangelical missions gradually
evolved to form an important part of the WCC-affiliated National Council of
Churches in the Philippines (NCCP). Considerably more ecumenical than
the first, the NCCP (this newly formed council in 1963) now included the
Episcopal Church and the IFI, which in liturgical style remained a Catholic

45 Marsden (following Timothy L. Smith) emphasised this dramatic decline of
evangelical social concern as “The Great Reversal”. See Marsden, Fundamentalism and
American Culture, 85-93.

46 For an interesting historical note on the publication of Henry’s book, see Stanley,

47 ‘Older’ here simply refers to the Protestant churches founded by the first wave of
largely American missions arriving around 1899 and in the years before the First World War.

48 On the birth of the NCCP see Oscar Suarez, ‘The Self-Understanding of the
Church and the Quest for Transformation: The Life and Work of the National Council of
Theological Seminary PhD Thesis, 1992), 61-62. See also the NCCP official website:

49 Then known as the Philippine Episcopal Church.
church though no longer in communion with the Vatican.\textsuperscript{50} This certainly was a milestone in the history of Protestantism in the Philippines considering that many of these ‘older’ evangelicals initially intended to evangelize Roman Catholics during most of the first half of the twentieth century. With the Episcopal Church and IFI becoming important founding members of the NCCP, the image of Protestantism in the Philippines began to feature, what the Church of the Nazarene historian, Floyd Cunningham, described as a “growing toleration… toward many aspects of the dominant Roman Catholic society.”\textsuperscript{51} Those who held to this new ecumenical development, however, were placing themselves at the risk of being considered, in the language of conservative evangelicals, ‘compromisers’ or ‘apostates’ who had turned their backs on what they – like their fundamentalist counterparts in the US – understood as the ‘biblical’ or the ‘fundamentals’ of the Christian faith.\textsuperscript{52} As we shall see below, “it became unlikely,” as Cunningham put it, “that Protestant groups that conceived their main task to be evangelizing Roman Catholics would join the NCCP.”\textsuperscript{53}

Unlike the Evangelical Union (1901), moreover, the NCCP had a “looser structure”. “Its charter”, Gardinier notes, “makes no explicit mention

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} NCCP website: \url{http://nccphilippines.org/site/about-us/brief-history/} (accessed 18 June 2012).
\item \textsuperscript{51} Floyd T. Cunningham, ‘Diversities Within Post-war Philippine Protestantism’, \textit{Mediator} 5:1 (October 2003): 90.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Aragon, ‘The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches’, 372.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Cunningham, ‘Diversities Within Post-war Philippine Protestantism’, 90.
\end{itemize}
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of hope for eventual church union, which had been a salient feature… since the Evangelical Union.”54 Of the earliest Protestant denominations mentioned above (pp.55-56), only the SDA and the CAMACOP did not become members of the NCCP.55 While the former consistently maintained some distance from any Protestant council, the latter, it should be noted, would play a key role in the formation of the more conservative evangelical council, the PCEC. In addition to the key role played by CAMACOP, the emergence of the PCEC during the years 1964-1969 was made possible with the coming of the second major wave of largely American evangelical missions from the late 1940s to the 1950s.56

The denominations emerging around this post-war period, and later to become key members of the PCEC, owe their genesis to a variety of Baptists, holiness, pentecostal and other evangelical missions and include the Luzon Convention of Southern Baptist Churches (SBC),57 the Conservative Baptist Association of the Philippines (CBAP),58 the Baptist Conference of the


55 Other churches that would later join the NCCP are the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, the Apostolic Catholic Church, and the Salvation Army (which by the way is also member of the PCEC). See http://nccphilippines.org/about-us/; membership of the Salvation Army in the PCEC can be found here: http://pceconline.org/about/denomination.htm (accessed 23 June 2015).


Philippines (BCP),\textsuperscript{59} the Evangelical Free Church (EFC),\textsuperscript{60} the Free Methodists,\textsuperscript{61} the Church of the Nazarene,\textsuperscript{62} the Wesleyan Church of the Philippines,\textsuperscript{63} the Assemblies of God (AG),\textsuperscript{64} the Church of the Foursquare Gospel in the Philippines (Foursquare),\textsuperscript{65} and the Church of God.\textsuperscript{66} To this list, we should mention two parachurch organisations, namely, the Far East Gospel Crusade (FEGC, now SEND International)\textsuperscript{67} and the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF)\textsuperscript{68} whose mission efforts since the 1950s led to the birth of another key PCEC-affiliated denomination, the Alliance of Bible Christian Communities of the Philippines (ABCCOP) in 1972.\textsuperscript{69} The coming

\textsuperscript{59} Started in 1949 by the missionaries of the Baptist General Conference (BGC) based in Chicago. See Cunningham, op. cit. 124-5.

\textsuperscript{60} The first missionaries of EFC, Rev. and Mrs. Gordon Gustafson, arrived in 1952. See Cunningham, op. cit. 127.


\textsuperscript{62} See Cunningham, op. cit. 114-117.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 113.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 106-10.


\textsuperscript{66} This Pentecostal group based in Cleveland arrived in 1953. See Cunningham, ‘Diversities within Post-war Philippine Protestantism’, 118.

\textsuperscript{67} For a brief history of FEGC see [http://www.send.org/about/history/](http://www.send.org/about/history/) (accessed 1 December 2014).

\textsuperscript{68} A historical timeline can be found in [http://omf.org/about-omf/](http://omf.org/about-omf/) (accessed 1 December 2014). The timeline mentions a ‘reluctant exodus’ in 1953, the year missionaries from China moved to neighbouring countries like Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

\textsuperscript{69} See a brief history of ABCCOP here [http://www.abccop.org/history.html](http://www.abccop.org/history.html) (accessed 1 December 2014).
of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (InterVarsity) in 1953, also helped in the growth of some ABCCOP churches such as the Diliman Bible Church (DBC) and its sister church the Diliman Campus Bible Church (DCBC) which is strategically located within the campus of the prestigious University of the Philippines. As we shall see later (p.94), DBC would play a part in the growing protest against the Marcos government in 1983 and 1986. It is also worth mentioning that the Lutheran Church in the Philippines was born during this second major wave of American evangelical missions, through the efforts of missionaries of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (a conservative Lutheran denomination) in 1946. This is particularly significant because of all the post-war denominations and parachurch groups listed in this paragraph, only the Lutheran Church joined the NCCP in 1969. The rest of these ‘younger’ evangelical groups, including several others arriving in the 1960s onwards, sooner or later joined the PCEC, while a considerable number of more fundamentalist and ‘independent’ pentecostal groups refrained from joining both councils.

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70 Having evangelical roots which goes back to Cambridge University in 1877, IVCF came to the Philippines in 1953 through the mission efforts of Gwen Wong. See http://ivcfphil.org/about (accessed 1 December 2014).


72 ‘Younger’ generally refers to Protestant churches established after the Second World War (1946-). Aragon, ‘The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches’, 371-75. For a glimpse of the current PCEC member bodies, categorised into denomination, para-church, and local church, see http://pceconline.org/about/denomination.htm (accessed 23 June 2015).

73 A fuller list of PCEC-related denominations, churches and parachurch organisations can be found here: http://pceconline.org/about/denomination.htm (accessed 5 December 2014).
It is worth re-emphasising that the early evangelical missionaries who formed the Evangelical Union in 1901 “showed sensitivity to the social dimension of evangelization.” While considering it to be part of their duty to evangelize Filipino Catholics, they nonetheless saw it a vital part of their ministry to build schools, hospitals and other service-oriented ministries which in some ways addressed issues of poverty in the islands. By contrast, post-war evangelical missions – particularly evangelicals who tended to align with the PCEC, and who regarded the NCCP as ‘modernist’ or ‘liberal’ or ‘humanist’ – “have been less involved,” observed the ATS theologian, Lorenzo C. Bautista, “in ministries which they thought were secondary to the main task of calling people to faith.” Bautista proceeds by noting that their missionaries were “preachers and evangelists of younger [faith missions] not supported by the older and more resource-rich denominations.”

“Theologically,” Bautista continues, “they were part of the conservative side in America who were reacting to the modernist and social gospel advocates whom they thought were straying away from orthodoxy.” He concludes that “[t]his conservative impulse and the lower missionary budget help much to

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75 In the chapter entitled “The Many-sided Work,” the Baptist missionary, Charles W. Briggs, Vice-President of the Evangelical Union, comments on some of the service-oriented ministries established by the Union as well as the Episcopal Mission within the first decade of the 1900s. See Charles W. Briggs, *The Progressing Philippines* (Philadelphia: The Griffith and Rowland Press, 1913), 139-59.


explain the constraints to their social involvement. The resulting ethic… coming from this side of the Protestant mission reflects such limits to the social aspect of ministry.” But while Bautista’s remark may be regarded as generally accurate – and there is no evidence that would seriously challenge it – it does not necessarily follow that all of the evangelicals whose churches were aligned with the NCCP were more committed to issues of social justice than their PCEC counterparts. In the next section, we shall therefore examine how NCCP- and PCEC-related evangelicals responded to the controversial authoritarian regime in the Philippines (1972-1986). This regime, and the social and political issues that it raised, is indeed an instructive case for all Christian churches in the Philippines (whether Catholic or Protestant) because it certainly tested (and revealed) the political and theological tendencies of their top leaders and thinkers, who, presumably, occupied key positions that helped to shape (at least, exercised a particular influence on) the minds of their parishioners.

1.2

Philippine Protestants Under the Authoritarian Regime

The emergence of the authoritarian regime can be traced back to the year 1965 when Ferdinand E. Marcos (1917-1989), later described as “brilliant, charismatic, wily… a human being who believed his own
falsehoods”, emerged as the tenth president of the Republic of the Philippines, subsequently becoming the only politician to rule the country for two decades (1965-1986). This event, and the political consequences that accompanied his rise to power, certainly marked a major turning point for the Philippines and the Christian churches there. Even today, what is remembered as the martial law regime continues to haunt Filipinos such as the National Artist, F. Sionil Jose, who describes this period as “a past still shrouded with gossip, innuendo and unresolved mysteries, among them the murder of [former senator Benigno ‘Ninoy’ Aquino Jr.], and whatever happened to the giant loot the Marcoses were supposed to have stashed abroad.” After charting some essential historical elements pertaining to the rise of the authoritarian regime and the reactions to this emerging political situation by the more radical Christians for National Liberation (CNL), this section will proceed to examine key responses of some of the top NCCP-aligned evangelicals, highlighting in the process the general silence of conservative, and PCEC-related, evangelicals while hinting at their gradual rediscovery of a concern for social justice. During this authoritarian regime, which Primitivo ‘Tibo’ Mijares derisively called the ‘conjugal dictatorship’ of

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80 Before his assassination, Benigno ‘Ninoy’ Aquino Jr., was the leading political opponent of Marcos.

Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, there was, writes an evangelical theologian, David S. Lim, “hardly any protest from [conservative evangelicals].”

1.2.1 Reawakening of Filipino Nationalism and the Rise of the Authoritarian Regime of Marcos (1950s-1970s)

It was not an ideal time when Marcos became president in 1965. Writing in January 1966, the journalist Napoleon G. Rama, stated that Marcos, dubbed by the Philippines Free Press as ‘man of the year’, “faces his biggest test in the next four years.” As the war in Vietnam escalated, political and economic conditions in the Philippines deteriorated. Marcos himself acknowledged this in his inaugural speech on 30 December 1965. “Our people,” he said, “have come to a point of despair. I know this for I have personally met many of you. … Prosperity for all, we promise. But only a privileged few achieve it, and, to make the pain obvious, parade their comforts and advantages before the eyes of an impoverished many.” While such words may have been used as ammunitions to attack the alleged greed of previous administrations, they painted some of the country’s basic social realities which no one, including Marcos, seemed prepared to deny. “We are

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in crisis,” he continued. “You know that the government treasury is empty. … Our government in the past few months has exhausted all available domestic and foreign sources of borrowing. … Unemployment has increased. Prices of essential commodities and services remain unstable. The availability of rice remains uncertain.”86 Regardless of the dismal conditions described, however, Marcos presented himself as one who had the vision necessary for “the transformation of the Philippines into a hub of progress,”87 declaring optimistically – repeating the line he is best known for – that “This nation can be great again.”88

His rise to power seemed to have offered the Filipinos a reason to hope anew. And, to some extent Marcos did not disappoint them. The attainment of rice self-sufficiency in 1968 could be considered an impressive achievement of Marcos during his first term as president.89 Likewise the construction of what became popularly known as “Marcos schoolhouses” for upgrading rural education may be viewed as another success story.90 While there was at least a semblance of economic progress during the years 1966-69, not all were impressed. “What undermined Marcos,” according to Abinales and Amoroso, “was the fact that economic progress could not be sustained.”91

86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
90 Ibid., 195.
91 Ibid., 197.
Discontent quickly resurfaced even before Marcos could get through his first term as president.

Meanwhile, it is significant that the post-war decades (1950s-1970s), which overlap with the Marcos era (1965-1986), were simultaneously celebrated as the period of the reawakening of ‘nationalism’. Indeed it was a period when the more educated Filipinos began to reread their history through the writings of Jose Rizal (1861-1896), Claro M. Recto (1890-1960), Teodoro Agoncillo (1912-1985), and Renato Constantino (1919-1999) – to mention four highly influential names. But ‘nationalism’, as Benedict Anderson would remind us, is quite a tricky concept. When the Marcos-led government, for instance, imposed martial law in September 1972, it officially justified such a political manoeuvre along the lines of ‘nationalist’ interest,

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93 Rizal’s best-known works containing his social critiques are his novels *Noli me tangere* (1887) and *El filibusterismo* (1891). A useful introduction to Rizal and his novels is found in Benedict Anderson’s chapter entitled ‘The First Filipino’, see Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World* (London; New York: Verso, 1998) 227-34.

94 One of the lasting contributions of C. M. Recto to the emergence of forms of post-war and post-colonial Filipino nationalism was the enshrinement, on 12 June 1956, of Republic Act No. 1425, or the Rizal Law, which made the novels of Rizal compulsory readings in all educational institutions. See [http://www.gov.ph/1956/06/12/republic-act-no-1425/](http://www.gov.ph/1956/06/12/republic-act-no-1425/) (accessed 25 June 2015).

95 The nationalist historians Constantino and Agoncillo have in various ways attempted to recover the nineteenth-century nationalist tradition of prominent figures such as the leader of the Katipunan, Andres Bonifacio. See Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* (Quezon City: Tala Publishing, 1975); Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *The Revolt of the Masses* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1956).

specifically, as a response “to the escalation of the efforts of both the leftists and the rightists... to employ violence, terrorism and subversion against the Republic of the Philippines....”\(^97\) It was a necessary step, Marcos claimed, “to save our republic and to reform society.”\(^98\) This key political strategy of Marcos’s *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* (KBL, The New Society Movement) could surely have passed as one of the more convincing, indeed, domineering, expressions of ‘nationalism’ at that time.

But there were certainly alternative and competing ‘nationalist’ voices, some of which (unfortunately) were used by Marcos as convenient evidence to justify the imposition of martial law. Prior to the authoritarian regime, various radical movements already surfaced. One interesting case, reported by the historian Reynaldo C. Ileto, is that of the *Lapiang Malaya* (Freedom Party) headed by Valentin de los Santos. Armed only with bolos, amulets and bullet-defying uniforms, some 380 men attempted to march to the seat of power, Malacañang, to demand the resignation of President Marcos in 1967. According to Ileto, the group “enthusiastically met the challenge of automatic weapons fire from government troopers, yielding only when scores of their comrades lay dead on the street.”\(^99\) In 1968, another group, calling itself the

\(^{97}\) See Alex Bello Brillantes, Jr., ‘Explaining Philippine Authoritarianism’ (University of Hawai‘i PhD thesis, 1986), 8.


Muslim Independence Movement (MIM) emerged, unambiguously declaring “its intention to establish an Islamic State in the predominantly Muslim areas in Mindanao and Sulu.”  

The same year, still another group claimed to have ‘reestablished’ on 26 December (the birth anniversary of Mao Zedong) what still stands today as the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), with its armed wing, the New People’s Army (NPA) being organised almost immediately afterwards in 1969.

Several radical forms of student activism also challenged the Marcos government, a prominent example being the *Kabataang Makabayan* (KM, Nationalist Youth) founded in 1964 by Jose Maria Sison, who later spearheaded the formation of the abovementioned CPP and NPA. KM, along with the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP), and the *Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan* (SDK, Democratic Association of the Youth), to mention a few, launched several rallies including one of the more haunting incidents – memorialised later as the *First Quarter Storm* – that occurred on 26 January 1970, the day Marcos delivered the state of the nation address as the newly re-elected president. “After the State of the Nation

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101 The term ‘reestablish’ refers to Jose Maria Sison’s attempt to ‘rectify’ what he perceived to be ‘errors’ of the older Party established in 1930.


address, which was perhaps my best so far, and we were going down the front
stairs,” Marcos recalled, apparently scribbling it down moments after the
event, “the bottles, placard handles, stones and other missiles started dropping
all around us on the driveway….”104 Two days later he also wrote: “If we do
not prepare measures of counter-action, they will not only succeed in
assassinating me but in taking over the government. So we must perfect our
emergency plan.”105 The next lines in this 1970 diary entry, however, are the
most revealing, for they contain some of the seeds of the emerging
authoritarian regime. “I have several options,” he jotted down. “One of them
is to abort the subversive plan now by the sudden arrest of the plotters. But
this would not be accepted by the people. … We could allow the situation to
develop naturally then after massive terrorism, wanton killings and an attempt
at my assassination and a coup d’etat, then declare martial law or suspend the
privilege of the writ of habeas corpus – and arrest all including the legal
cadres. Right now I am inclined towards the latter.”106

1.2.2 Nineteenth-Century Nationalist Tradition and the Birth of
Christians for National Liberation (CNL)

It is important to note at this juncture that the radical nationalist
movements emerging during the Marcos regime, such as the Christians for

104 Marcos diaries, 26 January 1970, p. 51. See the scanned handwritten files in
June 2015).

105 Marcos diaries, 28 January 1970, p. 55. See
June 2015).

106 Ibid., 56.
National Liberation (CNL), have, not unusually, drawn inspiration that goes back to an event in the nineteenth century – on 17 February 1872, to be more precise – when three Filipino priests, collectively known as Gomburza, were garrotted for alleged subversion. ¹⁰⁷ This controversial death marked a historical turning point, apparently contributing to the emerging anti-clericalism and nationalism of many including the leading ilustrado ¹⁰⁸ and pioneer nationalist, Jose Rizal (1861-1896). ¹⁰⁹ Rizal, whose politically charged writings, and, like the Gomburza, violent death at the hands of the Spanish colonial authorities, undeniably bequeathed a nationalist legacy, which is his lasting contribution to what would later be remembered as the ‘unfinished revolution’ against oppressive foreign powers and the struggle for self-determination. After Rizal’s demise, it was the Katipunan armed revolution (1896-1898), in some ways inspired by the 1896 execution of Rizal, which took up the nationalist struggle with some success in marking the final days of (slightly over) three centuries of Spanish colonial rule (1565-1898). However,


¹⁰⁸ The educated ilustrados, many of whom were also freemasons, actively campaigned for reforms in Spain (1880-1885). For a brief discussion of the term ilustrado, see Mojares, Brains of the Nation, 468-9. Cf. Michael Cullinane, Ilustrado Politics: Filipino Elite Responses to American Rule, 1898-1908 (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003); John N. Schumacher, Propaganda Movement, 1880-1895: The creation of a Filipino consciousness, the making of the revolution (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, [1997] 2000).

¹⁰⁹ Rizal dedicated his second novel El Filibusterismo (1891) to the three martyred priests.
what turned out to be a relatively successful revolution (clearly a prelude to the creation of what they imagined as an emerging Filipino nation), abruptly got – according to Floro Quibuyen – ‘aborted’ as American expansionists decided to occupy the islands via the bloody Filipino-American War (1899-1902) in Central and Northern Philippines. The War included the notorious Balangiga massacre in Samar, an operation which curiously formed part of the American campaign called ‘benevolent assimilation’ or ‘benign imperialism’, the aim of which, they claimed, was to ‘civilize’ and ‘Christianize’ the Filipinos. Intriguingly, the years 1896-1902, which the historian Resil Mojares calls “the country’s most complex and politically turbulent period”, saw (at least from 1899) the entrance of the first major batch of American Protestant missionaries as well as the birth (in 1902) of the revolutionary church, Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI, Philippine Independent Church) which we already encountered in the first section of this chapter.

In just three decades after the arrival of the first major wave of American Protestant missions, in 1930 to be exact, a new form of

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111 David Silbey has pointed out that the Filipino-American War “could be compared to the Boer War in South Africa between the British and Afrikaner farmers (1899-1902),” while the Balangiga incident in Samar “could be paralleled with the Congo, where the Belgian king treated his colony with such genocidal ferocity that he outraged even the normally complacent Europeans and inspired Joseph Conrad to write *Heart of Darkness.*” See David J. Silbey, *A War of Frontier and Empire: The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 212.

112 See Mojares, *Brains of the Nation*, 466.
nationalism, clearly not church-based, and distinctly communist-oriented, began to emerge. This is a milestone in the history of the nationalist tradition in the Philippines. Unlike previous nationalist movements, the new movement adopted a Marxist or communist ideology of class consciousness in their analysis of Philippine society. The Filipino intellectuals who inaugurated the movement were inspired to continue the nationalist struggle for autonomy and self-determination by working with the peasants, whom they perceived were victims of a seemingly endless feudal-like economic system that lopsidedly favoured the ruling class. But their struggle proved to be too difficult for two reasons. First, this newly-born Communist Party was declared illegal by the US-controlled Philippine government from 1932 onwards.\textsuperscript{113} Furthermore, after the granting of independence by the US in 1946, the Philippine government retained the largely US-like anti-Communist stance, effectively suppressing, with the help of US resources, a large portion of the leftist movement by the 1950s. Second, the dominant churches in the country, both the pre-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church, and the largely US-linked, and pre-NCCP, Protestant churches assumed a wholesale rejection of Communism until about the 1960s. This is evident, for instance, in the official statement on “Social Justice” issued by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) in 1949, which clearly advanced an anti-Communist rhetoric\textsuperscript{114} not so different from that used by the US-influenced Philippine


\textsuperscript{114} CBCP document May 1949. 
government in warning Filipino Catholics about what they perceived to be the “great crisis that is now swiftly descending on the Far East” – referring to the “tide of advancing Communism.”

About the same time, a federation of US-supported Protestant churches, comprising some Baptist and Methodist groups, claimed to have advanced Protestant principles that “stood uncompromised with either Roman Catholicism or Communism.” This narrow outlook, however, would gradually be challenged, in the 1960s and 1970s, as stirring global and national events would create new opportunities for the leading thinkers of the churches to revisit the meaning of Christian faith whilst exploring broader theological and political implications of church and mission under certain post-war historical conditions such as the Philippine experience of the authoritarian regime of Marcos.

On 17 February 1972, exactly a century after the Gomburza martyrdom, and seven months before Marcos declared martial law, a number of Filipino Catholics and Protestants, men and women, clergy and lay, gathered to commemorate the death of the three priests – establishing on the same day, a Marxist- or Maoist-inspired movement they would call Christians for National Liberation (CNL). “The date was deliberately chosen,” writes


the former Catholic (SVD) priest, widely regarded as the founder\textsuperscript{117} of CNL, Edicio dela Torre,

because we wanted to locate our initiative as part of the nationalist and revolutionary tradition. The more immediate rationale was to offer Christians who had chosen a more radical option (or were open to it) an organisational space and identity which was not available either in the secular National Democratic (ND) movement or in the institutional churches. We wanted to offer our service not only as individuals but as a community, without any intention of forming a revolutionary church. We sought to influence the larger church communities, though we were not yet very clear about the strategy [for national liberation] back then. The more immediate focus was simply to gather in one ecumenical formation all the radicalised Christians.”\textsuperscript{118}

There seems no clear evidence, beyond some unverified reports, that there were conservative Filipino/Filipina evangelicals who joined the movement, either at the time of its establishment in 1972, or shortly after. “At some point,” dela Torre recalls, “CNL used the term ‘revolutionary ecumenism’ to refer both to our shared purpose and our attempt to reach out to the secular and Marxist revolutionary organisations.” The use of the term ecumenical, he says, could be an indication that conservative evangelicals who tended to align with the more conservative theological orientation of the

\textsuperscript{117} Edicio dela Torre himself prefers to include Carlos Tayag and Luis Jalandoni among the founders of the movement. Jalandoni, who was a former priest, is currently more involved as the spokesperson of the National Democratic Front and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), while Tayag, who had a Benedictine background, mysteriously ‘disappeared’ since 1976.

\textsuperscript{118} Personal email to the author (12 November 2014).
PCEC had not yet joined the movement. By contrast, dela Torre confirms the vital involvement of several evangelicals from the mainline Protestant tradition, or those from the NCCP-related movements such as the Student Christian Movement (SCM) in the earlier stages of the formation of CNL, which, only seven months later, was forced to go underground by the time martial law was imposed. Like its parallel – the liberation theology movement – in Latin America, the CNL movement was among the first Filipino/Filipina Christian attempts to engage more seriously with Marxist and Maoist insights in attempting to understand and address the problems of Philippine society. But apart from the uneven influences of major foreign sources, such as, Marxism, Maoism, the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the WCC, as well as the influential voices of theologians such as Karl Rahner, Karl Barth, Hans Kung, Edward Schillebeeckx, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Johann Baptist Metz, Paul Tillich, Jurgen Moltmann, Gustavo Gutierrez and Paulo Freire (to mention several), it was the re-orienting awareness of – one might say, a certain solidarity with – the nineteenth-century Filipino nationalist tradition that led some of the more informed and

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119 Ibid.

120 More particularly, a document published in 1986, mentioned the participation of Christians from various student and youth movements such as the Student Christian Movement (SCM), Kilusang Khi Rho ng Pilipinas (KKRP), Student Catholic Action (SCA), Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF), Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF), the IFI Kilusang Pambansa ng Kabataan, the Lutheran Youth Fellowship (LYF) among others. See Ed de la Torre, *Touching Ground, Taking Root* (London: CIIR, 1986), 116.

121 Suarez, ‘Self-Understanding of the Church’, 68.
more radical Filipino Christians to nurture a commitment to social justice as a legitimate expression of being a Christian in a particular historical moment.\footnote{For materials from a Catholic point of view that seek to develop this line of thinking, see Ed de la Torre, \textit{Touching Ground, Taking Root} (1986) which is a compilation of essays and articles written from the late 60s to the early 80s. From the Protestant side, see the UCCP theologian, Levi V. Oracion, \textit{Rumors of the Divine-Human Synergy in our Midst: Towards a faithful rejoinder to the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth} (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 2010).

\footnote{Article III of the NCCP Constitution, see Suarez, ‘Self-understanding of the Church’, 263-264.}

\footnote{Suarez, ‘Self-understanding of the Church’, 62.}

1.2.3 \textbf{The NCCP During the Marcos Regime: An Emerging Ecumenical Style of Christianity}

This emerging national identity, however, did not mean a superficial ‘Filipinization’ of church leadership, where Filipinos merely took over key leadership roles vacated by foreign missionaries. For example, the NCCP was formed in 1963 with the specific objectives (1) to promote the growth of ecumenical interest in the study of Christian unity and cooperation among churches and their members, (2) to serve as a channel for united witness and common action on matters affecting moral, social, and civic life of the nation, (3) to safeguard fundamental human rights and uphold the principle of the separation of Church and State, (4) to foster closer relationships with Christian bodies in all lands, (5) to support cooperative work among churches and Christian organizations as such as may be agreed upon, and (6) to undertake other work which may be referred to it by any of the member-bodies.\footnote{Suarez, ‘Self-understanding of the Church’, 62.} However, the NCCP historian Oscar Suarez has also emphasised that while the birth of the NCCP was entirely a Filipino initiative with a decent set of objectives,\footnote{Article III of the NCCP Constitution, see Suarez, ‘Self-understanding of the Church’, 263-264.} it did not follow that the entire NCCP leadership
and its affiliated churches would automatically nurture a passion for social justice. Speaking during the 1967 Convention of the NCCP, the then Senator Jovito R. Salonga (1920-2016), who remained a leading UCCP lay thinker, asked:

Could it be that our churches have been totally indifferent to the problems of the nation? Could it be that our churches have failed to develop a faith that is relevant to our times? Could it be that our faith has kindled the spiritual fire but has not developed in us a social conscience that will make the Christian gospel a reality in our lives?\footnote{Ibid., 65.}

Suarez remarks that these penetrating lines have raised the “fundamental questions seldom heard in the hallowed walls and sanctuaries of Protestant edifices.”\footnote{Ibid.} More importantly, according to Suarez, Salonga’s words contributed to what Suarez considers the “political turning point at least in the leadership of mainline Protestantism,”\footnote{Ibid., 66.} implying, in effect, that mainline Protestantism, represented by the NCCP, was not yet known to be politically engaged, although many of them had been involved in various social ministries since the arrival of their first missionaries in 1899. In May 1972 – a few months before Marcos imposed martial law – a UCCP minister, Rev. Henry B. Aguilan, delivered a paper (at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey) which contained a critique of both Protestant and Roman Catholic
Churches in the Philippines for being “great stumbling blocks to the struggle for national liberation.”\textsuperscript{128} While recognising the “social concerns of the churches”, Aguilan proceeded to argue that “in spite of their good intentions” such concerns have “remained far removed from the basic problems and political realities confronting society.”\textsuperscript{129} In short, Aguilan critically posited that the “Church in the Philippines has been one of the powers of preservation of our social captivity. Its theology and practice have succeeded in domesticating Philippine society rather [than] opening it to the future and to freedom.”\textsuperscript{130} While one can challenge the accuracy of Aguilan’s general assessment of the Philippine churches, the unfolding political developments and the general response of the churches following the imposition of martial law tended to support Aguilan’s view. Even the NCCP, of which Aguilan is among its leading figures, was not an exception. “For more than a year, after the imposition of Martial Law,” Suarez notes, “the NCCP had virtually no relevant public statement on the urgent issues of the time until its General Biennial Convention”, on 22 November 1973, which called for “the lifting of Martial Law.”\textsuperscript{131} Writing in 1975, another UCCP pastor, Cirilo A. Rigos, noticed that the churches in general were adopting a wait-and-see posture,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 47-48. \\
\textsuperscript{131} Suarez, ‘The Self-understanding of the Church’, 74-77.
\end{flushleft}
while only a few church leaders were against martial law. Also in 1975, Rigos and Salonga led a weekly gathering called the Wednesday Forum, which – although virtually less radical than the CNL – nonetheless “issued statements exposing what it considered to be the deceptions and pretensions of the Marcos regime.”

1.2.4 The PCEC During the Marcos Regime: An Emerging Conservative Evangelical Style of Christianity

Unlike the evangelical leaders aligned with the NCCP such as Aguilan, Rigos and Salonga, whose political awakening was enhanced even more by the imposition of martial law, the evangelical leaders on the side of the PCEC seemed relatively undisturbed. In fact, the CAMACOP theologian, Averell U. Aragon, who studied the history of the PCEC, even goes further in quoting anonymously, a ‘prominent Christian leader’ who stated bluntly that many PCEC-aligned evangelical leaders “were supportive” of the authoritarian regime. This allegation has remained practically unchallenged as of today. The only PCEC-related evangelical group, which parallels that of the NCCP-aligned Wednesday Forum, led by Rigos and Salonga, was an InterVarsity study group that tackled some of the issues raised by the authoritarian regime.

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132 Cirilo A. Rigos, ‘The Posture of the Church in the Philippines Under Martial Law’, *Southeast Asian Affairs* (1 January 1975): 131. For some brief discussions of Catholic and Protestant leaders who were for or against martial law during its early years, see pp. 127-131 of the same article. For some examples of mainly Catholic Church reactions to authoritarian rule towards the end of the 70s, see Dennis Shoesmith, ‘Church and Martial Law in the Philippines: The Continuing Debate’, in *Southeast Asian Affairs* (1 January 1979): 246-257.


But unlike the Wednesday Forum which was more public, the InterVarsity initiative was, to an extent, an ‘underground’ study group. According to one of its leading thinkers, and one of our key subjects (whose story will be examined in chapter 2), Isabelo Magalit, “[w]e never published our findings because we knew that if we did Marcos would shut down the InterVarsity movement. And that is a high price to pay because you lose all opportunity to do evangelism, which is extremely valuable. Our most important contribution [as evangelicals] is still evangelism.”

It is interesting to note, however, that during the authoritarian regime the PCEC-related evangelical churches grew rapidly while the membership of the NCCP-affiliated churches began to dwindle. For example, CAMACOP, introduced in the first section as a key denomination which helped in the formation of the PCEC, reported a tremendous ‘church growth’ beginning in the 1970s. In 1974, CAMACOP had 400 churches which doubled (800) in 1979. As of 2014, CAMACOP has over 2,700 churches around the country. Another example is the Southern Baptists in Mindanao, which according to a study, experienced rapid numerical increase after adopting a ‘church growth’ philosophy in 1972. Southern Baptist statistics for Mindanao alone, reveal

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135 Isabelo Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.3 (13 May 2011), clip 2/4.


149 churches in 1974, skyrocketing to 925 in 1985. A recent statistical survey conducted by the PCEC reveals that in 1975, there were already 4,900 evangelical churches (excluding NCCP and non-aligned pentecostal churches). By 2010, there were approximately 77,000 evangelical and “full gospel” churches and about 26,000 were affiliated with the PCEC. Based on this optimistic projection, PCEC-related evangelicals may now make up as much as 9.5% of the Philippine population. The above trend seems to suggest that evangelicals have generally placed a high priority on ‘church growth’ initiatives since the 1970s. However, there are hints that some evangelical mission efforts have attempted to provide social services, albeit, as mere instruments for “church growth”, or as “means of winning a hearing for the gospel.”

Another angle worth exploring, in our attempt to understand the general lack of socio-political engagement of PCEC-related churches during the authoritarian regime, is the fundamental emphasis placed upon the concern “to maintain the purity of the Gospel and defend its truth”. This ‘separatist impulse’, not unusually accompanied by a premillennialist or

138 Ibid., 94.


140 Terry, op. cit. 234.

141 This is found in the PCEC’s Articles of Incorporation. See Aragon, ‘The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches’, 377.

142 For an interesting parallel and extended discussion on the nature of this impulse in the history of evangelicalism in the North American context, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, see Joel A. Carpenter, Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
dispensationalist eschatology, had serious implications in maintaining a
distinct ‘Christian identity’ which unsurprisingly was defined against
Catholicism, ecumenism, and communism – all forces which the PCEC-
related churches, in general, were reacting against. Aware of the still-
dominant Catholic influence and the growing presence of communism,
particularly the Maoist version, among the more progressive intellectuals in
major universities in the 1960s and 1970s, it was not uncommon for PCEC-
oriented evangelical missionaries and their converts to mount an evangelistic
strategy which carried an embedded anti-Catholic and anti-Communist
rhetoric. Such a separatist style of evangelism, complemented by a high
degree of premillennialist eschatology, came to characterise the emerging
conservative evangelical ethos in post-war Philippines, an ethos which, more
or less, had made a fundamental impact on the initial pilgrimages of the four
selected subjects of this study.

PCEC’s general silence plus the dearth of official records revealing
PCEC’s stance on the authoritarian regime should not prevent us from
postulating the probability of PCEC’s political naïveté. It seems reasonable to
say that during the Marcos regime, the PCEC was more equipped to address
certain types of church issues other than those relating to economic and social
injustice raised by the 1972-1981 imposition of martial law. This separatist
and socially-disengaged style of evangelicalism seems to be the exact target of
Emerito P. Nacpil, a leading UMC and NCCP theologian, when writing in

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143 Fermin Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.1 (10 July 2008), clip 1/3.
the 1970s he noted that Protestants “have seen their task mainly as
evangelism, pastoral work, and church extension....” Expanding his critique,
Nacpil attacked what he perceived to be a ‘fragmentary’ and ‘individualistic’
thology that prevents the churches from engaging with social issues:

[t]he personal reality of salvation is emphasized, but it is also distorted
by being understood in a fragmentary and individualistic fashion. It is
fragmentary in that it involves only the soul of man and not his body,
not the whole man and all his relationships. It is individualistic in that
it tends to make the believer withdraw from the world and its evils, and
enjoy for himself the benefits of salvation, instead of being concerned
with the problems of society and being responsible for its
transformation and right ordering.144

Much has changed since Nacpil mounted his general critique against
the Protestant churches in the 1970s. In a recent statement dated 30 January
2014, for instance, the PCEC has shown its support for the peace negotiations
between the Philippine Government and the Moro representatives in
Mindanao.145 More recently, on 9 August 2016, the PCEC issued a statement
which expressed a deep concern for the apparent violations of human rights
made evident in the brutal killings of suspected illegal drug users and pushers
occurring on a regular basis under President Duterte’s aggressive campaign
against illegal drugs.146 These recent examples of PCEC’s social and political

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145 “PCEC Welcomes the Final Stages of the Peace Negotiations in Mindanao”

146 “PCEC Statement on the Administration’s Campaign Against Illegal Drugs”
https://www.facebook.com/pcecph/posts/1068488673240332 (accessed 10 September
2016).
involvement direct our attention to a rather intriguing development precisely because, as shown in this sub-section, a concern for social justice was clearly not a topmost priority of the PCEC during the entire martial law period.

1.3

The Slow Rediscovery of a Concern for Social Justice among PCEC-related Evangelicals in the 1980s

In this third and final section of this chapter, we will examine the slow rediscovery of a commitment to issues of social justice by PCEC-related evangelicals. This would take us back to some of the key movements such as InterVarsity and the 1978 emergence of the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture (ISACC). We shall then examine how some of the leading conservative evangelicals reacted to the 1983 assassination of Aquino, as well as the largely non-violent 1986 people power revolution which ousted the authoritarian regime of Marcos. Along the way, we shall scan through an interesting albeit diverse list of PCEC-related evangelicals who, in one way or other, have engaged with the political issues of this critical period, which, thenceforth, should help to highlight the need for an in-depth study of the four evangelical subjects of this thesis.

1.3.1 InterVarsity and the Birth of ISACC

In p.88, we already saw that InterVarsity had an ‘underground’ study group during the authoritarian regime. But InterVarsity is worth mentioning
here in relation to the formation of the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture (ISACC). “We viewed ourselves”, said Melba Maggay, one of the founders of ISACC, “as some sort of daughter organization of [InterVarsity].” According to the historian Anne C. Kwantes, ISACC began when Melba Maggay, a former InterVarsity staff worker, “was interviewed during a live program of DZAS, the local Christian radio station.” Responding to questions regarding the political situation of the country at that time, Maggay, according to Kwantes, “openly expressed her unhappiness with Martial Law, and also with the quiescence of the Church. She voiced her frustrations and communicated her idea that Christians must do something.”\(^{147}\) Though institutionally more PCEC- than NCCP-related, ISACC was critical of the authoritarian regime from its beginnings in the late 1970s. During its first two years of existence, however, ISACC, and especially Maggay herself, experienced significant resistance, particularly from the more conservative evangelical leaders including those from the PCEC. While Maggay acknowledged her InterVarsity roots, she could not hide her disappointment at what she alludes to be a problematic conservatism among her evangelical readers, referring more specifically to pastors and missionaries. “I was grateful,” said Maggay, “for [InterVarsity] as a foundation for the faith and solidarity we enjoyed. Our members needed each other, especially when we discovered that the evangelical community was

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even more conservative than we knew.” She clearly recalls how some church leaders complained about what they regarded as somewhat “disturbing” or “offensive” publications of ISACC. On one occasion, for instance, there was a pastor who approached William Dyrness – Dyrness was then an ATS theologian and also a founding member of ISACC – to ask rather bluntly: “What right does this girl [referring to Maggay] have to talk about contextual theology, or, to write about such and such issue, she doesn’t even have a theological degree?” Despite strong resistance coming from the conservative evangelical communities, ISACC persisted as a research institute dealing with issues raised by the political and cultural climate of the Philippines. In fact, in 1981, ISACC published what is known as the ‘Novaliches Letter’, criticising martial law, while expressing a “grave concern over problems the Marcos regime had failed to address.”

1.3.2 Evangelicals Before and After the 1986 People Power Revolution

In 1983, ISACC, together with InterVarsity, and a leading ABCCOP congregation, namely, the Diliman Bible Church (DBC), signed a public letter which condemned the 1983 murder of Aquino. Interestingly, the public letter, entitled “A Call to Repentance”, was issued by DBC, which by that time was

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148 Kwantes, She Has Done a Beautiful Thing for Me, 305.


pastored by the former general secretary of InterVarsity and one of our key subjects Isabelo Magalit (chapter 2). “The letter”, according to Magalit, “was sent to two hundred local churches and Christian organizations.” Out of the two hundred, only five, Magalit says, expressed “agreement with our statement.” But there was one, rather terse and undeniably negative, reply which further reveals a kind of mentality that illustrates the basically apolitical or socially-disengaged posture of conservative evangelicals: “Read Romans 13!”

Far from being a distinctly conservative evangelical response, however, it is interesting that exactly the same line was also used by a Roman Catholic layman who, reportedly, rebuked the then Cardinal, Jaime Sin, for getting so involved in the socio-political issues of the country. The Aquino assassination was also important for it seemed to disrupt the long silence of the PCEC whose general secretary, Agustin ‘Jun’ Vencer, purportedly issued a somewhat reluctant statement which denounced “all forms of sin” while discouraging “public protest gatherings.”

After the experience of the 1986 people power revolution, there was not much change among evangelicals with regard to their posture towards the prevailing socio-political issues of the country. In one recent study, David S. Lim has listed five reasons why most PCEC-related evangelicals have

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refrained from engaging with the social question: (1) the American mission heritages of pietistic theology; (2) continued American financial support and influence; (3) individualistic outlooks, emphasizing personal salvation and ignoring social or cultural issues; (4) concern for self-advancement due to low social status; and (5) political naïveté.\textsuperscript{154} Yet, in spite of that, Lim has affirmed the presence of socially-involved evangelicals who, according to him, have emerged in ‘three waves’. He calls the first wave of evangelicals as ‘transformational’; he describes them as “predominantly educated and newly middle class, nurtured as students in the early 1970s by Inter-Varsity’s ‘kingdom of God’ paradigm,\textsuperscript{155} which led to the founding of the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture (ISACC) in 1978.” The second wave, according to Lim, refers to “Christian development groups” ministering among the urban poor, which, as he implies, includes the PCEC development and relief arm.\textsuperscript{156} A third wave, he calls, “charismatic evangelicals” who were “first visible in 1992. … Many of their leaders had activist or middleclass backgrounds and were theological optimists about transforming [the powers] having experienced God’s supernatural power in personal and church life.”\textsuperscript{157}

In a chapter published in 1996, ATS theologian Lorenzo C. Bautista had also observed “an increasing number and diversity of social ministries”\textsuperscript{158}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{154} Ibid., 241.
\bibitem{155} As to the exact origins of this supposedly early 1970s ‘kingdom of God’ paradigm, Lim does not expound.
\bibitem{156} http://www.pceconline.org/philtrads/home.htm (accessed 4 July 2015).
\bibitem{157} Lim, ‘Consolidating Democracy’, 241-2.
\bibitem{158} Bautista, ‘Church in the Philippines’, 190.
\end{thebibliography}
among PCEC-related evangelicals. He attributed this to the “new stimuli from the national situation coupled by developments in theological thinking” which Bautista sensed have helped some conservative evangelicals to become “more sensitive to the demands of the social problem”.159 Another positive source, he wrote, was the availability, since the 1980s, of foreign funding “for works of relief and development …through global [e]vangelical organizations with office[s] in the Philippines like World Vision.” “This encouraged,” Bautista observed, “even [e]vangelicals not particularly known for social involvement to widen their scope of ministerial interests.”160 He then concluded his section on evangelicals by suggesting a potential track for future research: “A most promising type of evangelical is emerging,” he wrote, “one which makes the underprivileged of society as the eminent focus of ministry in ways that bring out the theme of the Christian cross in most authentic ways. This minority section is worth watching in the next decades of evangelical ministry.”161

With a few exceptions such as the studies of Lim (2009) and Tizon (2008), a critical study of this minority section is still largely ignored. Surely, a most crucial need at this juncture is to conduct a serious and deliberate effort to build a biographical archive of evangelicals who may fall within this emerging minority section. The lack of this much-needed biographical archive must certainly have contributed in cautioning researchers from treading along this

159 Ibid., 190.
160 Ibid.
161 Ibid.
particular direction. The attempt of this current thesis in examining the four carefully selected evangelical theological pilgrimages will hopefully count as a step in this direction. However, in focusing on these four selected trajectories, this study is more particularly concerned in charting how each of these evangelical trajectories have moved from a socially-disengaged and pietistic evangelical beginnings to a later stage where the subjects eventually came to embrace a socially-engaged evangelical faith, which is a rather theologically challenging step to make given the historical and theological background discussed in this chapter. We shall now turn to explore these intriguing trajectories of change in the next four chapters.
CHAPTER TWO

A COMMITMENT TO EVANGELISM AND THE SHAPING OF A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

The Story of Isabelo Magalit

Does a conversion experience to conservative evangelical Christianity impede or diminish the impulse to engage with issues of economic or social justice? In the previous chapter, I surveyed the historical landscape in the Philippines underscoring the lack of socio-political engagement among conservative evangelicals in the years 1946-1986. The chapter noted several influential issues which may have contributed to such a historical outcome, and which can be summarised in two brief points, namely: (1) the impact of the socially conservative inclinations of mainly post-war US evangelical missionaries arriving in the Philippines, and carrying with them the ‘baggage’ of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the 1920s and 1930s, and (2) their Filipino/Filipina converts who knowingly or unknowingly perpetuated a similar, if not the same, separatist and socially-disengaged tendencies. Nonetheless, I emphasised another observation – which is more difficult to explain, and which is the focus of this study – that there were (and are) previously socially-disengaged evangelicals who have become socially engaged, thereby suggesting a radical change, that one may be tempted to describe it as a ‘second conversion’. In this chapter – as well as in the next
three chapters – I will attempt to explore this theological re-orientation by
following closely and examining carefully the four unique trajectories
unfolding in the life stories of our selected evangelical subjects. My basic
claim is that a sustained engagement with these trajectories of change should
enable us to move a step forward in problematising, and, hopefully, in
shedding some light on the processes involved in the movement from an
initial position that is socially disengaged to one that is socially engaged.

I shall now proceed to explore the story of Isabelo Magalit (b. 1940).

In 1973 – about a year after Marcos declared martial law – the
Philippine InterVarsity movement published a booklet entitled *Who is a Real
Christian?* The booklet, written by Isabelo Magalit, who then was the general
secretary of InterVarsity (1966-1973) as well as the newly installed East Asia
regional secretary of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students
(IFES, 1972-1982), was unambiguously evangelistic. It contained an
invitation towards a typical understanding of evangelical conversion: a call to
turn ‘from the power of Satan to God’, ‘from the darkness to the light’, *from* a
life of sin *to* forgiveness of sins, *from* a life leading to hell *to* salvation and the
attainment of ‘eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior’.¹
The booklet, however, mentioned nothing about the responsibility to confront
socio-political issues as essential to being a ‘real Christian’. And even the
young Magalit himself, who had an initial evangelical conversion experience

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in 1957, was not yet known in 1973 to embody a commitment to issues of social justice.

In 1983 – two weeks after the assassination of Marcos’s archrival Benigno ‘Ninoy’ Aquino Jr. – Isabelo Magalit, now the senior pastor of Diliman Bible Church (DBC), endorsed a 400-word public letter entitled *A Call to Repentance*. The letter, which was addressed to the Filipino nation, and sent to 200 evangelical churches and organisations around the Philippines’ national capital region Metro Manila, condemned the murder of Aquino while at the same time reviewing “a litany of Philippine realities: widespread poverty, graft and corruption in government, a suppressed press, unfair elections, a subservient parliament, and a Supreme Court losing its credibility.”² Moreover, on 19 February 1986, barely two weeks after the infamous snap election – which could have extended the reign of Marcos – the Magalit-led DBC, once more, issued *A Christian Response to the February 7 Election*. The tone of the letter was bold and categorical, written at a time when the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC),³ supposedly the visible representative of the Philippine evangelical community, was not prepared to challenge the prevailing political structure:


³ For an extended discussion on the PCEC’s lack of socio-political involvement, see chapter 1 (pp.83-87).
We judge the election to be fraudulent. We do not accept that President Marcos has been given a new mandate. He has no right to continue to rule.  

These series of events, sparked by the 1983 murder of Aquino, culminated in what turned out to be an unprecedented, dictator-ousted demonstration, internationally known as the people power revolution (22-25 February 1986), in which Magalit played a key role in leading a group of evangelicals to rally alongside multitudes of Filipinos in EDSA.  

This raises an interesting problem for this chapter. What moved a conservative evangelical such as Magalit, who initially did not seem to regard social involvement as essential to being a real Christian (judging from its absence in his 1973 booklet), to confront – in 1983 and later – some of the pressing socio-political issues in his country? Assuming that Magalit eventually regarded social involvement as an essential expression of his Christian faith, the question remains: how did he get to that point? What factors can we identify which propelled him to take a more socially-engaged path when it seemed fairly reasonable, or tempting, or more convenient simply to focus on the verbal proclamation of evangelism?  

I will attempt to answer these questions by exploring the trajectory of Magalit’s story in three sections. In section one, I will trace the beginnings of what Magalit himself calls his ‘social conscience’, the period when the young

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Isabelo was the general secretary of InterVarsity. This is where, I submit, we can detect a growing sense of disquiet as Magalit faced Marxist-inspired student movements in the universities of the 1960s and 1970s. The next section will examine the broader formative context leading up to the time he was appointed general secretary. This section will cover key details of his early years as a nominal adherent of both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, gradually moving towards Isabelo’s initial evangelical conversion, leading to his emerging identity as an evangelist, which should highlight the apparent absence of a desire to engage with issues of injustice. The final section will build on the previous two sections by incorporating and examining the narratives leading up to Magalit’s involvement in the 1986 people power revolution, in order to discuss the main question as to how and why a transformation towards a socially-engaged evangelical posture became possible.

2.1

An Emerging Social Conscience

The seeds of Magalit’s transformation towards a socially-engaged evangelical faith seems to be found in a growing awareness of a deficiency in his existing evangelical framework regarding issues of injustice. Although his 1973 booklet seems to obscure this, his life story, as we shall now explore, seems to indicate this growing sense of unease. “On the development of my social conscience,” Magalit recalls during one of our 2011 kwentuhans,6 “I think that

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6 The approach employed in this study, which I call the kwentuhan, is discussed in the Introduction (pp.27-32).
grew slowly.” He then takes us back to the period when he was general secretary of InterVarsity (1966-1973), which conveniently helps us to locate the beginnings of his ‘second conversion’. “When I became general secretary,” he says, “we thought of how we could effectively capture the attention of the young people, particularly students of major universities. But,” and here he introduces the major obstacle which clearly bothered him, “we immediately felt so much pressure from the communists, which was quite challenging to compete with because the Marxist and Maoist movements at that time were very influential and very persuasive.” Soon the situation led him to the realisation that perhaps an effective approach to evangelize university students, which was his main concern, should include an engagement with the ideology of these Marxist-inspired movements: “and so we were compelled,” he reports, “to respond by reading a little bit of the writings of Jose Maria Sison [the chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines].”

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, Isabelo must have wondered what resources were available for conservative evangelicals who were compelled to face the Marxist challenge. Was it still possible for him to respond to the Marxist challenge by a simple appeal to the presumed superior authority of the Bible as God’s word? Maybe. But his account reveals a particular concern that

7 Isabelo Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 26/46; Kwentuhan 3.1, (8 June 2011), clip 1/16.

8 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.3 (13 May 2011), clip 1/4.

9 We have first encountered Jose Maria Sison in chapter 1 (p.73). By ‘writings’ Magalit refers more specifically to Sison’s Philippine Society and Revolution which was published in 1970 under the pseudonym Amado Guerrero. Magalit, Kwentuhan 4 (1 December 2014), clip 2/20.
made him quite restless. There is evidence that on occasion a number of student activists participated in InterVarsity meetings, attempting to convince evangelicals with the intention to recruit some of them to the communist movement.10 “For example,” Magalit confides in our 2014 kwentuhan, “after a lecture I delivered, I remember a student activist who raised his hand as if he were about ask a question. But instead he lectured for thirty minutes and wanted to monopolise the meeting.”11 This incident partly explains the discomfort which eventually pushed Magalit to search for an intellectually adequate response.

“And after scanning around for materials,” Magalit recalls with satisfaction, “I found Lester DeKoster’s *Communism and Christian Faith* quite useful.”12 This book – which contains a rather problematic take on communism,13 though Magalit clearly found it sufficient for his own purposes – was then circulated more widely: “I got permission to do a local reprint, which made the book more accessible and affordable.”14 Regardless of its limitations, the book seemed quite

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14 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.3 (13 May 2011), clip 1/4.
instrumental in opening him up to issues of social justice: “In studying that book more closely,” Magalit recalls, “we began to feel the force of the Marxist argument, that there really was a genuine moral concern for the downtrodden, for the masses, the fringes of society; that there was, indeed, a cry for justice.”\textsuperscript{15}

But then he concludes, presumably following DeKoster, “that it was quite unacceptable to respond to the socio-political problem by imposing a Marxist system which eventually leads to loss of freedom because it is the dictatorship of the proletariat.”\textsuperscript{16}

From this report, it is not difficult to imagine that the then general secretary of InterVarsity was indeed disturbed by the presence of Marxist-inspired movements. Not only were these movements getting in the way of Magalit’s primary concern to reach university students for the gospel, they were also, as he described them, ‘very influential and very persuasive’, so much so that Magalit was forced to engage with some of their materials, aided by the book written by DeKoster. Although Magalit found DeKoster’s book useful in dealing with the topic of communism, the book also helped to reinforce a caricature of communism, as is evident in Magalit’s interpretation of the crucial phrase ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’,\textsuperscript{17} which he understood – as we saw above – as leading inevitably to ‘loss of freedom’.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., clip 1/4.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., clip 1/4.

\textsuperscript{17} For a discussion of the complex history of the phrase, see Hal Draper’s chapter on “The ‘Dictatorship of the Proletariat’ in Marx and Engels” in https://www.marxists.org/subject/marxmyths/hal-draper/article2.htm (accessed 20 March 2016).
Magalit did not seem to have access to the much more favourably reviewed published PhD dissertation by Charles West\textsuperscript{18} which might have helped in guarding against his virtually static and monolithic view of communism. This inclination to rely on secondary sources to interpret and ultimately downplay communism or Marxism would be criticised by another InterVarsity member, Fermin Manalo Jr. whose ‘second conversion’, as we shall see in chapter 4, involved a more positive accommodation of Marxist tools of social analysis. While there was a sincere attempt on the part of Magalit to understand Marxism, his overall view however tended to be somewhat compendious. Nevertheless, this early stage marked a gradual recognition of the importance of paying attention to issues of social justice, although an explicit commitment to confront injustice was not yet evident.

We cannot know for sure how long it took Magalit to realise the importance of addressing issues of injustice, much less can we ascertain the degree or depth of such a realisation. But there is an indication that this realisation was strengthened by his experience of the \textit{First Quarter Storm} which began, as mentioned in chapter 1 (p.76), during the 1970 state of the nation address of Marcos: “I was actually there, when Marcos delivered his state of the nation address. I was among the crowd of demonstrators, although I was merely an observer. But I suppose that my exposure to student activism in those days also helped to sharpen my social conscience.”\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{19} Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.3 (13 May 2011), clip 3/4.
Also in 1970, in an InterVarsity missionary conference in Baguio city, Magalit delivered a speech entitled *I Have a Dream* – clearly inspired, he admits, by Martin Luther King’s 1963 speech\(^{20}\) – which seems to reveal a desire for social engagement though still motivated by the aim to evangelize: “I dream that from the student world of this nation will come a steady stream of men and women… living in the middle of today’s hard realities: poverty, pain, injustice, inequality… recogniz[ing] the spirit of the times… hav[ing] insight into the peculiar opportunities of the day… and shar[ing] the good news of Christ in terms that are meaningful to their fellows, in terms that are easily understood.”\(^{21}\)

In addition, he also said (and here he shows awareness of, as well as a more explicit desire to align with, an earlier evangelical tradition of social activism):\(^{22}\)

> My dream includes politicians and social reformers who meet around the Word of God, discussing the nation’s needs and planning to meet those needs through political and social action…. This is not hopeless idealism: we have a prototype in the Clapham Sect of nineteenth-century, England. We have the example of a William Wilberforce, who with likeminded friends managed to abolish slavery and the slave trade, reform the prisons and establish primary education.\(^{23}\)

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\(^{23}\) Magalit, ‘I have a dream’, n.p.
However, this growing desire to align with an earlier evangelical social activist tradition was put to test two years later when Marcos declared martial law. We can easily notice how his commitment to evangelism trumped the responsibility to confront the social question, although the desire remained intact as evident in the discussion group that was formed:

When martial law was imposed in 1972, we formed a study group to respond to the question of dictatorial, tyrannical rule. It was a representative group – there were lawyers, industrialists, staff workers…. We met on a regular basis but we never published our findings because we knew that if we did Marcos would simply shut down the InterVarsity movement which is too high a price to pay because you will lose all your opportunity to do evangelism, which is extremely valuable. Our most important contribution is still evangelism. So we never published. But we met regularly.24

It is clear that as martial law was imposed, a commitment to the verbal proclamation of evangelism dominated. This change in the political climate including the political repression implied therein may further explain why his 1973 booklet *Who is a Real Christian?* failed to tackle the socio-political dimension of being a Christian, although as we saw above in his 1970 speech, a concern for social involvement was already beginning to be articulated. In other words, martial law can be considered as the fire which tested the allegiance of Filipino evangelicals like Magalit: when pushed into a corner he remained firm in his commitment to the verbal proclamation of evangelism. At any rate, we cannot deny that an emerging concern to address the social question was gaining some

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24 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.3 (13 May 2011), clip 2/4. This ‘underground’ study is also mentioned in chapter 1 (pp.83-84).
momentum through an ‘underground’ study group. This would be further nurtured once he participated in the 1974 Lausanne Congress, and subsequently thereafter, as an active participant of both the Lausanne Continuation Committee, as well as the Asia Lausanne committee, which we will discuss more fully in section three. But, in order to appreciate this gradual development of his social involvement prior to Lausanne, it is necessary to examine his formative years which should help in reconstructing a fuller account of the trajectory.

2.2

The Making of an Evangelist

In this section, I will explore Magalit’s formative experiences leading up to the time he became general secretary of InterVarsity in 1966. The purpose of this section is to examine key events, influences and factors which might have anticipated his ‘second conversion’ even before he became general secretary, and/or how this early formation might have further reduced his chances of nurturing a commitment to issues of economic or social justice.

Isabelo Magalit begins the story of his life by painting a Christian background that was rather ambivalent. “I grew up,” Magalit wrote, “a nominal Roman Catholic and Protestant. Father was a nominal Protestant who brought the younger children to a nearby Baptist Church occasionally, and Mother was a reasonably devout Catholic and we [siblings] sometimes accompanied her to
hear Mass.” With regard to economic status, the Magalits were middle class. Magalit’s mother run a dormitory for students, and his father was principal – later a supervisor – of a public school in Iloilo City. Bred in relative comfort, it is rather unsurprising that Magalit remembers a happy childhood. “I enjoyed being part of a large family because we had good relations,” he says. “We were seven siblings, and I was the sixth. Though the three older ones seemed a generation older, the four younger ones were a gang. Reynaldo was the oldest of the four and was our leader. Reynaldo, Val Jr., myself and Eugenia did a lot together…. So it was a happy childhood in Iloilo City. In fact, I was there from age six to eighteen, which were really happy years.”

2.2.1 Commitment to Christ

The good relations among the siblings, particularly with his older brother Reynaldo, seemed instrumental to Isabelo’s initial evangelical pilgrimage. In June 1956, as Magalit reveals in his written testimony, “Reynaldo came to Christ at a ‘Christian Emphasis Week’ in Central Philippine University, with Rev. Greg Tingson as preacher.” Subsequently, Reynaldo persuaded the three younger siblings (Isabelo included) to join him in the choir at Baptist Center Church where Rev. Tingson, the evangelist who is sometimes referred to as ‘Asia’s Billy Graham’ – was at that time the pastor. As a result, Magalit recalls, “we heard

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26 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 6/46.

27 Isabelo Magalit, ‘How I came to know’, 1.

28 In the 1940s, Gregorio J. (‘Greg’) Tingson was also a Youth for Christ staff member who closely worked with Torrey Johnson and Billy Graham. See Ed Morada, ‘Evangelist Dr. Greg Tingson: Still Full of Drive at 75’, Evangelicals Today (May 1996): 15-18.
the gospel many times.” I should note briefly that both Baptist Center Church (BCC) and Central Philippine University (CPU) were and still are affiliated with the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC). We may recall in the previous chapter (p.54) that CPBC was among the founding members of the ecumenical National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) in 1963. But in Magalit’s time, in the 1950s, BCC, CPU, and CPBC in general were still rather theologically conservative. And even today, many years after joining NCCP and the World Council of Churches (WCC), CPBC has retained some conservative evangelical features that may allow an observer to conclude that they are members of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC).

Moving back to the 1950s, Magalit says, “there were regular altar calls, and many committed their lives, but,” he quickly adds, “I never really felt comfortable going forward.”

At the same time, it is reasonable to speculate that because his mother was a devout Catholic, there was at least a fifty per cent chance he would become a Catholic. He did not. There were at least two reasons, he thinks, why this became unlikely: first, the Mass (this was pre-Vatican II) was in Latin. “My mother used to take me to the church to hear Mass,” he recalls, “but since it was in Latin, it didn’t mean anything.” Second was the remark of his nominal –

29 Magalit, ‘How I came to know’, 1.

30 For an example, see the current mission and vision of Baptist Center Church (BCC) here: http://bcciloilo.tripod.com/id4.html (accessed 25 April 2015), and their brief history here: http://bcciloilo.tripod.com/index.html (accessed 25 April 2015).

31 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 38/46.

32 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 5/46.
from Magalit’s point of view – Baptist father\textsuperscript{33} who convinced him about the “bigotry of Roman Catholicism.”\textsuperscript{34} This particular influence helped to diminish the appeal of the Roman Catholic option, although the Catholic Church was, and still is, the dominant religious institution in the Philippines.

The remark of his father was further reinforced when the young Isabelo, together with his siblings, joined the choir at the Baptist Center Church (BCC) in December 1956.\textsuperscript{35} There, a certain lay leader introduced him to some of the writings of Charles Chiniquy (1809-1899),\textsuperscript{36} a controversial French-Canadian and ex-Catholic priest who converted to Protestantism.\textsuperscript{37} “At that time,” he recalls, “I was struck by the Chiniquy tract entitled \textit{The Gift},\textsuperscript{38} although I was already reading the New Testament – for instance, Ephesians 2:1-10 I knew by

\begin{itemize}
  \item His father was a third generation Baptist who came from New Washington, Aklan before migrating to Iloilo. His father’s grandparents were among the first members of the earliest Baptist mission in the Philippines arriving at the turn of the twentieth century. Isabelo Magalit, Kwentuhan (13 May 2011), clip 1/4.
  \item Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), Clip 1/46.
  \item Magalit, ‘How I came to know’, 1.
  \item Because of his accessible anti-Catholic rhetoric, it is not surprising that the writings of Charles Chiniquy, the Quebec-born Catholic-priest-turned-Presbyterian-pastor, would become rather famous among the more fundamentalist or conservative evangelical groups even today. For an examination of Chiniquy’s life and his anti-Catholic rhetoric see Paul Laverdure, ‘Creating an Anti-Catholic Crusader: Charles Chiniquy’, \textit{The Journal of Religious History} 15:1 (June 1988): 94-108. Chiniquy’s conversion, from Catholicism to Protestantism, has also been recently examined by Richard Lougheed, see his \textit{The Controversial Conversion of Charles Chiniquy} (Toronto: Clements Academic, 2009). For another recent, perhaps more accessible, article on Chiniquy’s Protestantism, see Jason Zuidema, ‘Charles Chiniquy: The Meta-denominational and Protestant Presbyterian’, \textit{Westminster Theological Journal} 72 (2010): 103-17.
  \item Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 3/46.
  \item \textsuperscript{This tract, which contains Chiniquy’s testimony, has been perpetuated in many anti-Catholic websites, see for instance http://www.calltoworship.org/calltoworship/testimony/chiniquy.html (accessed 24 April 2015).}
\end{itemize}
heart. I would say that the Scriptures were far more important than the tract. But
the tract made it clear to me that salvation is a gift, God’s gift by grace through
faith. You cannot earn it by good works. There is no doubt that, apart from the
Scriptures, the tract influenced me towards evangelical Christianity.” Implied
in this last sentence is the making of a complete break with Catholicism,
although his narrative does not exactly fit the types of conversion discussed, for
instance, by Lewis Rambo. As we shall see below, there is no indication that
his evangelical conversion was a ‘defection’ or ‘institutional transition’, for he
was not attached to Catholicism. It cannot be considered ‘affiliation’, which in
Rambo’s sense connotes an exclusive membership in some fundamentalist sect.
However, it may be regarded as an ‘intensification’ of his existing religious
affiliation, but only of his evangelical side, not the Catholic side. Unlike his
brother Reynaldo, Isabelo did not commit his life to Jesus in response to an
invitation by a preacher during an evangelistic crusade, or a similar Christian
rally, as experienced and vividly described, for instance, by Martyn Percy. Instead, Magalit reports that he was alone:

39 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 3/46.

40 Lewis R. Rambo, Understanding Religious Conversion (New Haven: Yale University
Press, 1993), 12-14. In his discussion of the nature of conversion, Rambo identifies five types of
conversion, namely (1) apostasy or defection, referring to the “repudiation of a religious tradition or
its beliefs by previous members”; (2) intensification, which is “the revitalized commitment to a
faith with which the convert has had previous affiliation”; (3) affiliation, which is “the movement
of an individual or group from no or minimal religious commitment to full involvement with an
institution or community of faith”; (4) institutional transition which “involves the change of an
individual or group from one community to another within a major tradition”; and (5) tradition
transition, referring to “the movement of an individual or a group from one major religious
tradition to another”.

41 See Martyn Percy (ed.), Previous Convictions: Conversion in the Present Day (London:
SPCK, 2000), ix.
One day in June 1957, alone in the bedroom at home, I read Romans 8. As I was reading I came to that verse which says ‘Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him’ (Romans 8:9, RSV). And then the later verse which says: ‘it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God’ (v.16, RSV). That’s when I opened my heart to the Lord Jesus. I still remember the flood of joy and assurance that filled me as I read Romans 8:16. An overwhelming sense of assurance: the Holy Spirit speaking to me, ‘you are my child’. I knew I have become a Christian as I knelt there, alone, depending entirely on the text of Scripture. …I don’t know why the Lord allowed that kind of experience which may be uncommon. But after that I had no doubt that I belong to Christ: that I am a child of God, and my life would change permanently. Something similar must have happened to Val Jr. and Eugenia [his two younger siblings]. The three of us were baptized in water at Baptist Center Church in September 1957.”

Magalit was sixteen years old when he made an evangelical commitment, which roughly coincides with the experience of his older Latin American contemporary C. René Padilla (b. 1932) who was “a boy fifteen or sixteen years old” when he made a similar commitment. The mention of Padilla is important because of his notable role during the 1974 Lausanne Congress which had a lasting impact on Magalit’s ‘second conversion’, and which we will examine more closely in section three. We should also note in passing that John Stott,

42 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 38/46.
45 Isabelo Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.3 (13 May 2011), clip 4/4. Magalit equally mentions the influence of Samuel Escobar, but does not mention Orlando Costas. For a useful discussion of the contributions of Padilla, Escobar and Costas during the 1974 Lausanne Congress, see
whom Magalit considers his lifelong friend and mentor (more of Stott’s influence below), is also known to have an evangelical conversion experience at the age of sixteen.46

This teenage evangelical conversion experience is rather unsurprising because as Sara Savage (2000) has noted, following Johnson (1959), “the average age of conversion is around 15.2 years of age.”47 But, if conversion is an ongoing process of transformation, then this “initial change, while crucial,” as Rambo and Farhadian suggest, “is [only] a first step in a long trajectory of transformation.”48 At any rate, there seems to be an interesting difference between the initial evangelical conversion accounts of Padilla and Magalit. The former talks about a commitment that is accompanied by a “longing to understand the meaning of the Christian faith in relation to issues of justice and peace in a society deeply marked by oppression, exploitation, and abuse of power.”49 Such a longing is absent in the initial conversion account of the latter, probably because Magalit did not have a similar ‘preconversion’ experience to that which exposed Padilla to issues of injustice, such as the lack of religious


freedom, economic struggles and the questions posed by his atheist and Marxist teachers in high school. But what are the consequences of his initial evangelical conversion? Can we discern some potential for Magalit’s ‘second conversion’ immediately after his initial conversion to evangelical Christianity?

2.2.2 Bible Study and Leading Bible Studies

For Magalit, the immediate consequence of his initial evangelical conversion was a deepening desire to study the Bible and to see others come to Christ – in short, Bible study and evangelism. Even Padilla, who reports to have developed a longing for justice as he made the initial commitment to become an evangelical Christian, was mainly active in street and prison evangelism. While neither of them seem to have been prepared to engage with issues of injustice at this early stage, it is worth noting that Padilla’s testimony already shows signs of discomfort as apparently indicated in the impulse to scan for books “that would help me understand the social implications of the Gospel.” Padilla reports to have found only three authors and that his reading of them affirmed in me the conviction that my total inability to articulate a Christian answer to the questions my teachers posed was due to the lack of a social dimension in the Gospel I had received at home – a Gospel for individual (his emphasis) salvation by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, and little more than that.

50 Ibid., 127-8.
51 Padilla, ‘Pilgrimage’, 129.
52 Ibid., 128-9.
53 Ibid., 129.
We do not yet see, at this stage, the same impulse in Magalit’s testimony. Like Padilla, however, Magalit devoured Christian books, most of them borrowed from the library of his pastor, the evangelist Greg Tingson.\(^{54}\) What was more significant for Magalit at this stage was his encounter with two senior staff workers of InterVarsity: Gwen Wong and Mary Beaton, who were Magalit’s first serious evangelical mentors.\(^{55}\) The short- and long-term effect of this encounter – which roughly corresponds to Lewis Rambo’s ‘encounter’ and ‘interaction’ stages in his conversion schema\(^{56}\) – cannot be underestimated. It came at a time immediately after his commitment to Christ in 1957. The same year, it should be noted, Magalit began to lead a Bible study group at the University of the Philippines - Iloilo College (UPIC), where he was in his second year (pre-medicine). This relatively rapid change, from being merely a choir member (December 1956) to his commitment and baptism (June and September 1957), and subsequently becoming a Bible study leader, owed much to the relationship that was established with these InterVarsity staff workers. As Magalit himself writes: “I was encouraged by Gwen Wong and Mary Beaton…. I would study the Bible and lead Bible studies for the rest of my life!”\(^{57}\) “Of course,” he also

\(^{54}\) Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 3/46.

\(^{55}\) For a very brief background about Gwen Wong (which includes very little info about Mary Beaton) see http://www.intervarsity.org/news/her-own-league (accessed 24 December 2010).


\(^{57}\) Magalit, ‘How I came to know’, 2.
underscores, “those women introduced us to the world of John Stott” \textsuperscript{58} – again a major influence which I will discuss below.

But the encounter with these InterVarsity staff workers was only the beginning. It was the door which made it possible for Isabelo to join the 1958 Kawayan Camp, a month-long InterVarsity discipleship and leadership program, of which he was among the first batch of campers. As we shall see shortly, Kawayan can be considered as the key link between his initial commitment to Christ and his commitment to serve Christ through the ministry of InterVarsity. He recalls:

When I committed my life to Christ, I knew that things had to change. But I didn’t know how until I went to camp the following year. In March 1958 I spent a whole month with twenty-one other students at a training camp in Murcia, Negros Occidental. Kawayan Camp, as it came to be known, changed my life! The main fare was Bible study and prayer. Food was Spartan, we all had to do chores, and we received instruction on basic Christian doctrine. All in all, Kawayan underscored the totality of the Christian life of which Christ is Lord. \textsuperscript{59}

The following year, in 1959, Isabelo returned to volunteer as a Kawayan Camp staff worker in charge of the basic housekeeping. Towards the end of the camp, what he considers a key event occurred: Mary Beaton came to him and said ‘You know Bel, we like your attitude. We can see that you have come to really serve the Lord and to please him in this camp’ – “which was very high

\textsuperscript{58} Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 33/46.

\textsuperscript{59} Magalit, ‘How I came to know’, 2; Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 43/46.
praise!” Magalit reacts, “for [Mary Beaton] knew that part of the reason I volunteered was because my girlfriend was a camper!” Nonetheless the commendation left an indelible mark on him, for, as he continues to recount, now speaking more reflectively, “that was a very important commendation from someone I deeply respect.”

Although the commitment to justice remained unclear during this period, there is no doubt that the encounter with these InterVarsity staff workers, and the whole InterVarsity experience in general, Kawayan camp in particular, helped in forming and reinforcing a new sense of identity: an emerging evangelical identity that desired to be shaped and reshaped by the study of the Bible.

A similar identity formation seemed to have occurred in the life of Padilla, who in 1953 volunteered to help organise and lead a vacation camp for young people. This experience of voluntary service, including several activities such as street and prison evangelism, the correspondence course on the Bible, as well as the encouragement he got from his brother Washington, all helped to shape Padilla’s emerging evangelical identity. Looking back at this stage, Padilla wrote: “My deep desire was to study the Bible and theology, but at the same time also to get training in a profession, perhaps medicine.” But, the idea of

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60 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 16/46.
61 Ibid., clip 16/46.
63 Ibid., 129.
pursuing a medical degree, he says, “did not last very long.”\textsuperscript{64} He ended up taking philosophy and theology at Wheaton College.\textsuperscript{65}

2.2.3 Medical School and Sunday School

Magalit seems to have picked up what Padilla initially intended but was unable to pursue. In 1959 Magalit came to Manila to study medicine at the University of the Philippines. As expected, his medical training proved to be quite demanding, and yet the desire to study the Bible and the growing interest in theology did not diminish. He sums up his recollection of the period by saying:

As a medical student I studied hard, but I also continued to lead Bible studies. In fact in 1960, I became actively involved with Faith Baptist Church,\textsuperscript{66} singing in the choir and serving as a deacon for many years [1960-1981].\textsuperscript{67} Also in 1960, I started teaching Sunday school, with no less than twenty college students coming regularly.\textsuperscript{68} During weekdays, much of my time was spent on medical textbooks, but on Sundays I was, what you might call, a budding theologian.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Like Baptist Center Church, which was his home church in Iloilo, Faith Baptist Church was and is a part of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC) which, as discussed in chapter 1, is a founding member of the NCCP and also member of the WCC. But theologically, both Baptist Center Church and Faith Baptist Church tended to be (although this may be changing) considerably PCEC-like.
\textsuperscript{67} Magalit, ‘How I came to know’, 2. Also in, Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 31/46.
\textsuperscript{68} Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2, (13 May 2011), clip 31/46.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., clip 31/46.
Although Magalit successfully completed his medical degree, his priorities started to change. And as his new priority began to manifest more concretely, it generated a considerable tension between him and his mother. In his 2010 written testimony, he tries to deal with this issue by writing:

For four years of medical school and when at home during internship I lived with my sister Elnora and her husband Isaias Briones. I cannot repay their generosity but hope I have influenced their seven children for good! My brothers Allen and Val Jr. sent me a monthly allowance, and my parents paid for my tuition. I don’t know which of my loved ones were disappointed and dismayed when I decided to work as a missionary with [InterVarsity] in June 1964, right after taking the medical board. Mother, at least.70

In a profile written in 2002, concerning in particular Magalit’s decision to volunteer as a junior staff worker for InterVarsity, Dawn Herzog quotes Magalit as saying: “My mother cried a lot, she even offered me a plane ticket to America to do post-doctoral studies.”71 In his 2010 written testimony, Magalit attempts to clarify that his decision to serve as a staff worker was only temporary, and that eventually he intended to pursue his medical career. But still the experience only led him to become the next general secretary of InterVarsity (1966-1973).

I was going to serve for only two years, to pay a spiritual debt.72 I fully intended to practise medicine. However, after two years [in 1966] I was

70 Magalit, ‘How I came to know’, 2.


72 By 'spiritual debt', Magalit meant that he owed much of his spiritual growth through the ministry of InterVarsity and thus he felt compelled to express his gratitude by serving as a staff worker.
asked to be general secretary! I had no compelling reason to say no, the two years confirmed leadership gifts that would help the student movement, and the Lord gave me a wonderful wife with the same vision! The two years became eighteen, including ten years as East Asia secretary of IFES [1972-1982], the worldwide movement. That was the end of the medical career. 73

2.2.4 The Passion for Evangelism: Greg Tingson and John Stott

As his medical career was getting side-tracked, the passion for evangelism began to take central stage. But the burden for evangelism did not begin here. In fact, back in Iloilo City (between the years 1957 and 1960) Magalit recalls the many instances he thought of approaching his father with the intention to present ‘the gospel of salvation in Christ’. He was completely unsuccessful. “My father was far advanced in years and was quite intelligent. I always lacked the courage to approach him with the Gospel.” 74 On 23 November 1960, a fatal and irreversible incident occurred when reports of an airplane crash was confirmed. On board were Isabelo’s elder brother Reynaldo, his two-year old niece Mary, and his father! When Isabelo learned about the plane crash, the first thought that came to him was: “Oh no! I failed to evangelize my father and now he’s gone.” 75 This incident must have left a deep impact, constantly serving as a reminder never to neglect the task of evangelism ever again.

73 Isabelo Magalit, ‘How I came to know’, 2-3.

74 Magalit, ‘How I came to know’, 4. Also in Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 12/46.

75 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 12/46.
Later, the importance of evangelism was also instilled in him by two other major influences. “I suppose [the emphasis on evangelism] really came from Greg Tingson,” he says. “During my early years with the Baptist Center Church, Greg always preached about the grace of God. The main thing was grace, underlining Ephesians 2:1-10, the passage which I learned pretty early.”

Because salvation, understood as a gift of God through faith in Jesus Christ, was such a central concern for Isabelo, and in view of the 1960 plane crash mentioned above, it does not seem surprising why he would later regard evangelism to be his central task.

“But a significant part of it,” Magalit reflects, “is from John Stott.” Since their face-to-face meeting in 1962, Stott became “a lifelong friend and mentor.” To elaborate on Stott’s early influence on him, Magalit tells a story:

John Stott, when he was in Cambridge, many of his close friends said he should be president of the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (CICCU). But John Stott turned down the invitation because he said, ‘I think my gift really is evangelism more than anything else. I want to continue to do personal work.’ When I heard that, I felt it captured the heart of what I wanted to do. So, in a sense, I got that from him. That’s an important detail.

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76 Ibid., clip 27/46.
77 Ibid., clip 23/46.
78 Ibid., clip 33/46.
“But,” Magalit qualifies further by saying, “it was an evangelism which was ‘thinky’ – in other words with a lot of intellectual input – because we were in a university context. Not that we look down upon traditional evangelists. Rather, because we were in a university context, we had to be ‘thinking evangelists’. So we devoured everything that John Stott wrote.”80 This preliminary influence which developed into a lifelong connection with Stott must not be underestimated. For although Stott’s initial impact on Magalit was in the area of evangelism,81 the change in Stott’s thinking, signified in his growing desire to strike a balance between evangelism and social responsibility after the 1974 Lausanne Congress, would also contribute positively to Magalit’s theological re-orientation, as we shall see in section three. Stott’s commanding influence in the life of Magalit is already indicated in the latter’s own words: “More than any other person I suppose, [Stott] had more influence on me, both personally and through his writings.”82

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80 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 23/46.

81 It is significant to note the apparent dichotomy in John Stott’s early thought as evident in his tendency (during the Berlin Congress in 1966) to stress, as B. Stanley observes, the task of evangelism over the responsibility of reforming society. A shift in Stott’s own thinking after the 1974 Lausanne Congress is therefore notable. See Brian Stanley, The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Billy Graham and John Stott (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2013), 155, 172-3.

82 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 33/46.
2.3

The Birth of a ‘Peaceful Rebel’

Before Magalit became general secretary of InterVarsity in 1966, we have seen that issues of economic or social injustice did not appear to concern him. The earliest factor which he thinks might have influenced the growth of his social conscience dates back to his medical training (1959-1964):

Probably my training as a medical student is the earliest influence. Most of the patients I encountered at the Philippine General Hospital (PGH)\(^{83}\) were really poor. And they come from all parts of the country. That was such a rich experience! Through immersion alone, you begin to feel with the poor. I suppose that was part of it: to realise how poor many Filipinos really are. They hardly have anything. And it has not improved over the years.\(^{84}\)

But in the previous section, we saw that there were at least two key influences which, it should be noted, initially appeared as significant only to his conversion to evangelical Christianity and to his subsequent concern for evangelism, but surprisingly proved significant also to the emergence of a holistic understanding of mission: the InterVarsity movement and John Stott. I shall now examine their contributions to Magalit’s ‘second conversion’.

A noteworthy contribution of the InterVarsity movement is that it significantly widened Isabelo’s evangelical community: from simply being a

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\(^{83}\) PGH is the national university hospital operated by the University of the Philippines, College of Medicine (Manila) where Magalit studied medicine (1959-64).

\(^{84}\) Magalit, Kwentuhan 3.1 (8 June 2011), clip 1/16.
member of a local Baptist church, either in BCC (Iloilo) or in FBC (Manila), to being exposed to a wider interdenominational circle. This widening of his evangelical circle, which continued as he became general secretary of InterVarsity to his becoming regional secretary of IFES, functioned significantly in the broadening of his own theological outlook. As we saw in the previous section, the beginnings of his encounter with InterVarsity gave him the opportunity to nurture his emerging evangelical identity with the help of competent staff workers who mentored and encouraged him not only in the faith, or in the study of the Bible, but also in the area of leadership. This effective discipleship and mentoring – which he did not get from his local Baptist church – is significant for it was the door leading him to assume a leadership role, as general secretary. Consequently, this leadership role turned out to be a key element in the growth of his social conscience. But, for the sake of clarity, it must be emphasised immediately that it was not the leadership role per se that opened the possibility for a ‘second conversion’. Rather, the overall context in which he functioned as general secretary was the key: for in seeking to evangelize university students who were constantly inundated by competing and equally compelling ideologies of activism and communism, Magalit found himself in a situation where he was forced to engage with Marxist and Maoist ideologies. And, although he remained opposed to communism, the process of engagement contributed nonetheless in awakening a social conscience, as already discussed in section one.

Moreover, as seen in section one, his connections with InterVarsity opened other doors as well. In 1972, while still general secretary (until 1973), he
was appointed as the East Asia regional secretary of IFES, a post he held until 1982. This, again, expanded his evangelical circle even more. And it is significant to note that this new appointment occurred at the height of student activism, in fact, the same year when martial law was imposed. Although a desire for social engagement was already discernible in his 1970 speech, we have also noticed that his 1973 booklet *Who is a Real Christian?* failed to mention the importance of social engagement as part of the Christian’s responsibility. The booklet merely ends with two consequences of having faith in Jesus: namely, ‘forgiveness of sins’ and the pietistic duty “to belong to a body of believers,” by which he meant “a congregation where the [Bible] is preached… and where the Lord Jesus is given the place of highest honor.” Did he really believe that social responsibility was not essential to being a real Christian? Perhaps not, but this observation seems to imply that social responsibility was not yet fully integrated into Magalit’s evangelical outlook. An alternative explanation already implied in section one was that Magalit may have deliberately omitted the social dimension of being a Christian because he was not willing to endanger the InterVarsity movement by publishing what might be considered as a politically subversive material. At any rate, the imposition of martial law tested Magalit’s commitment. And it is not surprising that he remained committed to the task of evangelism.

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85 Magalit, *Who is a Real Christian?*, 10-3.

86 Ibid., 14.
A new phase began to unfold when Magalit was invited to be one of the Bible expositors at the International Congress on World Evangelization held in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974.\textsuperscript{87} Known as the 1974 Lausanne Congress,\textsuperscript{88} this important gathering of more than 2,300 evangelical leaders, from 150 countries, turned out to be a major learning experience for Magalit, particularly with regard to the growth of his social conscience. “Lausanne was the watershed for me,” he says, “because for the first time I saw the possibility that social responsibility can be placed high on the evangelical agenda without jeopardizing the evangelistic mandate.”\textsuperscript{89} He was also quite proud of the fact – and this can be counted as an additional factor, a positive consequence of his widening evangelical circle – that the “two most influential people in carrying that agenda forward were both with InterVarsity and IFES referring to C. René Padilla and Samuel Escobar.”\textsuperscript{90}

When the Lausanne Continuation Committee appointed an 11-member executive committee,\textsuperscript{91} Magalit was nominated as an alternate to Philip Teng.\textsuperscript{92}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{88} For a recent historical assessment of the Lausanne Congress and how key evangelical participants grappled with issues of mission and social justice, see chapter 6 of Brian Stanley’s \textit{The Global Diffusion}, 151-79.
\item \textsuperscript{89} Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.3 (13 May 2011), clip 4/4.
\item \textsuperscript{90} Ibid., clip 4/4.
\item \textsuperscript{91} The list of the eleven members can be found in the news release dated January 27, 1975 following the first Lausanne Continuation Committee meeting. A copy of the file can be accessed here: http://www.lausanne.org/docs/Lausanne_1974_Jan27_Survey.pdf (accessed 25 April 2015).
\item \textsuperscript{92} Rev. Philip Teng (1922-2013), a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, is regarded as ‘the most eminent Chinese pastor’ of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Hong Kong. See http://www.bdcconline.net/en/stories/t/teng-philip.php (accessed 25 April 2015).
\end{itemize}
who was officially the regular member, representing East Asia. But in effect, Magalit functioned as the regular member “because Philip Teng was [already] preoccupied with prior commitments.”

Back in Asia, Magalit was also active with the Asia Lausanne Committee, and this continuing involvement with the Lausanne movement, both internationally and in Asia, must have contributed significantly to his theological re-orientation. While he fully knew that the issue between evangelism and social responsibility was controversial at the time of the 1974 Congress, he found himself in agreement with the presentations of his colleagues Padilla and Escobar. Theologically, “Lausanne,” he says, “was important for relating evangelism and social service which is an expression of our love for our fellowmen.” As to the degree of impact this realisation had on him, we cannot know for sure. There are indications that the initial impact was deep enough for “after the Lausanne Congress,” he says, “I actually considered practising medicine in the rural areas. I seriously thought of quitting as an urban worker or if I should continue to do urban work, I thought of focusing on the urban poor. But, I could not get out of the IFES circuit!”

Aside from Lausanne, we can say that his career as regional secretary of IFES was equally important not only because he ministered to the InterVarsity movements in East Asia, but also because of the executive committee meetings which were normally held in London, thus, giving him a chance to interact with

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94 Magalit, Kwentuhan 3.1 (8 June 2011), clip 2/16.

95 Ibid., clip 2/16.
many of the key evangelical thinkers of the international movement. “There are few institutions I would equate with IFES,” Magalit reflects, “it is truly international, it is thoroughly evangelical, there is a great deal of mutual respect, a high level of cultural sensitivity, and solid mentoring.”96 And then he recalls some of his interactions with people such as the general secretary of Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF), Oliver Barclay (1919-2013), who “spent considerable time with the younger staff workers.”97 One of the thoughts Magalit treasures the most came from his interaction with Barclay, whom he remembers saying, “You know Bel, we cannot maintain the evangelical tradition without serious work in theological scholarship.”98 This is an important detail because it prefigures Magalit’s commitment to theological scholarship when he became the first Filipino president of Asian Theological Seminary (ATS, 1989-2005).99 Finally, the role of John Stott as friend and mentor, before, and many years after the Lausanne Congress, already speaks volumes. Although he mentions other influential names such as J. I. Packer, D. J. Wiseman, and Leon Morris, with whom he personally interacted even after his career with IFES,100 he considers

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96 Magalit, Kwentuhan 1.1 (2 February 2011), clip 20/44.

97 Ibid., clip 20/44.

98 Magalit, Kwentuhan 1.1 (2 February 2011), clip 20/44. Oliver Barclay is known to have published, pseudonymously, a book “which urged evangelicals to develop a Christian mind on a wide range of ‘secular’ topics.” See Brian Stanley, The Global Diffusion, 153.


100 Packer is currently the Board of Governors’ Professor at Regent College in Vancouver, Canada, http://www.regent-college.edu/faculty/retired/ji-packer (accessed 23 June 2015). Wiseman (1918-2010) was Professor of Assyriology at the University of London. Morris (1914-2006) was an Australian New Testament scholar. Isabelo Magalit, Kwentuhan 1.1 (2 February 2011), clip 21/44.
the influence of John Stott to be more decisive, “both personally and through his writings.”

Overall, Magalit’s career with both InterVarsity and IFES seems key in nurturing an intellectual openness, which must have aided him in those moments of theological re-orientation or ‘second conversion’.

But in terms of change directly related to the awakening of a social conscience, the Lausanne movement – and here we should note the role of external agents in the process of theological re-orientation – seems to have been the watershed, even more theologically decisive than his initial engagement with the Marxist-inspired movements when he was still the general secretary of InterVarsity. As we saw above, it was only after the Lausanne Congress when Magalit began to see that social responsibility “can be placed high on the evangelical agenda without jeopardizing the evangelistic mandate.”

This is a significant advancement, a milestone in terms of a fundamental theological re-orientation. Not all evangelicals, including those who participated in the 1974 Lausanne Congress, were prepared to accept this development. Tensions arose, the traces of which are immortalised in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Lausanne Covenant. Whereas paragraph 5 already indicates a recognition ‘that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty,’ it seems that there was an influential evangelical group behind paragraph 6 which sought to preserve a more conservative perspective of the church’s mission

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101 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.2 (13 May 2011), clip 33/46.
102 Magalit, Kwentuhan 2.3 (13 May 2011), clip 4/4.
103 Lausanne Convenant, see http://www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant (accessed 25 April 2015).
by insisting that ‘evangelism is primary’.

Because Magalit retains a strong commitment to the traditional task of evangelism, the apparently compromising phrase ‘evangelism is primary’ seems to have worked for him. In fact, without any hesitation, he commends the intuition to retain the language of evangelism as ‘primary’.

Nonetheless, a theological re-orientation is still discernible in his affirmation of social responsibility as an important Christian duty, which, as discussed above, is absent in his 1973 booklet *Who is a Real Christian?* A clear manifestation of this change, in terms of publishing, is found in his 1989 Asian Theological Seminary lectures which were reworked and published in 1992 as *Can a Christian be a Nationalist?*

In this essay, Magalit defines nationalism as “love for one's people, concern for their total welfare, and commitment to promote their best interests.” He distinguishes it from chauvinism manifested in forms of ethnocentrism and imperialism, as he seeks to recover the value of nationalism by further qualifying:

> Love for one's people does not mean exclusion of other peoples from one's concern but it does mean recognition by the Filipino that he has peculiar responsibility for his fellow Filipinos. His concern is for their total welfare – not only that they may enjoy peace and freedom, justice and prosperity, but also salvation in Christ. This love, this concern is not

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104 For a more nuanced discussion of this tension and John Stott’s mediatory role, see Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion*, 172-3.


107 Ibid., 12.
only in the mind and in the heart but is expressed in commitment to actively promote their best interests.\textsuperscript{108}

Now, this is quite a radical shift from his 1973 booklet, although there are some traces of social concern found in his 1970 speech, which I cited in section one. This ambivalence must have persisted even after the Lausanne Congress for a clearer manifestation of actual socio-political engagement as highlighted in section one began to surface after Aquino’s assassination in 1983, and during the people power revolution in 1986. As Magalit himself wrote (in a semi-autobiographical article containing his reflections on the use of Romans 13 by Filipino evangelicals):

The evangelicals [he implicitly includes himself] at the barricades [referring to the 1986 rally] had grappled with Romans 13 for many years. They agreed with the \textit{Lausanne Covenant} [his italics], understanding their duty to include both evangelism and socio-political involvement. Though slow in appreciating what was happening to their nation, they were roused from their stupor by the murder of Ninoy Aquino in 1983. They came to the conclusion… that their political duty as Christians was more than prayer and obedience.\textsuperscript{109}

As noted in section one and as seen in the above excerpt, it seems that the final and decisive trigger that led to Magalit’s ‘second conversion’ was the crisis created by Aquino’s murder in 1983. We may recall that the gradual transformation of Magalit’s theological outlook goes back to the time when, as general secretary of InterVarsity, he was compelled to respond to the challenge

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 12.

\textsuperscript{109} Magalit, ‘Rightful Rule’, 143.
posed by the Marxist-inspired movements in the late 1960s. In 1972, when martial law was imposed, Magalit helped to form a study group to discuss the issue of tyrannical or dictatorial rule. However, they never published the results of their study for fear that they might lose the chance to evangelize. This early focus on evangelism, which downplayed the importance of social responsibility, would be challenged at the 1974 Lausanne Congress in which he participated. The impact of the Lausanne Congress was immediately felt, but it took a while to digest the implications of the theological integration that was still emerging. His involvement in the Lausanne Continuation Committee as well as in the Asia Lausanne Committee should have helped him to process this theological integration. At the same time, as East Asia regional secretary of IFES (1972-1982), he was able to sustain an interaction with Stott, Barclay, and several other evangelical leaders connected to the international student movement, who were also nurturing a more holistic theological framework. This gradual theological re-orientation would finally be tested by the murder of Aquino in 1983. By the time of this national crisis, it seems that Magalit was theologically equipped to respond in terms of actual political action. Two weeks after Aquino’s death, Magalit endorsed the DBC letter which denounced the murder and reviewed a series of social and political issues, which in effect questioned the legitimacy of the Marcos government. This was followed by another letter, issued on 19 February 1986, which called the 7 February 1986 snap election fraudulent, while categorically stating that Marcos “has no right to continue to rule.”

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an important footnote to the story of conservative evangelicalism in the
Philippines. For the letter was sent to 200 local churches and Christian
organisations around Metro Manila. However, only five responded in agreement
with the statement. 111 While we cannot be sure why the rest seemingly ignored
the letter, it is noteworthy that a Baptist pastor felt compelled to reply: ‘Read
Romans 13’. 112 It is difficult to tell whether the reply was issued with a touch of
condescension or simply was a reflection of political naïveté, but it nonetheless
implied that the only legitimate Christian response was unqualified submission
to government authorities based on a particular reading of Romans 13. It should
also be noted that even the PCEC leadership, with whom Magalit was personally
in touch, was not prepared to endorse the basic political response articulated in
the 19 February 1986 letter. For example, a few days after the 7 February 1986
snap election, 113 the general secretary of the PCEC, Agustin ‘Jun’ Vencer, 114
came to visit Magalit. “Jun visited me in the DBC parsonage, where I suggested
that perhaps PCEC should issue a statement calling the election fraudulent.” 115

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111 The five who responded, according to David S. Lim, were: ISACC, InterVarsity,
DBC, Faith Baptist Church, and First Free Methodist Church. See David S. Lim, “Consolidating
Democracy: Filipino Evangelicals between People Power Events, 1986-2001,” in David H.
Lumsdaine (ed.) Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Asia (Oxford; New York: Oxford
University Press, 2009), 255.


113 Though Magalit cannot recall the exact date, it seems probable that the meeting took
place before the letter “A Christian Response” was issued on the 19th of February.

114 Agustin B. Vencer Jr., or Jun Vencer, was the then general secretary of the PCEC
(1978-1992), before becoming the International Director of the World Evangelical Fellowship
(1992-2001). He is also listed as a member of the 1982 joint consultation on the relationship
between evangelism and social responsibility, see http://www.lausanne.org/content/lop/lop-
21#7 (25 April 2015).

115 Magalit, Kwentuhan 1.1 (2 February 2011), clip 27/44.

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Vencer, however, seemed reluctant, according to Magalit, although days later a PCEC statement was released which began to question the “legitimacy of the present administration.” But it is worth noting that the PCEC statement was issued on 24 February 1986, at least two days after Magalit and his group already joined the people power demonstration, and barely a day before Marcos fled the country. This tiny bit of detail illustrates some of the dynamics and tensions among the conservative evangelical leadership in those days. But for our purposes, it begins to reveal a transforming picture of Isabelo Magalit who, unlike the early Magalit at the time of the imposition of martial law in 1972, was now more prepared to wrestle with major political issues in public.

It should be noted nonetheless that his ‘second conversion’, this theological re-orientation and growing commitment to address socio-political issues, did not relax his commitment to evangelism. While virtually embracing a new set of beliefs and values, the older ones such as evangelism did not necessarily disappear, but was seemingly supplemented or re-interpreted in light of Magalit’s later experiences as well as his renewed understanding of the Christian faith. In a 1992 document he entitled *A Vision for the Nation*, Magalit concludes by reaffirming his commitment to evangelism:

Only through the Christian gospel are people “put right with God,” so we evangelize as vigorously as we can.\(^\text{118}\)

\(^{116}\) Ibid., clip 27/44.

\(^{117}\) See David S. Lim, ‘Consolidating Democracy’, 255.

At the same time, his preaching, lectures and publications also began to deal more directly and more seriously with social issues. As already noted above, he attempted to recover the value of nationalism.\textsuperscript{119} He published his personal and biblical reflection on Romans 13 challenging the interpretation which favoured an uncritical submission to authorities.\textsuperscript{120} And more recently, he also contributed a bible study series on politics and good governance.\textsuperscript{121} While evangelism has remained a priority, Magalit maintains that the Lausanne Covenant forms his basic theological framework as an evangelical. In our final 2014 \textit{kwentuhan}, he summarised his current view by saying:

I have come to reject the view which says that our only Christian duty is to call people to faith in Christ, while leaving the social question to others. I equally reject the view which says we should engage with the issues of society in order to lead people to accept Christ. The first does not take account of the whole gospel. The second is unethical. It's like saying we extend help so that you will listen to the gospel. Or, we offer you bread so that you can respond to the ‘bread of life’. No! Our engagement with the issues of society proceeds from our view of God, man and the world. God, who causes the sun to rise to the just and the unjust, who sends rain to both the righteous and the unrighteous, calls us to love our fellowmen,\textsuperscript{122} who are created in the image of God.\textsuperscript{123} That is the fundamental motivation for engaging with the issues of society.

\textsuperscript{119} Magalit, \textit{Can a Christian be a Nationalist?} (Quezon City: New Day, 1992).

\textsuperscript{120} Magalit, ‘Rightful Rule’, 131-49.

\textsuperscript{121} Isabelo F. Magalit, \textit{Politics and Good Governance}, ISACC Bible Study Series, vol. 2 (Quezon City: ISACC, 2007).

\textsuperscript{122} Allusion to Matthew 5:45.

\textsuperscript{123} Genesis 1:26-27.
Therefore, to engage with the issues of society in order to be successful in evangelism is fundamentally mistaken in my view. Of course evangelism remains extremely important. But we must not use evangelism as an excuse for not being socially involved. We must not confuse one for the other. Or, use one as a bridge to the other. God invites us to participate in his mission: to proclaim his word, and to care for world. Both are essential to God’s mission. There is always a need to strike a balance.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{124} Magalit, Kwentuhan 4 (1 December 2014), clips 3/20; 12/20; 13/20.
CHAPTER THREE

OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S DESIGN: MEDICAL MISSIONS AS A PATHWAY TO HOLISTIC MISSION

The Story of Joel Ruiz

The story of Isabelo Magalit in chapter 2 revealed a trajectory of an evangelical who was directly involved and influenced by the Lausanne movement, and, in the process, came to regard the Lausanne Covenant to be the watershed in leading him towards a socially-engaged evangelical path. In the next three chapters, we will encounter three more trajectories, beginning with the story of Joel Ruiz in this chapter, followed by the story of Fermin Manalo Jr. in chapter 4, and the story of Jerry Carian in chapter 5. While acknowledging the contribution and reinforcing value of the Lausanne Covenant, these three, as we shall see, do not follow Magalit in thinking that the 1974 Lausanne Congress or its Covenant was the watershed in their own theological pilgrimages towards a commitment to issues of economic or social justice.

Like Magalit, nonetheless, Joel Ruiz (b. 1938) was also, as a university student, influenced by the InterVarsity movement. It is significant to note, for instance, that both Magalit and Ruiz participated in the month-long Kawayan Camp – Magalit in 1958, Ruiz in 1959 – which they both found to be life-changing.¹ In fact, according to Ruiz, “Kawayan was the turning point in my

¹ As noted in chapter 2, Kawayan Camp was the discipleship and leadership training camp of the Philippine InterVarsity movement.
spiritual life” because he, at the age of twenty-one, “came to know the Lord” there, a clear indication of his conversion towards evangelical Christianity. But, “I think the most important realisation which was impressed on me in Kawayan,” Ruiz elaborated further in our 2008 kwentuhan, “was the value of ‘obeying the Lord’ which should result into a manifestation of a transformed life.” Thus, Kawayan marked for Ruiz, “the point when my understanding of what it means to ‘obey’ began to grow.” Yet, this realisation remained vague, as evident in his admission that it was just the beginning of what would be a lifelong process of understanding the meaning of ‘obedience’. However, while clearly emphasising ‘obedience’, there seems nothing in the account of his evangelical conversion experience – as I will explore in section one – that would suggest an explicit desire at that point to grapple with issues of social injustice.

It is also significant to mention that both Magalit and Ruiz were trained in medicine. Magalit, as we saw in the previous chapter, studied at the University of the Philippines in Manila, while Ruiz obtained his medical degree from the University of Santo Tomas, also in Manila. The two men passed their

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2 This statement concerning his spiritual turning point is repeated in several instances throughout our conversations from 2008 to 2014. Joel Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 3/40; Kwentuhan 2 (1 September 2008), clip 2/32; Kwentuhan 4.2 (22 January 2009), clip 20/23; Kwentuhan 4.3 (22 January 2009), clip 2/3; Kwentuhan 6.1 (16 May 2011), clip 13/24; Kwentuhan 7 (28 October 2014), clips 32/50, 40/50; Kwentuhan 8 (22 December 2014), clips 2/23, 18/23.

3 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 2 (1 September 2008), clip 2/32.

4 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 3/40.

5 Ibid.

medical boards in 1964 and 1965, respectively, but in the end it was Ruiz, not Magalit, who practised medicine, and, as we shall see, spent practically a lifelong career as a mission doctor. His first full-time mission work was with the Good News Clinic in Ifugao (1969-1980) and then – after almost a three-year intermission – he spent another seventeen years as a full-time mission doctor with the Flying Medical Samaritans (FMS) in Mindanao (1983-2000). But as with his initial evangelical conversion, Joel’s initial decision to become a full-time mission doctor in Ifugao was not necessarily accompanied by an explicit commitment to issues of economic or social justice. In fact, there are traces of narrative evidence which seem to indicate that he subscribed to the notion which instrumentalised medical missions as merely a tool for evangelism. I will explore this important issue in section two.

However, after retiring from FMS in the year 2000, at the age of 62, a notable change in his understanding of medical missions began to surface more explicitly, which I will discuss in section three. During the years 2001-2005, both his friends and colleagues insisted that Ruiz should lead in conceptualising a Filipino medical mission program which resulted, in 2005, in the birth of Compassion in Action. The purpose of Compassion in Action, as articulated by Ruiz himself during our 2008 kwentuhan, has remained recognisably evangelical:

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7 For a brief history of the FEGC-established Good News Clinic, see http://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/406.htm#3 (accessed 10 May 2015).

8 But, as we will see in section two, Ruiz’s work with FMS extended to certain parts in Palawan and Polilio. For a brief history of FMS see http://www.pmapacific.org/about/history.php (accessed 10 May 2015).

9 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 31/40.
“to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and the life,\textsuperscript{10} and to work towards the preservation and transformation of lives.”\textsuperscript{11} But then – and this is quite significant – he qualified his statement of the priority of an evangelistic purpose to Compassion in Action by explaining that it was intended to be a program in which medical services are essential, not merely instrumental, to the presentation of the gospel. We may detect this in his critique of a certain trend he observed in many evangelical medical missions in which the apparent priority was to draw crowds for the verbal proclamation of evangelism, while ultimately neglecting what, according to him, “should be an ongoing Christian duty of the local church to look after the health issues of the community.”\textsuperscript{12}

This development of a more holistic understanding of medical missions raises the question of how it was possible for Ruiz to attain such an understanding. This, together with the question of the possibility of a ‘second conversion’ to the importance of wrestling with social justice issues, is the central concern of this chapter, which I will develop more fully in section four.

\section*{3.1 The Making of a Mission Doctor}

Although Joel Ruiz was a pioneer mission doctor and the first Filipino director of the Good News Clinic in Ifugao in 1969, he obviously was not the

\textsuperscript{10} A clear reference to John 14:6.

\textsuperscript{11} Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 35/40.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., clip 28/40; Kwentuhan 2 (1 September 2008), clip 27/32.
first doctor who nurtured a desire to look after the needs of the sick in the
Philippines. Pre-colonial peoples in the Islands, like many indigenous cultures
around the globe, had already been practising folk medicine, a tradition which
has remained quite resilient even after centuries of colonisation and
evangelization.\(^\text{13}\)

In 1609, only a few decades after Spanish contact, and many years before
the era of both modern missions and modern medicine, the Spanish lawyer and
historian Antonio de Morga (1559-1636) already reported the existence of at
least three hospitals in Manila: a royal hospital for Spaniards, a hospital of
Mercy “for the purpose of works of charity”, and what today is considered the
oldest living hospital in the Philippines, San Juan de Dios (1578)\(^\text{14}\) – founded by
a certain Franciscan Fray Juan Clemente – in which, according to Morga, “a
great number of natives [were] cured of all sorts of infirmities, with much care
and delicate attention.”\(^\text{15}\)

In 1901, three years after the three centuries of Spanish rule of the
Philippines (1565-1898) had come to an end – only to be replaced by the bloody

\(^{13}\) F. Landa Jocano, ‘Cultural Context of Folk Medicine: Some Philippine Cases’, *Philippine Sociological Review* 14:1 (January 1966): 40-8. While there certainly are negative practices “which have been found to be detrimental to health,” the resiliency and potential of folk medicine in the Philippines (and elsewhere) has already been acknowledged and encouraged by some physicians and community health workers. See Jaime Z. Galvez-Tan, ‘Religious Elements in Samar-Leyte Folk Medicine’, in Leonardo N. Mercado (ed.), *Filipino Religious Psychology* (Tacloban: Divine Word University, 1977), 3-21.


conflict of the Filipino-American War (1899-1902) – the American physician and Presbyterian J. Andrew Hall (1867-1960) founded the first Protestant mission hospital in the Philippines, which is currently the university hospital of the Baptist-run Central Philippine University (CPU).  

Between 1901 and 1903, another physician and Presbyterian missionary Henry W. Langheim was appointed as the Provincial Health Officer of Negros Oriental, while helping to establish the Dumaguete Mission Hospital. It is also noteworthy to mention another Presbyterian, the Scottish surgeon James Alexander Graham (1875-1940), who was the first Protestant missionary in Bohol (August 1909), where he founded in 1912 the Tagbilaran Mission Hospital.

There were also Filipino Protestant mission doctors before Ruiz. The UCCP historian T. V. Sitoy mentions the names of the physicians Ramon Ponce de Leon and Jose Garcia “who carried on the work of the Dumaguete Mission Hospital” by 1939. Interestingly, Sitoy also reminds his readers of the University of the Philippines-trained surgeon Pio C. Castro (1906-1986) who continued the work of the Tagbilaran Mission Hospital “from Dr. Graham’s

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18 Ibid., 415. Kwantes, Presbyterian Missionaries, 97-9. A short biography of James A. Graham is also found in the website of the UCCP-Tagbilaran, which is also known as the Dr. Graham Memorial Church. In 1936, the Provincial Board of Bohol declared Graham as an Adopted Son of Bohol. He died in 1940 and is buried in Tagbilaran. See https://uccptagbilaran.wordpress.com/church-history/ (accessed 10 May 2015).

19 Sitoy, Several Springs, 416.
death in 1940 till the early years of the [post-war] era.” From Bohol, Dr. Castro moved to Surigao, in the northeastern tip of Mindanao, to establish in 1952 Grace Christian Hospital where – it should be noted – Joel Ruiz, who is the focus of this chapter, did his residency training in general surgery in the years 1965-1969. Ruiz credits Castro (who also became his father-in-law) as the second Christian doctor who had a major influence on him.

The earliest major influence on Ruiz was his own father, the late surgeon and Presbyterian Eulogio Ruiz Sr. (1903-1978). After the Second World War, a good American friend and military doctor “donated a complete set of medical equipment, including hospital beds and food supplies.” This enabled Eulogio Ruiz to open the David A. Sharp Clinic and Hospital in Surigao, which functioned from 1946 to 1953, when Pio Castro was still with the Tagbilaran Mission Hospital in Bohol. When the Ruiz family moved to Gingoog in 1948, Eulogio also opened Faith Hospital where he offered primary care and surgery until 1954. “Wherever [my father] went,” Ruiz recalls, “he always practised his profession.” Although Eulogio Ruiz was not a missionary (at least he did not consider himself a missionary), his example as a Christian surgeon from 1946 to 1954 made an impression on his son Joel, who was at that time between ages 8

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20 Ibid., 416.
21 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 2 (1 September 2008), clip 20/32.
23 His father also practised his medical profession before the War but this is beyond what Joel Ruiz can recall, as he was only three years old when the War broke in 1941. After 1954, his father continued his medical career in Mindoro and elsewhere before he died in 1978.
and 16. I will return to the impact of this childhood memory on the post-retirement thoughts of Ruiz in section four.

The Ruiz family were middle-class. Aside from his father’s medical profession, Joel’s mother was also a private high school teacher. There were three brothers (Joel being the youngest), and as far as he remembers, there was not much of a sibling rivalry either before or after the War.  

But what Ruiz remembers as a generally happy childhood was seriously disrupted by the permanent separation of his parents in 1954. This traumatic separation must have added to the confusion or disorientation of his teenage years because, for instance in 1955 after graduating from high school, Joel did not immediately proceed to college, admitting, in our 2009 kwentuhan, that he was indeed affected by this family crisis.  

He wandered around, sometimes selling fish, at other times volunteering as a personal driver for a Catholic missionary priest. It seems that he did a lot of things, but he clearly lost interest in his studies and practically did not know what to do with his life. Meanwhile, the three brothers stayed with their mother, and initially (at least for Joel) harboured some hatred against their father, who left for Mindoro. One may wonder whether this crisis may have functioned as a prelude to his evangelical conversion in 1959.

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25 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 2 (1 September 2008), clip 7/32.
26 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 4.2 (22 January 2009), clip 14/23.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
3.1.1 InterVarsity

Joel, who was born in Surigao in 1938, grew up in a secure Presbyterian home. His parents were active members of the Evangelical Church (Presbyterian) which – together with the Congregational Church and some of the older Protestant churches established by the first wave of largely American missionaries who arrived at the turn of the twentieth century (as discussed in chapter 1) – eventually evolved to form in 1948 the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP). “Back then [from the late 1940s to the 1960s],” Joel recalls, “UCCP was still evangelical,” indicating that some radical change took place in the 1970s with the growing emphasis on socio-political engagement and forms of contextual and liberation theologies (see chapter 1, pp.84-87). But prior to the 1970s “our preachers,” he said, “always emphasised the gospel, and the need to accept Christ for salvation.”

While he grew up thinking that he was an evangelical Protestant, Ruiz admitted that he only came to ‘know the Lord’ when he was a second-year medical student at the University of Santo Tomas. The change occurred, as he recalls it, in the 1959 Kawayan Camp when the 21-year old Joel – while attending the evening lectures of Gwen Wong and Mary Beaton [these were the same staff workers who influenced Isabelo Magalit, as recorded in chapter 2] –

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30 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 8/40.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid. Also, idem, Kwentuhan 4.3 (22 January 2011), clip 2/3.
33 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 2 (1 September 2008), clip 2/32.
began to realise that “I was still a sinner.”34 “I mean,” he explained, “growing up in an evangelical home, you tend to think you’re saved.”35 “But in Kawayan,” he continued, “I began to understand what it meant to be saved from sin,36 to have a relationship with Christ which must manifest in a transformed life.”37 It should be noted, however, that there was nothing new in this message for, as he already said, this message was “always preached” in UCCP. On further reflection, commenting on his early church-going years in UCCP, he explained: “Perhaps I was just too young to understand the gospel at that time.”38 With this, we can infer that Joel, at the age of twenty-one, had indeed arrived at a stage that he regarded as his evangelical conversion, or what one might call a theological re-orientation, and an evangelical identity formation similar to what we saw in the story of Isabelo Magalit (chapter 2). And just like Magalit’s initial conversion to evangelicalism, we cannot sense any explicit sign that Ruiz, at this stage, had developed a commitment to issues of social justice.

Nonetheless, in 2008, while reflecting on this particular Kawayan episode, Ruiz said that if he were asked to summarise the most important point he learned at that time, he could put it in one word: ‘obedience’.39 This is the key theme, as we shall see later, that would influence Ruiz’s attempt to organise the

35 Ibid.
36 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 4.2 (22 January 2009), clip 20/23.
38 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 4.3 (22 January 2009), clip 2/3.
story of his evangelical theological pilgrimage. But it should be added immediately that ‘obedience’, which for Ruiz is “the only thing that matters” does not mean obedience to a set of sharply defined duties which are clear right at the outset. “Obedience,” Ruiz elaborated further, “doesn’t come automatically” implying that whatever meaning it has, it is not instant, not one-time, not ready-made. In our 2009 kwentuhan, Ruiz emphasised that there are no shortcuts and ready-made answers: “[y]ou grow by living the Christian life, by expressing the fullness of the Spirit on a daily basis.” We will see how the idea of ‘obedience’ gained a deeper meaning for Ruiz as we analyse his post-retirement reflections in sections three and four. In the meantime, I shall end this section with two more episodes from this period which will illustrate not only the lack of a desire to confront social injustice, but more personally for him, the lack of a clear direction of whether or not he would respond to the call to devote his life to missions.

### 3.1.2 Events Prior to Medical Missions

As already mentioned above, Ruiz in 1969 finally accepted the call to become a full-time mission doctor to Ifugao where he became the first Filipino director of the Good News Clinic. Back in 1965, around the time when the young Ruiz had newly graduated from the University of Santo Tomas, Frank Allen, an American missionary of the Far East Gospel Crusade (FEGC), invited

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40 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 3/40; Kwentuhan 4.2 (22 January 2009), clip 6/23.

41 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 3/40.

42 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 4.3 (22 January 2009), clip 2/3.
the Surigao-born physician to serve as a mission doctor in Ifugao. But, Joel, who
was more preoccupied with his plan to get married at that time, said ‘no’. In
1967, while he was on residency at the Grace Christian Hospital, Joel conducted
what seemed to be an initially successful surgical procedure. The patient,
however, subsequently died, sending Ruiz into a state of depression. Taking the
patient’s death as a sign that he was not meant to be a doctor, Ruiz decided to
quit, saying, “I cannot follow my father’s footsteps.” A visit by his father,
whom he did not see for a while, proved to be a significant therapeutic boost. In
their conversation, his surgeon-father gently reminded him that “we don’t have
full control of life.” But more than the reminder of human limitation, the more
decisive statement which encouraged Joel to carry on were his father’s parting
words: “If you can help just one person in your entire career as a doctor, it’s
worth it.” While this experience may not initially seem so helpful in explaining
the possibility of a ‘second conversion’, it certainly allowed Ruiz to continue as a
surgeon, which was a precondition for the medical mission work which he
would embark on in 1969.

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43 Ibid., clip 4/40.
44 Ibid., clip 15/40.
45 Ibid., clip 15/40.
46 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 8 (22 December 2014), clip 23/23.
47 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 15/40.
3.2

Joel Ruiz twice almost missed the opportunity to engage in full-time medical missions in Ifugao: first, in 1965, when he rejected Frank Allen’s initial invitation, and (unconsciously) again, in 1967, when he nearly abandoned his medical profession. Yet, in 1968, the young surgeon changed his mind. After some part-time experience in medical missions to the Mamanwa tribe in Surigao, he began to sense that “as a doctor, I could contribute something to missions.” Therefore, in 1969, the 31-year-old Ruiz, his wife and their two toddler daughters, crossed 900 miles of land and sea, from their comfortable lowland hometown in Surigao to the mountainous region of Ifugao. There, in a period antedating, and subsequently overlapping with the authoritarian regime of Marcos, Ruiz became a pioneer Filipino surgeon and director of the Good News Clinic, a mission hospital established in 1956 by American missionaries of the Far East Gospel Crusade (FEGC). Framing his duty as “both medical mission and church planting,” he

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48 Ibid., clip 4/40.
49 Ibid., clip 15/40.
50 Ibid., clip 6/40.
52 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 8 (22 December 2014), clip 6/23.
ministered there until 1980, describing the overall experience as “a fruitful eleven years of service with no regrets!”\textsuperscript{53}

3.2.1 Instrumental View of Medical Missions?

In tracking the possibility of a ‘second conversion’, the main issue which requires a careful examination at this stage seems to arise from the fact that he defined his missionary task as “medical mission and church planting.” Did he mean to say that medical mission was as important as church planting? Or, was his medical work only important if it achieved his evangelistic aims? Was he bent on neglecting his medical work in order to focus more on evangelism? These questions are not immediately answerable from the narrative itself. A related observation, for the purpose of this study, is that there seems to be no awareness at all of doing medical missions as a way to combat certain economic injustice.

It may be that his basic understanding of medical mission, as far as one can reconstruct from the narrative, was supportive of the view that it was only a means to achieve evangelistic goals. For example, Ruiz was quite active in assisting foreign missionaries in forming Bible study groups and church planting efforts in various parts of Ifugao.\textsuperscript{54} This is crucial precisely because it raises the problem of an instrumental view of medical missions, as a mere tool for evangelism. This issue seems to be underscored by the fact that throughout

\textsuperscript{53} Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 9/40.

\textsuperscript{54} Ruiz, Kwentuhan 2 (1 September 2008), clip 23/32.
our kwentuhan, Ruiz did not seem to detect anything odd or problematic about the explicit purpose of the Good News Clinic “as a means to evangelize the Ifugao tribal people… and establish a church among them.”\textsuperscript{55} Moreover, on more than one occasion in our kwentuhan, Ruiz himself virtually affirmed such a statement of purpose when he talked about medical mission as “a tool we are using to introduce the Gospel.”\textsuperscript{56}

As a way of exploring further the nature of Joel's early involvement in medical missions, it is interesting to note, that during the colonial era, mission doctors, as David Hardiman puts it, “worked with sick people in remote parts of the globe, treating maladies that were seen to be as much social as physical. They laboured,” Hardiman continues, “not only to restore health to the bodies of ‘natives’, but also to save their souls.”\textsuperscript{57} And here lies the actual or potential problem: were those who dispatched the pioneer mission doctors in the nineteenth century responsible for establishing an instrumental understanding of medical mission? The view that medical and surgical work are to be considered primarily as handmaids of evangelism is evident in the careers of pioneer Protestant medical missionaries such as Peter Parker (1804-1888) and David Livingstone (1813-1873).\textsuperscript{58} A case has also been made that the pioneer


\textsuperscript{56} Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 29/40.

\textsuperscript{57} David Hardiman, \textit{Healing Bodies, Saving Souls: Medical Missions in Asia and Africa} (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2006), 5-57. Quotation is found in p. 5.

Presbyterian and medical missionaries in the Philippines, mentioned above, such as J. Andrew Hall and James Alexander Graham, “always considered [their] medical expertise subservient to [their] missionary calling.”

Although ministering after the colonial era, and as a Filipino missionary to fellow Filipinos, it seems that Joel Ruiz, too, was not an exception in that he was inclined to offer his medical services to those he intended to evangelize. By framing his missionary task as “both medical mission and church planting,” and moreover, by talking about medical mission as “a tool we are using to introduce the Gospel,” Ruiz evidently aligned himself with the purpose of the Good News Clinic, which (as already stated) was built “as a means to evangelize the Ifugao tribal people… and [to] establish a church among them.” This, we might note, is a line of thinking which Magalit, informed by his understanding of the Lausanne Covenant as we saw in chapter 2, came to regard as quite problematic.

But can we confidently conclude, based on the way Ruiz defined his mission, that the doctor was in practice, and not merely in theory, instrumentalising his medical work to achieve his evangelistic goals? Is there evidence that Ruiz in fact only did medical work if it could be shown to be for the purpose of opening doors for the gospel? Was there an instance when he

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60 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 29/40.

61 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 8 (22 December 2014), clip 6/23.

62 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 29/40.

refused to do medical work because it clearly did not serve the goal of evangelism? To an extent we may surmise that there may have been some instances when medical work was construed primarily as a tool for church planting because this was in fact the main reason why he was in Ifugao in the first place. However, there are also examples which can be gleaned from the narrative that point to the possibility that medical work was not always conceived merely as an instrument for church planting.

When Ruiz was a pioneer mission doctor in Ifugao (1969-1980), it may be recalled that his stay did not only coincide with the authoritarian regime of Marcos; it was also the period when the New People’s Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), took refuge in certain areas in Ifugao. Therefore, armed encounters became intermittently unavoidable, according to Ruiz, especially when government forces advanced into the territory. As expected, wounded combatants from both warring parties were brought to the Good News Clinic, being one of the nearest hospitals. And in such situations, “the standard procedure”, the doctor said, “was to provide the necessary medical treatment; no questions asked.” It is clear that on occasions such as these, the concerns for both evangelism and church planting seem to have receded to the background, though we cannot conclude that these concerns had become completely insignificant. The same tendency may be observed in Ruiz’s narratives about the primary health care

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64 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 5.2 (24 January 2011), clip 11/11.
65 Ibid.
and surgical services that he offered on a daily basis to the residents of Ifugao. Apart from being a conflict-prone region, Ifugao, as Ruiz put it in our 2008 *kwentuhan*, was also a province “where many were basically deprived of medical assistance due to economic reasons,” suggesting that by 2008, and arguably earlier, Ruiz already had developed an awareness of economic inequality, although we cannot assume that in the 1970s the young doctor had already developed a mature critical social awareness. All the same, these are clues which may suggest that in practice Ruiz did not merely regard his medical work as an instrument to lead people to an evangelical conversion and the setting up of a local church, although these traditional evangelistic goals undoubtedly remained important to him.

The Ifugao mission experience lasted for eleven years. Again, in 2008, during our first *kwentuhan*, Ruiz emphasised that the Ifugao mission was generally a positive experience for him. What made it particularly positive is that it came to be viewed retrospectively as a ‘platform’ which tested and confirmed his belief in the grace of God sustaining his entire mission experience. “I was not earning,” he revealed. “But we survived.” Armed with what one might call an idealistic faith, and a meagre monthly allowance, he stayed in Ifugao for over a decade. “And we left the mission”, he concluded, “in good terms.” What is of particular concern for the purposes

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66 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 18/40.

67 Ibid., clip 11/40.

68 Ibid., clip 10/40.
of this study, however, is not so much that he survived, but rather that his period of missionary employment ended. As we shall see, this would prove crucial because it was a lucrative professional interlude that could have redirected his career away from the chance to nurture solidarity with the more vulnerable sections of Philippine society.

3.2.2 Yemen and the Transition to FMS

The end of the Ifugao episode suggests an interesting complication, for it brings to the surface an important issue which potentially could have delayed the emergence of a critical social awareness. While he could have stayed longer in Ifugao, and, while he fully believed in the standard faith-mission dictum that ‘God’s mission will not lack God’s provision’, he left the mission for, at least, one financially-related reason. “When our two daughters entered high school,” he said, “we became deeply concerned about their education. So we thought, it was probably time to move on.”

69 They moved down to Manila and after a year of transition there he was recruited by a US-based company to work in Yemen. Whether or not he was disillusioned with his experience of missions, cannot be established here. Recounting this particular episode in our 2008 kwentuhan, he simply noted, “the Lord opened a way for me to work in the Muslim world.”

70 But, as noted above, and as we shall see shortly, the effect of the Yemen experience was potentially to impede Ruiz’s awakening towards social justice issues because it became quite

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69 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 12/40.

70 Ibid.
tempting to maintain a lucrative professional career abroad. In 1981, he landed in Yemen as the chief of the ambulatory care unit, where he supervised thirteen doctors, some of whom were from Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria and the United States. He revealed that the substantial salary he was now receiving included a paid holiday every six months. In addition, he was offered an option – which he did not use – for his children to study either in Europe or in the US, all expenses covered.\textsuperscript{71} Indeed, in terms of financial gain, Yemen was the exact opposite of Ifugao. We may fully agree with the doctor that the decision to work abroad was motivated by duty as a parent. And yet it is likely that because he was so well compensated, the drive to maintain a lucrative professional career might have preoccupied him. Even if we assume that a critical social awareness was emerging in Ruiz at this stage (which is not clear), the concern to establish his professional career, most probably a lucrative one, equally may have suppressed this assumed emergence.

However, Ruiz resigned after two years (1981-1983) in Yemen. But not because – and this should be emphasised – he felt something was wrong about his profession. “I could have retained my position as a well-paid doctor,” he said.\textsuperscript{72} The main reason for abandoning Yemen, he recalls, was that “I felt I could find a better option.”\textsuperscript{73} He returned to the Philippines, toying with the idea of starting his private practice. “But,” and here he reveals what he

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
intended to do, “my mind was really set to work abroad.” Indeed, the allure of working abroad to secure a better-paying career seems to confirm our initial observation. We can safely say that for Ruiz, at this point, medical mission was a closed chapter. He even had what appears to be a “Baptist” way of justifying his decision to move beyond mission, the traces of which is still preserved in the memory of his prayer during those times: “Lord, I have already given ten per cent [a tithe] of my life to missions…” primarily referring to his eleven years of full-time mission work in Ifugao, which apparently convinced him that indeed his mission life was over.

His return to the Philippines was clearly, as his narrative suggests, a transition towards a better professional option, rather unrelated to mission. “That is why,” he explains, “when the Flying Medical Samaritans (FMS) first invited me [shortly after his arrival in the Philippines in 1983] to join the mission in Mindanao, I categorically turned it down.”

The invitation to join FMS – which he did not expect, and, which did not interest him – was to be a mission doctor in a predominantly Muslim population in the southwesternmost region of Mindanao, comprising the provinces of Zamboanga, Basilan, and the Sulu archipelago, a context historically resistant to Christianity since the colonial period, and which

74 Ibid., clips 13/40, 24/40.
75 Ibid.
76 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 4.2 (22 January 2009), clip 9/23.
remains rather challenging today. But, according to him, the invitation was too late. “My mind was somewhere else. Indeed, I was fully set to work abroad.”

It is not difficult to imagine that his first-hand experience in Ifugao, followed by the contrasting experience of receiving a high salary in the US-run hospital in Yemen, had already taught him that full-time mission can be financially disadvantageous to the life of the missionary and to his family. Speaking from experience, he later reflected by saying: “unless the mission will seriously address the financial needs of their missionaries, there is a real danger that they will lose their highly qualified mission doctors.” But, in the end, Ruiz accepted the invitation to join FMS.

The reason he joined FMS is difficult to comprehend from an objective standpoint precisely because of the highly subjective nature of the religious experience that accompanied his surprising decision. Ruiz reports that he ‘heard the voice of God’ saying: ‘This is the work I want you to do.’ But while this key event is highly subjective, it can be quite presumptuous on the part of the researcher to dismiss this religious experience as a mere illusion, just as it is equally presumptuous to conclude that there is something much

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77 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 24/40.
78 Ibid.
80 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 24/40.
more than a human experience which has moved the doctor. What is clear is that Ruiz was moved by the experience, and that his life was redirected. But, at that time, Ruiz had no way of knowing that this decision was a step that would move him closer towards his ‘second conversion’ to a more holistic understanding of mission. We shall touch on this experience once more in section three.

At any rate, this transition indicates that there was a less visible force at work. For example, prior to FMS, there was, as his narrative suggests, an offer which could get him to earn an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 US dollars a month (in the 1980s). Hence, choosing to respond to FMS which secured for him 700 US dollars a month, seems to indicate something more than a concern for money: an action which Ruiz can only explain as a result of ‘hearing the voice of God.’ Ruiz also noted that 700 US dollars was sufficient to sustain the basic needs of his family which included the education of his children. Whatever the nature of the reason was, the fact remains that his life would take a different turn.

It deserves to be mentioned here, that it was an InterVarsity colleague who invited Ruiz to join FMS. As in the case of Magalit, Ruiz’s expanding evangelical network – prior to his ‘second conversion’ – was therefore a factor in the unfolding of his career as a mission doctor. Back in 1965, as noted

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81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
above, it was also during an InterVarsity gathering that Joel had first been invited by Frank Allen to Ifugao.

### 3.2.3 FMS and the Seaweed Project

Unlike his experience in Ifugao, which was mainly hospital-based, the mission with FMS (which began in the second half of 1983) was more mobile, involving first-hand contact with some of the more hard-pressed Moro and *lumad* people in their rural communities in Mindanao and Sulu. As Director of the Medical and Social Services of FMS, Ruiz spent his first six years particularly in the Muslim-dominated Sulu archipelago where, using the FMS boat clinic, he did a monthly circuit. After six years, FMS gradually moved northwards to areas in Palawan such as the remote islands of Cavili, Cagayancillo, Cuyo, Conception, and Agutaya.

In the early stages of the mission, FMS was not yet involved in introducing alternative livelihood programs. But gradually, as the nature of his work tended to expose Ruiz to some of the extreme economic conditions experienced by the people he regularly visited, people whose communities were quite isolated from the urban centres of the country, the doctor must have been challenged, sooner or later, to face such dire conditions. One of the

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84 A collective Visayan term referring to the indigenous people of Mindanao.

85 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 5.2 (24 January 2011), clip 1/11.

86 Ibid.

87 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 8 (22 December 2014), clip 7/23.
first things he noticed was the situation of the pastors and church workers who were working hard to sustain the ministry in these regions, but, unlike Ruiz, were not earning a stable income. Thus, the idea that at least he was earning a stable income, while they did not, must have disturbed him. We should recall that Ruiz had a similar, though not perfectly identical, experience while he was doing mission in Ifugao. And part of the reason why eventually he had to leave the Ifugao mission had to do with the lack of a stable income to sustain the needs of his growing family. In addition, his appointment as the Director of Medical and Social Services might also have added to his restlessness. But the more fundamental reason, as his narrative has indicated, is his belief that God called him to FMS, which must have led Ruiz to raise the questions: Why am I here? What must I do?

This degree of restlessness is evident in two major episodes in his narrative: the first episode concerns his encounter with Andry K. Lim, the founder of Tribal Mission Foundation International (TMFI). TMFI started in 1985 as a very traditional hand-out style relief work which aimed to reach the Matigsalug tribe in Davao. But, in noticing that the enormous needs just tended to pile up, Andry Lim came to realise that the hand-out method really was not a solution. As a result, TMFI retooled itself by adopting, developing and providing the necessary training in, for example, practical and effective

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88 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 7 (28 October 2014), clip 4/50.


90 Ibid.
backyard farming to overcome hunger. In the long run, this approach proved to be more empowering for the Matigsalug tribe. 91 When Ruiz encountered this ministry in the late 1980s, the first thought he had in mind was that this approach could be adopted as a way to help the poor pastors and church workers he was ministering to. 92

The second episode, he remembers, occurred sometime in 1990, during a medical mission trip to Palawan. In that mission trip, Ruiz learned that rural pastors, and by extension the people, who were seaweed planters, were being exploited by middlemen. 93 “In a way, it was unavoidable,” Ruiz said, “because as we ministered in the area, we began to hear their own conversations like, for instance, how they were forced to sell their products at a price that was quite disadvantageous to the planters. And then later we learned that its market value in the cities was high. It was clear that the planters were not getting the price that they deserved. Such a learning process moved us eventually to find ways to ensure that the planters would not remain at the losing end.” 94 Here, I propose, is a clear turning point with regard to the question of his ‘second conversion’ because a vision of an

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91 Ibid. It is interesting to note that, in view of its traditional background, TMFI today does not use the language of ‘soul-winning’ or church-planting as its rationale. Its mission, as currently articulated is to combat poverty and illiteracy in tribal areas aiming at environmental sustainability. The training that TMFI offer is designed with the hope that the tribes themselves would eventually respond to and contribute in the corporate project of sustaining both their lives and their environment.

92 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 5.5 (24 January 2011), clip 2/7.

93 Ibid., clip 6/7.

94 Ibid.
appropriate Christian response in terms of measures to improve the economic sustainability of Palawan Christian pastors, and eventually of entire communities of marginalised seaweed planters, began to take shape and gradually inform the mission of FMS.

Unlike the case of Magalit, who (during the 1974 Lausanne Congress) had Stott, Padilla and Escobar – which underscores the role of external agents in the process of theological re-orientation, Ruiz, spending most of his time in remote islands, did not have the same access to these evangelical advocates of social engagement. Moreover, unlike Magalit, and we shall see later, Manalo and Carian, Ruiz was largely unaffected by the issues raised by the imposition of martial law and the 1983 murder of Ninoy Aquino. He described his isolation by saying: “First, I was in the mountains for eleven years [referring to the years 1969-1980 in Ifugao], and then, for another seventeen years, I spent my time travelling to some of the most remote islands in the Philippines [referring to the years 1983-2000 with FMS].” But this isolation had its own advantage, for it allowed him directly to experience some of the more extreme cases of economic poverty in the Philippines. And so in his case, the ‘faces of the poor’ became the external agents sensitising him to the problem of economic or social injustice.

In addition to his experience in Palawan, we can also see a similar development, in 1995, as Ruiz introduced a seaweed industry in the island of

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95 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 7 (28 October 2014), clips 15/50, 16/50, 43/50.
Patnanungan, which is part of the Polilio group of islands on the Pacific side of Luzon. This is his account:

Back in 1986, I flew to Katakian Grande, one of the islands of Polilio in Luzon. This island is populated by fishermen most of whom were marginalised. They had no medical facility and their island was quite isolated being the farthest island of the Polilio group, facing the Pacific Ocean and regularly hit by typhoons. After some assessment we started the mission for Luzon, visiting the island once every two months.

In 1990 we got a better idea of seaweed culture in Cavili island [Palawan] and in 1995 we started a regular seaweed industry in Patnanungan [still part of the Polilio group of islands] with the help of friends and volunteers to demonstrate that it was feasible. Until then, “dynamite fishing”\(^{96}\) seem to have been the more attractive option for livelihood. But after a relatively successful planting, others began to show interest. What began as a livelihood project for pastors and church workers\(^{97}\) eventually evolved to become a community-wide project. However, warnings of the adverse effect of overplanting were not heeded by the people. Thus in 2001 the industry died slowly as the production dropped from a high 150 tons of harvest per month to 10-15 tons per month.\(^{98}\)

\(^{96}\) ‘Dynamite fishing’, also called, ‘blast fishing’ is an illegal and indiscriminate method of fishing which use explosives to shock a school of fish for an easy catch. The explosion also affects juvenile fish and other non-targeted marine species while damaging coral reefs and the marine habitat in general.

\(^{97}\) This concern for the livelihood of church workers is also found in Joel Ruiz, Kwentuhan 7 (28 October 2014), clip 2/50.

\(^{98}\) Ruiz, Kwentuhan 7 (28 October 2014), clip 35/50.
As we shall see in section four, the growth of his holistic understanding of mission was made possible through a largely non-critical and protracted exposure to the people's lived environment as Ruiz traveled extensively from the Sulu archipelago in the south, to the Polilio group of islands in the north. FMS also opened an orphanage in Naujan, Mindoro and extended medical assistance to some of the Mangyan tribes also in Mindoro. Though largely non-critical, the experience of ministering to the bodily needs of people in various marginalised regions of the country must have helped to shape and expand his understanding of mission. After seventeen years with FMS, Joel Ruiz finally retired in the year 2000 at the age of 62.

3.3

Compassion in Action (2001-present)

In our 2008 kwentuhan, Ruiz disclosed an important period of transition which occurred during the years 2001-2005, when some of his Baptist and Pentecostal friends and former colleagues – who knew about his ministry with FMS – insisted that he should take the lead in setting up a Filipino medical mission program. This was not easy, according to Ruiz, because aside from the issue of funding, they (the team he led) had to have a relatively clear vision and understanding of their mission. This compelled Ruiz, who by now had considerable experience from which he could draw insights – both from his hospital-based exposure with the Good News Clinic (1969-1980) and his more mobile exposure with FMS (1983-2000). In other words, it was a golden
opportunity to rethink the nature of mission in the Philippine context. After several sessions of brainstorming with these Baptist and Pentecostal friends, ideas started to crystallize. I shall reproduce below the record of the thoughts that emerged, as he articulated them in the kwentuhan of 2008 and 2011, precisely because they are essential for understanding the nature of his emerging critical social awareness, and the possibility of a ‘second conversion’ towards a commitment to issues of social justice. Here is Ruiz’s description of the ideas that began to emerge in the years 2001-2005.

We started to envision a medical program that would grow not merely as a dispensable auxiliary arm but rather as an organic component of the mission of the local church, particularly in pioneering local churches in the countryside where health care is not normally accessible. As an organic dimension of the local church’s mission, this program should be exercised and nurtured as a continuing ministry addressing the health issues of the community, and not merely a showcase for attracting crowds or potential converts.99

What we observed as a tendency, in his early ministry, to instrumentalise the medical work as a handmaid for evangelism and church planting has, in the above excerpt, finally been acknowledged and confronted. It is interesting that Ruiz, at this late stage, had begun to formulate an understanding of the place of medicine in Christian mission something along the lines of the 1938 Tambaram International Missionary Council (IMC) report which stated that “[t]he ministry of health and healing belongs to the essence of the Gospel and is, therefore, an integral part of the mission to which Christ has called and is calling His

Church,” and that “[m]edical work is not an optional part of the Church’s work and …not an additional luxury to be provided if money is available.”

According to Ruiz, there were three fundamental issues with which he tried to wrestle as he and his team went through the process of conceptualising an emerging medical program. The first involved what he observed – after spending almost thirty years in the field of medical missions – as the tendency to reduce medical missions to something like an ostentatious show, wherein the concern for the health issues of the community was ultimately sidetracked. He elaborated:

I was particularly disturbed by the mentality – which I think is common – behind certain occasional medical missions which operate during church anniversaries or disasters as though that is all there is to medical missions. Not that I am against such an idea per se. I think we should always respond to calamities and emergencies. But I also think we must learn to question the limits of this approach in light of the gospel. For example, can we really demonstrate genuine service to the daily and apparently unending health issues of the marginalised communities by conducting a one-time medical outreach in a certain area? Are we not simply using medical missions to attract multitudes so that we can report that hundreds, perhaps thousands, have come to our church anniversary (or whatever the case may be)? So what if we have attracted a thousand? The crucial question is: do we have the capacity to offer genuine service to each one of them? Have we convinced ourselves that health issues can be best remedied by attending to them only during church anniversaries or disasters? While we should try our best to deal with emergency situations,

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101 Ibid.
I think that is far from sufficient. If we want to demonstrate a Christian concern for the health issues of the community, then medical missions must be a regular and a much more intentional preoccupation of the local churches especially in the countryside where there are no hospitals. As Christians, we are called to share the gospel. But to use medical missions simply to attract crowds, or worse, as a one-time spectacle, is, I'm afraid, just an ostentatious show (pakitang-tao) disguising as service.102

The second fundamental issue which Ruiz attempted to tackle in conceptualising the new program was (and still is) the issue of the health-worker exodus from the Philippines which had dramatically increased in the years 2001-2005. He expressed a particular concern when he heard of certain doctors-turned-nurses who opted to work overseas.103 A survey conducted by the Manila-based Health Alliance for Democracy in 2006, showed, as reported by Margaret Harris Cheng, “that 80% of doctors working in the Filipino public sector had applied or intended to apply to work overseas and 90% of municipal health officers were set to leave to work abroad. They were planning,” Cheng continues, “to leave not as doctors but as nurses, because it is nurses that the major recruiting countries—the USA, the UK, Ireland, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore—are seeking and luring with promises of pay well above a Filipino public doctor's salary.”104 This increasing migration of professional health workers has certainly left the Philippine health care system, as a 2010 report puts

102 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 28/40.

103 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 10/40; Kwentuhan 2 (1 September 2008), clip 16/32.

it, in a “sad state of disrepair especially in rural areas where health care facilities and services are badly needed.”\textsuperscript{105} In 2005, the Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines (PHAP) reported about 800 partially closed hospitals and another 200 hospitals which had already ceased to operate.\textsuperscript{106} The program that Ruiz had conceptualised includes something he called the Christian Health Workers Association, which aims “to inculcate a sense of Christian solidarity among the younger health workers while nurturing the value of Christian service by introducing them to various local churches where they would serve, if possible, for life.”\textsuperscript{107} But Ruiz is aware that with the current situation and the nature of the program which requires a sustained collective effort, the program will certainly take up several years to mature.

This leads to the third issue which is the need for cooperation, not only among the Christian health workers but also among the various local churches around the country. He explained this point further:

I have also observed that medical missions are done individually rather than collectively which tends to reinforce the parochial mentality of \textit{kanya-kanya} [each to his own] leading to further unhealthy competitions and unnecessary divisions in the body of Christ.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{105} The Medical Action Group, ‘Challenges in Attaining Universal Health Care in the Philippines’, \textit{In Focus} 10 (2010): 61-102. A section on the exodus of health care professionals is found in p. 95-6.

\textsuperscript{106} The Medical Action Group, ‘Challenges’, 96.

\textsuperscript{107} Ruiz, Kwentuhan 2 (1 September 2008), clip 15/32.

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
The challenge today, as Ruiz sees it, is to come up with a program that can best express the meaning of the gospel. “What I would like to see more in the future,” Ruiz concluded, “is cooperation among various local churches, particularly in the margins, in sustaining a vibrant, year-round, public health program because they believe it is a ministry which naturally proceeds from the gospel, rather than just an extra arm of social concern artificially attached to the ministry of the church. But since the gospel is also spiritual, their ministry cannot end by simply addressing the physical health of the community.”

Through these reflections, Ruiz has demonstrated how his current understanding of the gospel is directly related to a commitment to tackle the public health issues which is also sensitive to the socio-economic conditions of the people. In 2005, the Ruiz-led interdenominational group formed what is now called Compassion in Action, as an initial step in this more holistic direction. How it will unfold in the next few years of Filipino evangelical ministry is certainly worth watching.

3.4

A Growing Holistic Understanding of Mission

It is now time to return to the question of how and when Ruiz came to a holistic understanding of mission which articulated into a commitment to a

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109 Ibid., clip 17/32.
public health program that is sensitive to the issues of economic or social justice in the margins of society. It is now obvious that the contribution of his protracted exposure in medical missions, first with the Good News Clinic (1969-1980) and then with FMS (1983-2000) cannot be underestimated.

We may recall that Ruiz (in section two) was appointed as the Director of the Medical and Social Services of FMS. However, it should be noted that it began simply as a designation because, according to Ruiz, the actual program still had to be worked out. “That shows how basic the mission was in the beginning,” he said.\(^{110}\) As such one might ask how it was possible for him to develop the program, and how the process of developing the program had made an impact on him, and his understanding of the gospel. As we saw in section two, one essential advantage he had was time. We already know that Ruiz spent seventeen years with FMS. The other key advantage he had was the geographical and multi-cultural scope of his ministry in which he had to travel and encounter regularly. His first six years with FMS were mostly spent in the Muslim-dominated Sulu archipelago\(^{111}\) where traditional evangelistic work, whether in the form of preaching or tract distribution, was culturally repelled, and in certain instances was met with hostility.\(^{112}\) This must have been an occasion when it became possible for Ruiz to exercise a more diplomatic and dialogical approach to the Muslim population. It might


\(^{111}\) Joel Ruiz, Kwentuhan 4.1 (22 January 2009), clip 2/2.

\(^{112}\) Joel Ruiz, Kwentuhan 5.2 (24 January 2011), clip 3/11.
not have been possible for him to stay for six straight years in the area had he insisted on doing evangelism in the traditional way. Indeed, even without the traditional evangelistic work, the mere fact that Ruiz and his FMS team were Christians was already viewed with suspicion at least by some of the more fundamentalist Muslims. “We received threats from Muslim extremists in the area, warning us to stop our work,” he confided.113 About the same time, Ruiz knew of at least one “Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL)114 Bible translator who was kidnapped.”115 But the introduction of the boat clinic which made a monthly circuit around the Sulu archipelago, was generally received well by the people. Even some Muslim revolutionary groups requested for medical assistance.116

Although the boat clinic continued for at least six years without interruption in the Sulu archipelago, there is no indication that Ruiz won converts there.117 For someone who believed in the verbal proclamation of evangelism, the experience might have been quite troubling. But there is no evidence that would suggest that Ruiz considered his medical work a failure because it did not win new converts. It is interesting to note along this line that he recalls being impressed by the career of one of the major CAMACOP ministers, Florentino de Jesus Sr., who then was the pastor of the only

113 Ibid.
evangelical church in the region of Sulu. Unlike the ministry of most CAMACOP and evangelical churches in the country at that time, de Jesus pioneered an evangelical ministry which he simply called Love Your Neighbor, which, instead of doing the usual aggressive evangelism (which the locals found generally offensive), was more focused on nurturing caring relations with Muslims. “He did not impose his beliefs on others,” Ruiz was impressed.\textsuperscript{118}

After six years in the Sulu archipelago, FMS began to move northwards, indicating that the mission was searching for other ‘unreached’ contexts – such as parts of Palawan, Mindoro and Polilio – that would be more open to the evangelical message. During his final decade with FMS, in the years 1990-2000, we saw that, alongside medical work, livelihood projects such as seaweed planting, began to be incorporated into the social services of the mission. As already noted, however, livelihood programs were initially implemented to support the rural pastors and church workers who were not receiving financial support from their economically poor churches.\textsuperscript{119} But eventually, as for instance in Patnanungan, seaweed planting became a community-wide livelihood program from which residents who were not necessarily members of the evangelical church began to benefit as well. In this particular initiative, we can finally see a clear practical manifestation of his commitment to tackle the economic problem of the community. The 1990s

\textsuperscript{118} Joel Ruiz, Kwentuhan 3 (4 December 2008), n.v.c.

\textsuperscript{119} Ruiz, Kwentuhan 7 (28 October 2014), clip 35/50.
was a decade when the Ruiz-led FMS started to have a stronger social services program which addressed the economic concerns of the community.

Indeed, it is evident in the career of Ruiz, that he was able to strengthen both the medical and social services of the mission by systematically providing the much-needed medical services in several marginalised regions of the country, and by developing certain livelihood programs which he learned as his network and area of ministry expanded. However, with the absence of personal diaries or notes of his reflections during this period, it is difficult to evaluate how his understanding of mission began to change prior to the 1990s. The year 1990, when Ruiz was 52 years old, already indicates, as noted above, the actual manifestation of his practical commitment to protect the exploited seaweed farmers in Palawan whose products, Ruiz discovered, were purchased cheaply and unfairly.\footnote{Ruiz, Kwentuhan 5.5 (24 January 2011), clip 6/7; Kwentuhan 8 (22 December 2014), clip 1/23.}

Unlike Magalit, Ruiz does not talk about reading Marxist literature or Christian literature in dealing with issues of social justice. Moreover, the documents of the 1974 Lausanne Congress did not seem available to him prior to the 1990s. Being a member of a Bible Baptist church since moving down to Manila in 1981 did not seem to be a promising resource either, in addressing the issues that he was facing in the field.\footnote{Ruiz, Kwentuhan 6.1 (16 May 2011), clip 16/24.} As a Baptist, Ruiz was and is a premillennialist, and, in fact, believes in the theory of pretribulation
that the second coming of Christ will occur prior to the so-called ‘Great Tribulation’, which is a popular dispensationalist reading of the Bible. But this particular Baptist influence on him did not seem to have hindered his commitment to social justice issues. In our 2011 *kwentuhan*, Ruiz shows awareness of the limits of his local Baptist church when he said, “the Baptist church has focused its energies on the activities of soul-winning and church planting, what is missing is an emphasis on the Christian practice of living in righteousness and justice.” Here we have an example of the possibility that an evangelical can still be committed to issues of economic or social justice despite the importance he or she gives to the verbal proclamation of evangelism and to a rather dispensationalist view of eschatology: an interesting example challenging the notion that premillennialists and ‘soul-winners’ necessarily end up with a socially-disengaged faith. In spite of Ruiz’s rather conservative theological orientation, we can at least say that his appointment as the Director of the Medical and Social Services of FMS in 1983 was a quiet turning point towards nurturing a socially-engaged faith, for as he says, “[i]t gave me the chance to develop the program.”

Moving backwards from the 1980s to the late 1950s, we may also say that Ruiz’s expanding evangelical network as he joined the InterVarsity movement had played an important part in leading him to a career in medical missions, although it did not in itself awaken him to issues of social injustice.

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122 Ibid.
123 Ibid., clip 24/24.
Unlike Magalit, Ruiz was not affected by student activism. And Marxist or communist ideologies did not seem to have bothered him at all. At any rate, InterVarsity had a contribution in the sense of redirecting his life to medical missions. As we already saw, it was during an InterVarsity gathering in 1965 when Frank Allen first invited him to join the mission in Ifugao. In 1983, it was also an InterVarsity colleague who invited him to join FMS.

But what is more interesting is that the 1959 Kawayan Camp – in which he locates his evangelical conversion, and which, initially, did not seem to have any contribution to his holistic understanding of mission, had become, by 2008 (we may certainly argue for an earlier date), a rich theological resource. As noted in section one, Kawayan was the place where he realised that he was still a ‘sinner’ and that he needed to ‘accept Christ’. But in 2008 – the year I began to gather the narratives of his theological pilgrimage – we already see evidence that Ruiz, in revisiting his Kawayan experience, had come to a deeper understanding of ‘obedience’. Viewed through the lens of his protracted career in missions, Ruiz was enabled to construe ‘obedience’, not as a blind compliance to a sharply defined set of rules, but rather as a long process of ‘seeking God’s design’. Recasting this realisation into a question evidently reveals that the essential issue for Ruiz has once more returned to the question of identity, purpose and meaning: ‘What am I designed for?’ or simply, ‘Who am I?’

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125 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 5/40.
In the 1959 Kawayan Camp, when he was still a second-year medical student, Ruiz only had a vague intuition that “maybe God is calling me to be a doctor.”

In 2008, it was possible for him to say that “God’s design for me is to serve him.” And, in 2011 he could articulate his wider sense of vocation with the words, “God has called me to participate in the preservation of life.” Perhaps it is noteworthy that neither his continuing adherence to premillennial eschatology, nor his belief in the Rapture and imminent return of Christ (being an active member of the Bible Baptist Church since 1981) seem to have blocked his emerging desire to engage with the issues of society.

He explained by saying:

Whether or not Jesus Christ will return today, is not my concern. In fact, the Bible says ‘no one knows’ exactly. My concern is: have I done what the Lord wanted me to do? For instance, if you are called to be a farmer, then your responsibility is to contribute as a farmer. Each one should participate in the preservation and cultivation of life. In other words, we engage with the issues of society because we are called to be salt and light ‘in’ this world, that is, we are called to a life of

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126 Ibid., clip 3/40.
127 Ibid., clip 5/40.
129 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 6.1 (16 May 2011), clip 16/24; Kwentuhan 7 (28 October 2014), clip 18/50.
130 Mark 13:32; Matthew 24:36.
righteousness and justice. As such there really is no point for indifference in a world of suffering.

But unlike Magalit, as well as our next two subjects, Manalo and Carian, Ruiz was able to explain his inclination towards holistic mission by drawing from his childhood experience. This does not mean that he attained this realisation in childhood. For instance, it should be recalled that, psychologically, the crisis of the permanent separation of his parents in 1954 may have driven him temporarily to repress his entire childhood experience, and therefore it may not have contributed to his understanding of the gospel for a long time. While the healing process may have begun after his therapeutic Kawayan experience in 1959, Ruiz did not yet seem to regard his childhood experience as a resource for his holistic understanding of the gospel. There seems to be no consciousness at all about the need for a holistic gospel as the main issue for him during the Kawayan Camp was where he can find a remedy for his sin. But by the time of our 2008 kwentuhan, it was apparent that Ruiz had reached a position where he was able to look beyond the painful crisis that occurred early on and to identify in his childhood experience an understanding of the gospel that tended to be holistic right at the outset. Below is the 2008 account of his childhood:

Our house in Surigao, before and after the War [the Second World War], was like a missionary house. It was a place where church workers, missionaries and pastors were regularly accommodated by my parents,

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132 An allusion to Matthew 6:33, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” which may also be translated as ‘justice’.

133 Joel Ruiz, Kwentuhan 7 (28 October 2014), clips 28/50, 31/50.
who were believers [they were Presbyterians]. And so the practice of Christian charity, the gesture of offering food and providing temporary shelter to those who were practically strangers in need, was instilled in me as a child.

This example of hospitality and service was extended and expressed in my father's medical practice. He put up a hospital shortly after the War, where Christian workers, who were not necessarily members of our church, were treated for free. It was also his practice to provide medical treatment to anyone who needed his expertise. He was an ‘old school’ doctor who seemed unconcerned whether or not his patients could afford the treatment. He always treated them first.

The day we had to close the hospital when my father left [after the separation] was an eye-opener to me, as files of unpaid debts [of previous patients] amounting to millions of pesos in today’s currency surfaced. That moment has stayed with me, teaching me that the value of money must be outranked by the value of service.

From a very young age, I was already introduced to the gospel – about the life of Christ, that he healed people physically and spiritually [my emphasis]. There were times I would accompany my mother to clean the church, and I would run up to the pulpit as a little boy to ‘preach’. Then some people would ask “What would you like to be?” So I guess an idea was forming, and I would respond: “Well, I want to be like Jesus. I want to be a doctor and a pastor.”

When Ruiz narrated this account to the researcher, it was clear that the gospel was still upmost. However, it must be noted that the apparently dominant evangelical understanding of the gospel, that ‘Jesus Christ died to save sinners from their sins’ is virtually absent here. Instead we can see a gospel understood

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134 Ruiz, Kwentuhan 1 (13 August 2008), clip 1/40.
as a ‘ministry of healing’. This is indicated in his own description of the gospel as the story of “the life of Christ, that he healed people physically and spiritually.” This simple yet interesting integration is important, first, because it seems to suggest a departure from the conservative evangelical tendency to define the gospel narrowly, in which the main task is limited to verbal proclamation aimed at winning converts. Second – which is more important – this integrative capacity to appropriate the gospel as a healing ministry, translated into a desire to imitate Jesus,\(^{135}\) points to a fundamental ‘metanarrative’ which, although initially, and for a long time, largely latent or non-conscious, has played a part in forming or composing his ‘self’ or ‘identity’ even if it took a while before Ruiz had the capacity to identify and articulate it.\(^{136}\) Later, this ‘metanarrative’ was reinforced by his protracted career in medical missions, which must have contributed in informing and transforming his understanding of mission. It is also possible to surmise that the ‘voice of God’ which led him to join FMS was influenced by the workings of this ‘metanarrative’ which he had been inhabiting for quite a long time.

At any rate, it seems to be the case, as Dana Robert has argued with reference to American women missionaries in the late nineteenth century,\(^{137}\) that

\(^{135}\) This ‘imitatio Christi’ motif as a rationale for medical mission is also emphasised by Christoffer Grundmann, ‘Proclaiming the Gospel by Healing the Sick? Historical and Theological Annotations on Medical Mission’, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 14:3 (July 1990): 124.

\(^{136}\) This function of inherited and largely non-conscious ‘metanarratives’ or tradition is more fully developed in John C. Haughey, ‘Narratival Selfhood’, in David E. Aune and John McCarthy (eds.), *The Whole and Divided Self* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 182-98.

because Ruiz's ministry was less occupied with preaching and pastoring, and more engaged in caring for bodily needs through medical work and livelihood projects, he necessarily developed a more holistic understanding of mission, and this, in spite of his conservative evangelical theological orientation.

But, then, it is also possible to surmise, on the basis of the narrative itself, and its several repetitions through the *kwentuhan* from 2008 to 2014,\(^{138}\) that there is another theological resource for a holistic understanding of mission which dates back to the ‘metanarrative’ he inherited in childhood. This ‘metanarrative’, which had been lurking beneath his consciousness and gradually brought to the surface after many years of experience in the mission field, have finally revealed itself to be a fertile theological resource for nurturing a more holistic understanding of mission. In this sense, the story of Ruiz seems to suggest that the potential of inherited ‘metanarratives’ cannot be underestimated in the development of a holistic view of mission that effectively escapes the narrow confines of a conservative evangelical understanding of the gospel.

Finally, while the language which tends to instrumentalise medical mission as a tool for advancing the gospel is still audible in the utterances of Ruiz, we have concluded, after delving into his theological pilgrimage, that he does not mean to say that medical mission is useless if it does not lead to the winning of converts. Rather he does mean to say that medical mission is an essential way of expressing the gospel. In fact, it was his vision to see local

churches becoming satellites of healing, but not merely of the physical, for the gospel for him is also profoundly spiritual. He would surely not find it problematic to agree with M. Witschi who wrote: “[t]he local church not having a deep concern with sick people, the poor and the people in moral danger, is not a Christian community.”

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The story of Magalit (chapter 2) is an example of an evangelical who was compelled to confront Marxist-inspired movements because they got in the way of his primary task to evangelize. Nevertheless, as a result of such a confrontation, Magalit ended up awakened to the presence of injustice, developing a commitment to issues of social justice which became a permanent dimension of his ministry, while still rejecting Marxist-inspired options. The story of Ruiz (chapter 3) presented a different trajectory, in which the pressure to confront Marxist-inspired movements was not felt or deemed necessary, and in which a similar awakening and commitment to issues of economic or social justice was achieved through what one might call a protracted career in medical missions – and this, in spite of its rather traditional beginnings. In this chapter, I will explore a third intriguing trajectory: one that charts the process of a ‘second conversion’ which essentially is – quite unlike the stories of Magalit and Ruiz – an accommodation of social analysis that draws from the thought of Marx. But it is not, as one might mistakenly expect, a conversion away from evangelical Christianity (although at some stage it may appear as though it was). In selecting the story of Fermin Manalo Jr. (b. 1957), hereafter Jun Manalo, the primary task of this chapter is to examine how and why it was possible for an evangelical to accommodate a Marxist framework of social analysis, and, as a result, to
become increasingly engaged in addressing political issues even when it meant being pushed towards the margins of his own evangelical community. The chapter will be divided into seven sections. In section one I will examine briefly an excerpt from Manalo’s story which locates the turning point that is the root of his ‘second conversion’. In section two I will then proceed to survey the period prior to his ‘second conversion’, when he was a new evangelical convert, to get a picture of the circumstances leading up to his theological re-orientation. Next, in section three, I will explore more closely the nature of his ‘second conversion’ during and immediately after his encounter with the University of the Philippines political scientist, Francisco Nemenzo Jr. From this point onwards, I will move beyond the university context to examine, in sections four and five, the emerging tension between his acquired evangelical theology and his evolving political theory. I will attempt to demonstrate that this tension, which became more manifest in his early career and simultaneous involvement in the local church after his studies at the University of the Philippines, further sustained his ‘second conversion’. Finally, in sections six and seven, I will touch on the growing tension between his evangelical theology and political ideology while examining his later encounters with some influential evangelical theologians.

Unfortunately, (at present) we do not have details of Manalo’s childhood, or his family background, except that he states rather curtly: “I am not aware of any political involvement on either side [of my parents].”¹ One can only inquire

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¹ Fermin Manalo, personal email correspondence (5 March 2015).
whether there may be some childhood experiences that might help in shedding light on Manalo’s ‘second conversion’.

4.1

Encountering Nemenzo

Up to a certain point, Manalo’s story closely resembles that of the stories of Magalit and Ruiz. Manalo’s initial conversion to evangelical Christianity is in essence a story of a university student who, after encountering the InterVarsity movement (we should notice the similarity with Ruiz, and to some extent with Magalit), ends up embracing an evangelical identity. However, with regard to their ‘second conversion’, that is, the movement from a socially-disengaged to a socially-engaged evangelical identity, their stories differ significantly. And this contrast becomes more striking, it seems, in the case of Manalo whose ‘second conversion’ involved an accommodation of social analysis inspired by the thought of Marx, which he learned from the University of the Philippines political scientist Francisco Nemenzo Jr.² How, one may ask, did this ‘second conversion’ come about? To find an answer to this question, I shall begin with an excerpt of Manalo’s account, suggesting the vital role of external agents, in this case, a University professor, in presenting a new message:

A major turning point in my life occurred during the second half of my third year in college when I enrolled in an elective course by Francisco

² Francisco “Dodong” Nemenzo Jr., a co-founder of the Third World Studies Center (1977) at the University of the Philippines (UP Diliman), is a leading political scientist in the Philippine academe. For an academic profile, see http://polisci.upd.edu.ph/faculty/nemenzo.html (accessed 12 March 2015).
Nemenzo Jr. Professor Nemenzo, I soon realised, was a Marxist. And I don’t think he had any religious affiliation at all. Through him, I began to appreciate the value of doing a careful analysis of social realities... The impact of the course was such that by the end of the semester, I felt I had a conversion experience – my second. There was a profound change in the way I perceived things. I realised this because in the following semester, all the essays and term papers I wrote had something to do with social issues like foreign debt, nationalism, martial law... I was never the same again after that course. And my studies, thereafter, started to have a clearer sense of direction.

But how did this change come about? What were the factors that made this change possible? What were the conditions, as far as can be observed from his narrative, which helped to further reinforce such a ‘second conversion’ experience? In order to understand how this change might have unfolded, I shall now turn to explore the key events prior to this episode, a period when Manalo was still a young evangelical convert.

4.2 Evangelical Conversion, Evangelical Community

Jun Manalo became an evangelical during the period of martial law, a major political context which I discussed in chapter 1. He was a freshman at the University of the Philippines in Baguio (hereafter, UP Baguio) where he stayed

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3 We do not know exactly how Nemenzo would react to this label. He may accept it, but in a critical way. See Francisco Nemenzo Jr., ‘Questioning Marx, Critiquing Marxism: Reflections on the Ideological Crisis on the Left’, in Kasarinlan: A Philippine Quarterly of Third World Studies 8:2 (1992): 5-25.

4 Fermin Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.1 (10 July 2008), clip 2/3.
for a year before moving to the Philippines’ national capital region, Metro Manila. In UP Baguio, he first encountered the InterVarsity movement which led to his evangelical conversion. However, unlike Magalit, Ruiz, and even Carian (as we shall see in chapter 5), Manalo identifies, not one, but several occasions, each of which may count as an initial conversion experience. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is to reproduce below an extended excerpt from his own account. This excerpt also has an additional value of prefiguring the type of personality with which we are dealing in this chapter.

It seems that my conversion to evangelicalism developed gradually. I remember when I studied in Baguio, I found myself joining a movement of evangelical students called InterVarsity.\(^5\) What initially attracted me to the movement was the distinct and truly caring environment of evangelicals which I believe was a consequence of their faith in Christ. I was also attracted by their passion to study the Bible, and even their way of critiquing some of the so-called ‘doctrinal errors’ of the Catholic Church fascinated me.\(^6\) Then there was one instance when, while attending a Baptist church service, I felt moved by an evangelistic call to go forward. In fact, the mere effort to stand up already felt like I was moving into something quite decisive.\(^7\) In another occasion, I visited what then was called the University Center, run by the Southern Baptists, which had a lending library of Christian books. But in order to get a borrower’s card, I was required to attend a session where I was led to a prayer of accepting Christ, which I gladly did. Because of that experience I had this feeling that maybe I was also a member of their fellowship.\(^8\)

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\(^5\) Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.2 (10 July 2008), clip 3/17.

\(^6\) Ibid., clip 4/17.

\(^7\) Manalo, Kwentuhan 2.3 (25 January 2011), clip 4/31.

\(^8\) Ibid., clip 5/31.
final experience in Baguio – related to my evangelical conversion – occurred when I was scheduled to take an oath as a member of InterVarsity. The night before, I felt that I was not yet ready because I could not honestly say that I fully understood what it meant to be a member of the movement. I suppose the staff workers assumed that, because I went through the discipleship program, I was ready to be a member. Just before the actual oath-taking, each one of us were asked to share our testimony of how we received Jesus. When it came to my turn to share I said: ‘I would like to confess that I only accepted Christ last night.’ I suppose many were shocked. But after that event, I still had a feeling that there was something missing.⁹

After a year at UP Baguio, Manalo moved to Manila to pursue a degree in Islamic Studies at the University of the Philippines in Diliman (hereafter, UP Diliman), where he stayed from 1975 to 1979. During this period, the evangelical movements (namely, InterVarsity, OMF, and ABCCOP)¹⁰ with which Jun came into contact, had, as it appeared to him, at least two distinct characteristics: they were both ‘anti-Catholic’ and ‘anti-Communist’, Manalo noted, as he spontaneously discussed the unmistakably ‘Christian apologetics’ approach adopted by evangelical leaders and missionaries at that time.¹¹ Through InterVarsity, in particular, Manalo recalls how young evangelical converts, including himself, were systematically ‘discipled’ or nurtured in the faith through a series of lectures (every Friday) that could be classified easily under the rubrics ‘knowing your faith’ and ‘knowing the enemies of your faith.’¹²

⁹ Ibid., clip 6/31.
¹⁰ Introduction to these movements is found in chapter 1, pp.66-68.
¹¹ Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.1 (10 July 2008), clip 1/3.
¹² Manalo, Kwentuhan 2.2 (25 January 2011), clip 2/6.
“We enthusiastically studied John Stott’s *Basic Christianity,*” he recalls, although he does not explain the exact impact Stott’s book had on him. “We were warned,” he continues, “about the evils of Communism, about why Roman Catholicism is a false religion, and how both ecumenism and secularism were the works of the devil.” Aside from that, he says, “we were encouraged in the faith by InterVarsity staff workers who frequently visited us.” In short, it was a program of theological or spiritual formation designed to nurture and defend a seemingly vulnerable evangelical identity thriving in a context dominated by what they perceived as their ‘enemies’.

As an active member of InterVarsity, Jun (like Magalit and Ruiz before him) eventually got involved in leading Bible studies among students with the intention to evangelize. In Batangas City, which is his hometown, he also helped OMF missionaries to establish a house church that came to be affiliated with ABCCOP (I will discuss an important episode about his relations with OMF missionaries in section five). He reflects on this period, and particularly, on his evangelical conversion, by saying:

My priorities clearly changed when I became an evangelical. I developed a zeal for evangelism and began to feel a sense of mission. I wanted to see people accept Christ. I wanted to see them attend church and find new life in Christ. There were times when I also got disappointed with the


church. But this must be understood within the context that I wanted to see positive improvements in our community, in the sense that I wanted the church to make an impact in society. All these, I suppose, were signs that a genuine conversion must have taken place, and, that I was indeed serious about my evangelical faith.\(^\text{17}\)

Although Manalo admits to having a Roman Catholic background as he entered college, there was not much to say about it, except that he calls that stage *mababaw* – shallow,\(^\text{18}\) as if to admit that it was embarrassing to call himself a Catholic when he never attempted to understand or practice it in the first place. And that shallowness, he says, may be part of the reason “why I felt that there really was a genuine conversion experience when I became an evangelical.”\(^\text{19}\)

Meanwhile, during his second and third years (1975-1977) in UP Diliman, Manalo recalls himself observing a group of activists, mostly university students, who were so vocal against something he did not yet regard as an issue, namely, martial law:

> I couldn’t understand why they should waste their time and risk their lives in opposing martial law. As those of us from InterVarsity used to say: ‘What difference does it make if one could change the entire system, but could not change one’s own corrupt and sinful ways? The true revolution that could lead to genuine transformation can only be achieved if one accepts Christ.’ For us, activism was not a solution at all. In fact, we regarded it as part of the problem. And, consequently, activists


\(^{19}\) Ibid.
without exception were considered enemies of the faith. If given the chance, our only task was to win them over to Christ.\textsuperscript{20}

If Manalo’s narrative which began with his evangelical conversion experience had ended here, one would certainly get a picture of an evangelical identity that was predominantly evangelistic or primarily concerned with the task of winning souls rather than with the task of examining seriously as well as engaging directly the complex social question of his context.

But the story does not in fact end here. During the first semester of his third year, a political scientist and activist, Francisco Nemenzo Jr., was invited to speak in one of Jun’s English classes. In his talk, Professor Nemenzo touched on the issue of martial law. But instead of the typical one-sided propaganda that Jun used to hear from student activists, Nemenzo’s handling of the issue was, surprisingly for Jun, “intelligent, witty and with integrity.”\textsuperscript{21} Who would have known that this episode would lead Jun to his ‘second conversion’? Even Jun himself was clueless. When it was time to choose an elective course the following semester, Jun decided to take up \textit{Modern Political Theories}, a course designed by none other than Nemenzo himself. Manalo admits that he was not primarily fascinated by the topic as he was by the intelligence, wit, and integrity of the professor. Without these winsome traits embodied in the teaching style of Nemenzo, Jun did not have any compelling reason to take the course, which,

\textsuperscript{20} Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.1 (10 July 2008), clip 1/3.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., clip 2/3.
after all, was just an elective. But then as the second semester commenced, Jun
found himself sitting in Nemenzo’s class.

4.3

Second Conversion

“From the beginning Nemenzo did not hide the fact that he was a
Marxist,” Manalo recalls, adding that this fact did not seem to bother him at
all.22 “As a teacher,” Manalo continues, “he certainly was passionate, but
passionate without resorting to some wily dogmatism just to convince anyone to
embrace his views.”23 While clearly critical of martial law, it seems that
Nemenzo was not the type who would indulge in what he himself called the
‘childish militancy’ that manifested in the sloganeering, fist clenching and flag
waving campaigns that characterised student activism in the 1960s and 1970s.24
From these sketches one may infer that Nemenzo was not by any means a threat
to Jun’s evangelical identity. When asked later about this particular issue,
Manalo responds: “Though I was already a committed evangelical, I remained
malleable, and I never felt that Nemenzo was attacking my evangelical beliefs in
any way, whether directly or indirectly.”25 This malleability, in addition, could
also have contributed to the ‘reconfiguration’ of his identity. After all, he was

22 Manalo, personal email correspondence with the author (5 March 2015).
23 Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.2 (10 July 2008), clip 1/17.
24 Francisco Nemenzo, Jr., ‘The Third World Studies Center at 20: Reaffirming its
25 Manalo, personal email correspondence with the author (5 March 2015).
around twenty years of age when he met Nemenzo, a crucial stage – as Erikson and those after him have proposed – for identity formation and ideological reorientation. If this was so, for it is reasonable to think that it was, then one may rightly ask whether Manalo’s ‘second conversion’ was a case of the ‘right potential convert’ meeting the ‘right advocate’ at the ‘right place and time’.

While one may be inclined to subscribe to such a simple formula, I submit that conversion, whether religious or not, is so complex that it would be too simplistic even to hint that it can be explained by a single event or encounter or context no matter how life-changing such initial factors may seem. Nevertheless, as far as Manalo is concerned, it is worth noting that he simply asserts: “I just wanted to enjoy his [Nemenzo’s] class. Apart from that, I didn’t have any expectation. And I never thought that it would later create such an impact on me.”

Through Nemenzo, Jun was convinced of the need for a critical social analysis, which (as Manalo would later describe it) came to him strongly as a ‘second conversion’: “I’m pretty sure that Nemenzo is not aware that his class had such a life-changing impact on me. For my part, all I know is I was never the same person after that semester. If that is not conversion, then I certainly

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27 Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.2 (10 July 2008), clip 8/17.

28 It is noteworthy that Manalo himself used the language of ‘second conversion’ or ‘new conversion’ at several points in our kwentuhan. Fermin Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.1 (10 July 2008), clip 2/3; Kwentuhan 1.2 (10 July 2008), clips 1/17, 2/17, 5/17; Kwentuhan 2.3 (25 January 2011), clip 13/31.
don’t know what to call it.”29 This, however, did not mean a rejection of his evangelical identity, for he remained involved with InterVarsity, and (as we shall see again below) continued to help OMF missionaries to establish a church in his hometown in Batangas.

At any rate, three fundamental changes in Jun became manifest after a semester with Nemenzo. First, Jun began to see martial law in a different light. Prior to Nemenzo’s class, martial law was no more than an ordinary feature of the daily environment. For an evangelical like him, martial law seemed irrelevant, even a non-existent entity. But after Nemenzo’s class, it became possible for him to reconsider more critically the nature of martial law which, he realised thereafter, was fundamentally repressive. For instance, he began to notice the troublesome implications of the death of the free press under martial law, which meant there was so much going on which the ordinary citizen relying on state-controlled media could never see. “One couldn’t expect to hear about state-sponsored human rights violations from a state-controlled media,” he emphatically notes.30 As such, Jun began to get hold of uncensored news reports through periodicals such as Malaya,31 Philippine Collegian32 and several other underground materials which, fortunately for him, had been circulating freely around the university campus. “That’s how I learned about some of the atrocities

29 Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.2 (10 July 2008), clip 1/17; clips 7/17; 8/17.
30 Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.2 (10 July 2008), clip 6/17.
of martial law,” he says.\textsuperscript{33} Moreover, his academic readings also expanded to include the writings of pioneer post-war historians like Renato Constantino, introduced in chapter 1.\textsuperscript{34}

Second, Jun became rather more deliberate in choosing his courses (for the remaining one-and-a-half years) before finally graduating in 1979.\textsuperscript{35} He took courses on history and nationalism; he actively attended seminars of the newly established Third World Studies Center (TWSC)\textsuperscript{36} – which Nemenzo, together with several of his colleagues like the sociologist Randolf S. David, had co-founded in 1977. Jun thought that this was necessary if he must deepen and sharpen his analysis of social issues.\textsuperscript{37}

Third, he later observed that all the essays and term papers he wrote for the rest of his stay in UP Diliman had something to do with issues such as foreign debt, nationalism, martial law, Marcos, etc.\textsuperscript{38} “Even in one of my major courses where we were required to exercise our writing skills in Arabic, I

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[33] Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.2 (10 July 2008), clip 1/17.
\item[34] See p.74.
\item[35] Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.2 (10 July 2008), clip 2/17.
\item[38] Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.1 (10 July 2008), clip 2/3.
\end{itemize}
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essentially wrote about political issues,” emphasising the radical change that occurred to him after one semester with Nemenzo.  

4.4

Emerging Tension Between Theology and Ideology

After his encounter with Nemenzo, it gradually became inevitable that Manalo should interrogate the relevance, or rather, the apparent lack of social relevance, of his evangelical faith which he had received mainly through the ministry of InterVarsity. But he admits that, essentially, his evangelical theological outlook remained intact, except that it no longer sat perfectly well with his emerging political theory, which is a clear example of a growing sense of uneasiness regarding his existing evangelical framework. Manalo explains:

The time came when I felt the need to share my views with fellow evangelicals on certain social and political issues. However, in my discussions with InterVarsity friends, who were also from UP Diliman, I got the impression that while they seem to agree with me, our discussions would usually end up with the thought that such issues were not our priority [as evangelicals]. I also became quite conscious about the fact that InterVarsity staff workers relied heavily on secondary sources when making a critique of Marxism or communism, rather than directly engaging with the key writings of Karl Marx. And so I began to feel the tension.

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40 We have seen this tendency for instance in the story of Magalit (chapter 2, p.102.
41 Ibid., clip 14/31.
Overall, though he does not hesitate to admit that he was the ‘most naïve’ in Nemenzo’s class, Manalo concludes that his second conversion, expressed in the application of critical social analysis, offered a clearer sense of direction to his studies, a direction that would later lead him into a lifelong career in community development. But if conversion is a process, a discussion confined to the remainder of his UP Diliman days is certainly insufficient. It is therefore necessary to extend our exploration of the nature of such conversion to the narrative of his career as well as his involvement in his local church, to which I shall now turn.

4.5

Community Development, Church Discipline

His first job in 1979, immediately after his graduation from UP Diliman, was a government-sponsored community development program among fisherfolk in his hometown in Batangas. While confiding that his understanding of community development at this stage was ‘pretty shallow’, his knowledge of ‘conscientization’ – here, Manalo refers in particular to Paulo Freire’s concept of conscientization as articulated in his classic book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* – nonetheless, gradually developed as he encountered Catholic activists “who assisted me in developing and implementing the program,” he recalls. For

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42 Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.1 (10 July 2008), clip 2/3.
43 Manalo, personal email correspondence (5 March 2015).
45 Manalo, personal email correspondence (5 March 2015).
someone who did not have any formal training in community development, his inclination to pay attention to community concerns propelled by a basic sense for people empowerment was an eye-opener for him, or, as he puts it, “I was quite unaware of it until that time.”

However, the ensuing conflict between him and the city mayor guaranteed his early exit. But he maintained his connection with Catholic activists – a connection that would eventually be used against him by a Scottish evangelical missionary, who placed Jun under church discipline. I will return to this crucial incident below.

With the short-lived community development work now temporarily behind him, another opportunity opened. He began teaching social science courses at Western Philippine Colleges (now University of Batangas).

I was quite vocal in discussing about issues under the Marcos regime. That was how I expanded my connections with left-leaning idealists and activists which included both students and faculty members. We held forums about education or conscientization in the Philippine context. I regularly travelled to Manila to scout for resource persons as well as teaching materials which I thought would be useful for promoting critical awareness. I was so driven! Personally, these experiences deepened my own understanding and practice of conscientization, or critical awareness development.

As Jun, between the years 1979 and 1981, tried to deepen his understanding and practice of conscientization, he was also active in the local church, the same church which, as mentioned above, he had helped to establish.

46 Manalo, Kwentuhan 2.3 (25 January 2011), clip 13/31

47 Manalo, personal email correspondence (5 March 2015).
in his hometown. He continued to handle Bible studies and worked closely with OMF missionaries who were stationed in that area, and, who were influential in shaping and maintaining the evangelical identity of the emerging church. Of all his experiences during this period, it seems that the most crucial (at least to his evangelical faith) was his relationship with OMF missionaries. This relationship and the impact it had on Jun had decisive implications for both his second conversion and his future theological thinking as an evangelical. But before I encode some comments on this particular episode, which may help to explain why he would later (as we shall see below) become more involved with ISACC than with his local church, it is first necessary to hear an extended excerpt on how Manalo himself frames this crucial experience:

There were two types of OMF missionaries who made an impact on me. The first was an American who always remained very fatherly, gentle and caring. While he certainly valued orthodoxy [he was quite keen to maintain a distinct evangelical theology], I noticed that he was sensitive to the local culture. For example, he was not afraid to attend Catholic functions when he was invited. And he had a respectful attitude that manifested in the way he inquired about certain customs. One time he asked me about the significance of a local Catholic ritual where they move an image of Mary from house to house, and he understood that this was meaningful and dear to the people. After the ceremony, he did not hesitate to join and eat with the people. He had the capacity to empathise which I admired. Later, he relocated himself in an urban poor setting. And when I met him again, several years later, I noticed that even his discourse started to change. He said to me: ‘Jun now I understand that unless we break feudalism in this country we can’t expect much good to happen.’

The second, who took the place left by the American, was a

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48 Manalo, Kwentuhan 2.3 (25 January 2011), clip 11/31.
missionary from Scotland. She had a negative impact on me, although in the long run I think the overall outcome was still positive. I realised that she was less sensitive to the local culture. For instance, when one of my nephews approached her to *mano* [a traditional Filipino custom which is a sign of respect for elders] the missionary discouraged him, as if there was something inherently wrong about the practice. One time I called a meeting of the young people to discuss ways to improve our worship service. She interpreted it as though I was plotting against her. ‘I heard that you are trying to take over!’ she said. Later, upon learning about my collaboration with Catholic activists in the area of conscientization [the meeting usually took place in the Catholic church], she confronted me, saying, ‘You haven’t left Rome!’ [The country remained] under authoritarian rule during those times, and naturally the safer place to meet was the Catholic church. But there was no sign that she wanted to understand any of my actions. Perhaps she was just too anti-Catholic. Like one of the last things she said to me was: ‘We must always remember that we are, above anything else, Protestants.’ When she confronted me, she already had decided to subject me to church discipline, and since that day, I was not allowed to speak in the church. There was no due process at all.49

The encounter with these two contrasting types of OMF missionaries, and especially with the latter, sent Jun into a state of serious reflection. Between the two missionaries, Jun found himself approving of the style of the American, who embodied a degree of cultural sensitivity.50 On the other hand, he found himself strongly reacting against the style of the Scottish missionary. He concludes: “Because of that experience, I developed a profound distaste towards

49 Manalo, Kwentuhan 2.3 (25 January 2011), clip 12/31.

50 Ibid.
an unreasonably narrow and rigid expressions of being a Christian.”⁵¹ As a consequence, one can say that the experience (which to an extent was informed by his positive connections with Catholic activists) enabled him to move more consciously beyond the anti-Catholic rhetoric which he had learned, and somewhat internalised early on, as a young evangelical convert in both UP Baguio and UP Diliman. On the other hand, one can say that the incident also helped to reinforce his second conversion, which after all was an ongoing development of a critical social awareness and alertness to confront issues of injustice. Again, what we have here, I propose, is another example of a growing sense of disquiet with, at least, the evangelical framework of the Scottish missionary.

It is possible further to surmise, with good reason, that the lack of due process in dealing with his case which he obviously held against the Scottish missionary was a key factor for his accepting, in 1982, a job opportunity in Saudi Arabia, with the hope, he says, “to save for my law school.”⁵² The desire to study law, however, was disrupted. In 1983, after the assassination of Ninoy Aquino (mentioned in chapter 1), Jun resigned from his job to return to the Philippines, and to identify with initiatives against the dictatorship.⁵³ He describes his return by saying: “I joined rallies on my own until I met some evangelicals who were also involved in political action against, or at least were

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Manalo, personal email correspondence (5 March 2015).

⁵³ Ibid.
agitated by, the authoritarian regime.”54 (I will return to his encounter with these evangelicals below). Theologically, however, things were changing for Jun. The general lack of social engagement among evangelicals, exacerbated by his experience with the Scottish missionary, must have contributed to his growing disappointment towards the evangelical churches in general. “I think it was inevitable,” he admits – and again we can see here an example of his growing dissatisfaction with his existing evangelical framework – “that I would develop a cold shoulder towards the evangelical culture.”55 The incident also helped to convince him that the concern to address issues of injustice, which he came to regard as essential, was indeed not a priority for evangelicals. It must have been quite tempting for him to turn his back entirely on the evangelical community. But, before he could do that, he discovered ISACC.

As introduced in chapter 1, ISACC, co-founded by Melba Maggay and her colleagues in 1978, began mainly as an evangelical research institute which promoted reflections and studies on culture and politics viewed from a biblical or evangelical perspective.56 For Jun, who started to grow somewhat exhausted with attending church services (although it should be noted that he still remains a member of the local church in Batangas), ISACC was a fortunate discovery. “I found a home in ISACC, a faith community where I can express my political views and hope to be nurtured in the faith.”57 He learned about ISACC while

54 Ibid.

55 Manalo, personal email correspondence (5 March 2015).

56 See chapter 1, pp.92-94. See also ‘Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture’ in Appendix 3 of Al Tizon’s Transformation After Lausanne, 257-8.

57 Manalo, personal email correspondence (5 March 2015).
boarding in the house of an InterVarsity friend in college, who turned out to be (Manalo later discovered) one of the board members of ISACC. There, Jun had a chance to read an issue of ISACC’s *Patmos* magazine. As far as he can recall, there were three things that impressed him about *Patmos*: first, the articles dealt with cultural and political issues which were clearly important to him; second, he realised that *Patmos* was not anti-Catholic, “in fact,” he recalls with approval that “there was an article which affirmed Mary.”\(^{58}\) And third, to his surprise, “it was evangelical!”\(^{59}\) Based on Manalo’s description it is not surprising that ISACC became the venue for evangelicals who, like Manalo, were in search of a much-needed faith community where they could freely discuss issues related to politics and culture. During the years 1984-1985, Jun became the social action coordinator of ISACC, including a brief period as officer in charge when Melba Maggay was on leave.\(^{60}\) Part of his job was to promote, in various evangelical churches, a conference on ‘Philippine Realities’ which, he says, ‘I truly enjoyed’, probably because there was nothing else more meaningful, and indeed, more therapeutic, after the personal and spiritual crisis he went through in his home church in Batangas.

\(^{58}\) Manalo, Kwentuhan 2.3 (25 January 2011), clip 18/31.

\(^{59}\) Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.2 (10 July 2008), clip 10/17.

\(^{60}\) Manalo, Kwentuhan 2.3 (25 January 2011), clip 20/31.
4.6

Back to community development work

The ‘home’ that he says he found in ISACC was, however, only temporary. Eventually, he returned to community development work. This section will touch on this particular transition before I finally turn in the final section to discuss what appears to be an immensely enriching and ongoing relationship with (at least two) evangelical theologians.

The time came when Jun became a bit more restless about ‘merely promoting critical awareness’. “To advocate for critical awareness is one thing,” Manalo notes, with a tone of appreciation, for it is evident that he was all for promoting critical awareness even before he joined ISACC. However, he does not elaborate in detail how he came to some sort of restlessness, except to underline what increasingly became an urgent question for him, namely, ‘What is our alternative’ [to the present social order]? He explains:

I think we cannot simply content ourselves with, for example, a critique of political repression. We must go beyond critique and start thinking about positive alternatives for transformation which church people, or people in general, can begin to act on. I mean, what exactly are we trying to advance? What are the alternatives and strategies that we can recommend to church people who feel, or who eventually would come to realise, the need to do something in the direction of social transformation? That is the area we should be working on.61

61 Manalo, Kwentuhan 2.3 (25 January 2011), clip 19/31.
In one sense, Jun’s restlessness was a manifestation of a search for a deeper and more radical sense of being involved, an involvement which, at the same time, was an expression of his faith because it was a search, Manalo admits, accompanied by the question: ‘What is the meaning of my faith?’ or ‘Who really is Jesus for me?’62

This is quite a significant turning point because it appears to be an interesting sign that his evangelical identity was undergoing, once more, some kind of a reconfiguration. It is also, one must further note, a sign that his evangelical faith and his second conversion to a commitment to social justice issues which initially seemed mutually exclusive, were now gradually coming together in ‘mutual coexistence’. I will return to this interesting development in the final section below.

This search for a deeper involvement is how, at least partially, Jun returned to community development work. Unlike his first job in Batangas, however, his latest work was not a government project, but rather was an NGO linked in some ways to the Philippine Left (which, as hinted in chapter 1, pp.77-84, is also a very complex movement). He moved to Mindoro where his community development work focused on “agroforestry and advocacy on ancestral domain”63 among the Mangyan, one of the marginalised indigenous people groups in the Philippines. But his community work, in the years 1987-1994, was not a smooth ride. During these post-Marcos years, a period roughly

62 Ibid., clip 7/31.

63 Manalo, Kwentuhan 2.3 (25 January 2011), clip 25/31.
coinciding with the ‘global end of Communism’, the Philippine Left, which comprised the national democratic movement and the Communist Party, began to self-destruct. This had grave consequences for Jun’s work in Mindoro, which Manalo clearly regards as a crucial turning point in his journey.

I was already the executive director of the NGO when the split occurred in the early 1990s. During the split, our organisation declared ‘independence’ meaning, we wanted to continue our community development work without siding with one of the two quarrelling factions, that is, the increasing polarisation between the ‘Reaffirmists’ who wanted to reaffirm what they believed to be the ‘orthodox’ ideology of the Party, and the ‘Rejectionists’ who started to feel that the ideology of the Party did not sufficiently articulate their post-Marcos ideals.

However, our declaration of ‘independence’ which, again, for us [NGO] precisely meant to avoid taking any one side, was misconstrued by the Party to mean that we were finally turning our backs on them! As a result, the Party sent a fully armed squad to drive us out of Mindoro.

Manalo also recounts other details (which I cannot discuss here) of the outcome of the split, such as the notorious ‘bloody purge’ where many former comrades suffered torture, and some were executed, at the hands of the NPA (the armed wing of the Party, introduced in chapter 1). Going back to his experience of facing the NPA, he comments: “That was my worst experience

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with the Left, which really makes you realise that in end, it is not the force of your argument, nor the quality of your analysis that settles the matter, but rather he who has the gun!"  

But the experience, which must have been quite traumatic, also resulted in something positive. Newer progressive movements began to emerge which prioritized open-ended discussions and serious rethinking of, for instance, the complex nature of democracy more than the interest to defend, at the expense of human lives, a static ideology. It was a new chapter for those involved in the progressive movement in the Philippines. For Jun, in particular, the entire experience was also a realisation of something about his emerging identity: the degree of aversion he felt against the ideologically fundamentalist elements of the Party brought back memories of the aversion he felt against the fundamentalist Scottish missionary. “Regardless of the group in which I happen to find myself at a given stage, I realised that I couldn’t last long when I sense the workings of fundamentalism, just as I was put off by my experience with the fundamentalist missionary. This may be a sign that I too am quite narrow. Or, that my commitment is quite shallow.” In any case, he found himself valuing a basic questioning stance, which at this late stage must have contributed further to reinforcing his second conversion which began with his encounter with Nemenzo.

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67 Manalo, Kwentuhan 2.4 (25 January 2011), clip 2/7.
68 Manalo, Kwentuhan 2.5 (25 January 2011), clip 6/12.
4.7

Faith as a work in progress

I shall now return to what I identified above as an interesting
development about the relationship of his evangelical faith and his second
conversion involving the discipline of social analysis. In this final section, I will
discuss how and why it became possible for Manalo to sustain an evangelical
faith (a faith still largely in the making) while nurturing at the same time a
critical consciousness. A careful exploration of this inquiry is significant because
of its potential to shed further light on the nature and development of his second
conversion.

I noted above that two aspects of Manalo’s identity which initially
seemed mutually exclusive were now gradually coming together in ‘mutual
coexistence’. By ‘mutual coexistence’, I do not mean to suggest that his faith and
his emerging political theory which informed his commitment to engage issues
of economic or social justice were haphazardly harmonised, nor do I suggest that
they were successfully integrated into one whole sophisticated system because
that is not exactly how it appears. Rather I suggest that this ‘mutual coexistence’
emerged when Manalo came to see that although social analysis that draws from
the thought of Marx was clearly not part of the traditional or dominant
evangelical theology, it aided him in his ongoing reflections on his faith. While
they remained in tension, the nature of such tension was not mutually exclusive.
How did this happen?
Just before he decided to go into community development work in Mindoro, we may recall that Jun was with ISACC. I would like to emphasise further that this was a period (1984-1985) when Jun began to expand his progressive evangelical circle, an expansion, we should note, that went far beyond the initial expansion that he experienced while he was with InterVarsity.

One of the most influential and lasting encounters Manalo mentions about this period was when he came to know the ATS theologian Lorenzo C. Bautista (b. 1950). This is, I suggest, a significant encounter, something akin to his encounter with Nemenzo. Bautista, prior to his becoming an evangelical (and this is an important background), was already an activist, and a member of a radical student movement during his years in UP Diliman (1967-1974). After his graduation, at the age of twenty-four, he had an evangelical conversion experience. His evangelical conversion experience, however, did not compel him to abandon his activism, much less his liberal arts education. In the late 1970s he trained at Asian Theological Seminary (ATS), an evangelical seminary in Metro Manila, where he studied with scholars such as (to mention only two) the widely respected British evangelical and New Testament scholar I. H. Marshall, as well as the Reformed theologian and art historian William A. Dyrness (this was years before Dyrness became Professor of Theology and Culture, and founding member of the Brehm Center for Worship, Theology and the Arts at Fuller Theological Seminary). Bautista was subsequently recruited to the ATS faculty and began teaching courses in Bible and theology in 1980. It was perhaps owing

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to his liberal arts background and to an extent the influence of Dyrness that his handling of the Bible and his understanding of theology – instead of being locked up in versions of Christian apologetics – developed along the lines of the hermeneutic tradition,71 a direction which speaks volumes as to how he managed to sustain his interest in Marx and his broader interest in philosophy while developing his theology that is critical-yet-sympathetic of the traditional evangelical mainstream (that is, the conservative evangelicalism historically discussed in chapter 1). This detail is crucial because Bautista is the only Filipino evangelical theologian Manalo mentions “who helped me in reflecting more about the relation of faith and my ongoing struggles in the area of community development work.”72 In our 2008 kwentuhan, Manalo explicitly acknowledged the major impact of Bautista in his journey of faith and struggle: “Boy [Bautista’s nickname] has indeed been one of the key influences in my theological pilgrimage.”73 The only other evangelical theologian who continues to make an impact on Manalo is another ATS theologian, the Dutch-Australian Charles R. Ringma, now Professor Emeritus at Regent College, Vancouver, 74 who still visits ATS on a regular basis. Somewhat like Bautista, Ringma’s theological approach also moves along the lines of the hermeneutic tradition as evident in

71 For an idea of Bautista’s hermeneutic approach to the Bible, see his article “The Bible: Servant in the Formation of Communities of Faith,” in Doing Theology in the Philippines, ed. John Suk (Quezon City: Asian Theological Seminary, 2005), 51-64.

72 Manalo, Kwentuhan 2.5 (25 January 2011), clip 11/12.

73 Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.2 (10 July 2008), clip 13/17.

his writings. Moreover, like Bautista, Ringma has also been engaging with the tradition of liberation theology, and has actually offered a modest critique of the evangelical praxis that is represented in the documents of the Lausanne movement. He has also been a prolific writer in the area of Christian spirituality.

As with his early encounter with Nemenzo, Manalo’s subsequent personal encounters with evangelical thinkers like Bautista and Ringma cannot be underestimated. His ongoing relationship with these progressive evangelical thinkers helps to explain why he is able to sustain his second conversion while nurturing a faith that is still a work in progress. In Manalo’s words, they (he also includes some progressive Catholic theologians and activists, notably, Enrique P. Batangan, and also, to an extent, Edicio dela Torre) are “the people with whom I can freely discuss about the possible integration of spirituality and ideology.”

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77 Enrique P. Batangan was also, like Manalo, actively involved in community organizing in the 1980s. Some of his articles on building basic Christian communities can be found in *Faith and Social Change: Basic Christian Communities in the Philippines* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1985).


Lastly, I would like to attempt to examine what has been attained so far for the purpose of clarifying the nature of his second conversion. How does he see himself at the moment? Below, Manalo generously offers a candid but tentative picture, which certainly challenges traditional definitions of evangelicalism, while raising (as already seen) the issue of the compatibility of evangelical faith and the thought of Marx.

Officially, I remain a member of the ABCCOP church in Batangas, although I think my relationship with the church has become kind of ambivalent because the things that I value, for instance social activism, does not seem to be a priority to the church. My brother, who is still an elder there, knows that. Truth to tell, I have failed to do [since his return from Saudi Arabia] what traditional evangelicals consider to be their primary task, namely, evangelism and church planting, including the regular practice of attending church services. But I always long for fellowship with evangelicals who are also engaged with issues concerning social transformation, and who believe in the role of the Spirit in transforming all areas of life. Occasionally, ABCCOP would invite me to speak on certain issues which I gladly accept. So, although we [he and his wife] may not be actively attending services in one local church, we still consider ourselves part of a faith community. In fact, I was once asked by a leader of an international NGO about church attendance, and I replied that I don’t regularly attend church but I do consider myself part of a faith community where I am accountable. At the same time, I also consider myself accountable to a wider community. For instance, I feel I am accountable to my feminist colleagues for, although they may be non-Christians, I cannot deny that their sense of justice is high, and therefore they have a say when it comes to my political views or my lifestyle; so I value their views though I certainly may not always agree with them. In this sense, I may be somewhat ecumenical… Theologically, I still hold on to the centrality of Jesus with his emphasis on the kingdom of God.
(paghahari ng kalooban ng Diyos) in the totality of life. Perhaps, I may be called an evangelical with a theology of transformation, but that might still be quite inaccurate. Here at ATS [where he is also designing a program for evangelicals who are into community development work], at least, I can sense that there is an evangelical spectrum, and this spectrum, it seems to me, is regarded with respect. And I am glad to be part of such a community that consciously and continuously nurtures a critical social awareness.80

From the above excerpt, Manalo clearly positions himself outside the dominant style of evangelicalism, though he is aware that there is an evangelical spectrum that may accommodate someone like him. He candidly reveals that he has failed to do traditional evangelism and church planting. At any rate, while he does not attend church regularly, he maintains that he is part of a faith community, including a wider community [involving non-Christians] working on the larger project of social transformation. Moreover, he also maintains a biblical faith evident in his emphases of the centrality of Jesus, the kingdom of God, and the role of the Spirit in transforming life in general. And this is interesting because it compels one to raise the critical question, following Alistair Kee’s critique of Latin American liberation theologians, whether or not Manalo’s religious commitment, manifested in his attempt to retain these traditional Christian themes, is a sign that he is avoiding what Kee has pointed out as Marx’s second (ontological) criticism of religion as an inversion of reality.81 Kee’s point is that liberation theologians have indeed appropriated

80 Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.2 (10 July 2008), clip 12/17.

81 For a fuller discussion of Marx’s second criticism of religion, see Alistair Kee, Marx and the Failure of Liberation Theology (London: SCM Press, 1990), 41-68.
Marx’s criticisms of religion, but only insofar as Marx’s first and third criticisms are concerned. The first of Marx’s criticisms of religion (Kee calls ‘moral’ criticism), that religion can function as an opiate in leading people into an uncritical reconciliation with a world of evil or injustice, is generally accepted by liberation theologians and is evident in their commitment to take the side of the poor and oppressed as well as in their commitment to denounce everything that dehumanizes or hinders the people from achieving their fuller human potential.83 The third of Marx’s criticisms of religion, that religion can function as an ideological instrument to legitimize and maintain the interests and values of the ruling class at the expense of the interests of the poor and oppressed,84 is again accepted and appropriated by liberation theologians and is evident in their commitment to a ‘critical theology’ that seeks to unmask the dehumanizing tendencies of the dominant ideology or theology. However, Kee has argued that while liberation theologians have appropriated Marx’s first and third criticisms of religion, they have ignored Marx’s second (ontological) critique of religion, that traditional religion, building on Feuerbach’s projection model, is a reversal of reality.85 By not allowing their own theology or religion to undergo Marx’s ontological critique, liberation theologians (Kee argues) “have failed to comprehend the full implications of Marx’s work.”86

82 Ibid., 68, 85. An extended discussion of the first criticism is found in chapter 2 of Kee’s book (pp.12-40).
83 Ibid., 180.
84 Ibid., 69-87.
85 Ibid., 41-68.
86 Ibid., 282.
Can Manalo’s appropriation of Marx’s thought be indicted (in a manner with which Alistair Kee has charged the liberation theologians) as a selective application that accommodates Marx’s critique of religion as ‘reconciliation’ and as ‘ideology’ that perpetuates oppression and injustice, but ultimately is not willing to subject his own theological commitment to Marx’s fundamental ontological criticism of religion?

In February 2011, in an ATS theological consultation on topics related to the issue of power, Manalo introduced to an evangelical audience a model that could be useful for analysing the structure of power in the church. This is interesting because it can be used as a test case to analyse the extent of his accommodation of Marx’s critique of religion. According to Manalo’s model, the structure of power has three dimensions: a resource-based dimension, a political dimension and a cultural dimension. The first dimension, as the name suggests, has something to do with the question ‘Who controls the resources?’ whether economic, academic, or symbolic.  

The second dimension relates to the decision-making process in the church, or ‘Who controls the decision-making process?’ While the third dimension refers to the ‘cultural legitimizers’, primarily the members of the church. As a dramatic example of how these dimensions may work, and, to illustrate the importance of the model he is proposing, Manalo proceeds by saying: “When those who control the resources

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87 Fermin Manalo, ‘Structure of Power’ (15 February 2011), clip 1/5.
88 Ibid., clip 2/5.
89 Ibid., clip 3/5.
(the first dimension) also have a powerful influence on the outcome of the decision-making process (the second dimension), and when the culture or members of the culture or church (the third dimension) function in a way that reinforces the other two dimensions, we have a perfect recipe for an oppressive structure of power.”

The model of analysis that he presents offers three advantages in his view. The first benefit, he says, “is that it aids us to critique how power is organised and controlled, and, if controlled, how it might be perpetuated using the resources.”

Second, once there is an understanding of how the dimensions of power operate, the model can also be useful for those who desire to work for positive changes “as a basic tool for considering how the structure of power can be effectively reclaimed to promote and sustain transformative actions.” The third benefit, (and this is where we return to the question raised above regarding the extent of his appropriation of Marx), is that “this understanding of the structure of power provides a sharp context with which we can reflect upon and apply a scriptural view of power.”

There is no doubt that Manalo accepts and appropriates Marx’s critique of religion as both reconciliation and ideology in his analysis of how the three dimensions can reinforce each other, thereby creating and perpetuating an oppressive structure of power. However, when Manalo discusses the benefits of such a model, he says that such a model can provide “a sharp context with

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90 Ibid., clip 4/5.
91 Ibid., clip 5/5.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
which we can reflect upon and apply a scriptural view of power.” Indeed, this
statement can be quite tricky because Manalo seems to assume that there is a
scriptural view, presumably his view, and perhaps indicative of his own
theological commitment, that is not subjected to his analysis of the structure of
power and therefore does not come to terms with the full force of Marx’s
fundamental ontological critique of religion. However, I must be rather tentative
here in my discussion. Manalo does not claim to be a theologian, and it may be
that what he calls the ‘scriptural view’ is also a work in progress, although he
does not elaborate.

I shall now end this section by allowing Manalo to have the final word
(though again this is also tentative) on his view of praxis. Again, we should note
that he brings with him a fundamentally Christian set of principles such as the
importance of aligning one's action according to the will of God. At the same
time, he admits that this is not always clear, and therefore, the way forward is to
engage life, instead of getting stuck with the lack of a comprehensive theology.

There will be times [he is thinking of martial law for instance] when we
must act, even if we feel that our action lacks a systematic or
comprehensive theology. Of course, we want to align our actions to the
will of God. We certainly wish that what we do is a legitimate Christian
duty, a duty or an act that is informed by our resources of faith, the Bible.
But then in practice it is not always that simple and we may not always be
satisfied with our reflections no matter how hard we try, to the point that
it can lead to a crisis of faith. For instance, I know of a priest – a member
of a conservative Catholic group – whose transition from moderate to
radical was a crisis of faith. At a particular point in history, he reflected
and decided with considerable doubt and anxiety that it was his Christian
duty to join the armed struggle against the Marcos regime. Indeed, it was a challenging decision to make, but he did not wait for it to be fully resolved, to the extent that he would be paralyzed. So, we may not always be satisfied with our theological reflections, and yet we must act. For what exactly is life? At the end of the day, we must admit that we don’t always have a clear answer, and that perhaps an answer to our theological questions may only emerge as we begin to critically engage with the issues of life.94

Because Manalo’s theological commitment, which involves the centrality of Jesus, the kingdom of God, the will of God, and the role of the Spirit in transforming all of life, have not yet been elaborated in detail, it seems quite premature to judge his position at this point. But whether or not he has fully come to terms with Marx’s critique of religion, there is no doubt that Manalo’s second conversion has clearly transformed his initial evangelical conversion.

In this chapter, I have explored Fermin Manalo’s second conversion, attempting to understand how and why it became possible for this conservative evangelical, not simply to become engaged in addressing issues of injustice, but to combine his continuing evangelical theological stance with what appears to be a selective appropriation of Marx. Unlike the previous trajectories of Magalit and Ruiz, as explored in chapters 2 and 3, Manalo’s second conversion involved a conscious accommodation of Marx’s social analysis on the complex social question. It began, somewhat innocently, when he encountered the political scientist, Francisco Nemenzo Jr. while studying at UP Diliman. Although

94 Manalo, Kwentuhan 1.2 (10 July 2008), clips 16/17, 17/17.
Manalo was equipped with a recently inherited, apologetics-oriented, evangelical theology which certainly helped to shape his early identity as a committed evangelical, all these apparently paled once he encountered the wit and intellectual integrity of Professor Nemenzo. Without expecting it, Manalo ended up becoming convinced of the necessity of nurturing and applying a critical social analysis of society. For a while, there seemed to be only a slight tension between his theology and his emerging political theory. But after the ensuing conflict with one Scottish missionary, the slight tension intensified considerably. Having been placed under church discipline without due process, Manalo was pushed to the margins and could have been on his way out of the ‘evangelical nest’ if it had not been for his timely discovery of ISACC. ISACC provided, temporarily at least, the much-needed faith community which politically agitated evangelicals (like Manalo) found lacking in the evangelical churches at that time. His second conversion was reinforced in various stages of his journey, from his first community development work in Batangas to his more radical community development work in Mindoro. But more than his brief stay with ISACC (1984-1985), the crucial relationship which made a lasting impact in terms of a serious rethinking of the interplay between theology/spirituality and political theory was and is the ongoing relationship he had established through the years with ATS evangelical thinkers like Bautista and Ringma, without which a ‘mutual coexistence’ of his evangelical faith and his appropriation of a critical social analysis that draws from the thought of Marx might not have been possible. Based on the contours and transitions of his story, Manalo could have ended up with a second conversion minus an evangelical faith.
In the next chapter, I will explore the trajectory of our fourth main evangelical subject, Jerry Carian, by raising the question how a second conversion to economic or social justice was possible in the life of a conservative evangelical coming from an underprivileged background. Carian’s story presents a different narrative again because it unfolds without the taken-for-granted privileges, such as financial security and/or a first rate university education, enjoyed by the three middle-class evangelical biographies hitherto explored.
CHAPTER FIVE
A ‘THIRD LOOK’ AT POVERTY

The Story of Jerry Carian

The stories of Magalit (chapter 2), Ruiz (chapter 3), and Manalo (chapter 4) are accounts of middle-class evangelicals who enjoyed financial security as well as a first-rate university education in the Philippines’ national capital region Metro Manila. As evident in the accounts of their lives, these economic, academic and geographic advantages have contributed, in varying degrees, to what we have tentatively termed their ‘second conversion’, that is, their new-found commitment to issues of economic or social justice. The story of Jerry Carian (b. 1947), representing the fourth and final trajectory, which I will explore in this chapter, presents a striking contrast to all three previous accounts. Carian’s story is a story of an evangelical born and raised into economic poverty.

Unlike the previous subjects, Carian did not have the opportunity either to train in a university, or to join a student movement like InterVarsity. Unlike the previous three, who studied, migrated and eventually settled in parts of Metro Manila, Carian’s ministry was confined to the countryside in rural and semi-rural parts of the island provinces of Cebu, Bohol and Negros. Does this brief sketch already reveal a natural inclination or tendency towards confronting economic injustice? It was clearly not inevitable, as will become even clearer as the story unfolds, that Jerry, born into economic poverty after the Second World
War, and, ‘born again’ (referring to his evangelical conversion) at the age of eighteen, would necessarily engage with issues of economic injustice. That he was born poor, on the one hand, may perhaps be regarded as a necessary condition in so far as it was, eventually, accompanied by a realisation that poverty or economic disability was socially unacceptable. However, we cannot assume that such a realisation was necessarily the case. That Carian was also ‘born again’ as an evangelical (in 1965) was, as is self-evident in the light of the theological and historical factors discussed in chapter 1, very far from being a guarantee of an eventual commitment to issues of economic justice.

Nevertheless, through the story of Carian, I will try to explore how and why it became possible for an underprivileged evangelical to be awakened to economic injustice, and thereby, to experience a form of a ‘second conversion’ towards a commitment to combat economic injustice.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. In section one, I commence the study by touching on the profound impact of his mother’s death in 1982, which, for Carian, marked a crucial turning point. This section will examine whether the death led him to interrogate the nature of poverty, and thus provoked him to challenge his hitherto naïve acquiescence – his apparent resignation to the largely unspoken notion that “poverty is normal, the most one can do is to accept it.”¹ To understand more fully the profound impact of his mother’s death and the change in his perception of poverty, the chapter will unfold in three more sections. In section two I will delve into the context of his

¹ Jerry Carian, Kwentuhan 1.1 (7 April 2011), clip 6/8.
formative years from the 1950s up to the year 1965, a period which is the context of both his initial evangelical conversion and, it should be noted, his apparent acquiescence to the culture of poverty, which I suggest is his 'first' naïve view of poverty. From his initial evangelical conversion, I will follow Jerry, in section three, as he moved from his hometown in Kabankalan to northern Cebu, where he enrolled at Baptist Theological College (BTC). This period of study (1968-1974) which extends to his 20-year ministry in Bohol (1972-1992), marks a movement towards an intellectual inclination, which, I argue, is crucial for the emergence of his critical social awareness. This development will be examined more closely, as I attempt to relate it to his 'second' but not quite critical view of economic poverty. Section four will follow Carian as he moved back to his hometown in Kabankalan in the years 1998-2010, when a major encounter with the reality of economic poverty, finally triggered what I call his 'third' and more critical view of economic poverty. The study ends by touching on his more mature reflections and his future plans – a discussion of what he identified as the 'bigger dream' of which “I feel I must get more involved in the future.”

5.1

Death and the Problem of Economic Poverty

No one, not even Jerry Carian, could have known in advance that the death of his mother in 1982 would stimulate a third, and more critical, view of economic poverty, which we shall discuss in section four. But did the death of

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2 Carian, Kwentuhan 2.2 (8 April 2011), clip 13/32.
his mother immediately set in motion a second conversion, that is, the move towards a principled commitment to combat economic injustice?

By the time of his mother’s death, Jerry Carian, then a 35-year-old Ilonggo-speaking Fundamental Baptist from Kabankalan, in the province of Negros, was already a missionary of another Baptist group, introduced in chapter 1 (pp.66-67) as the Baptist Conference of the Philippines (BCP). He was, to be more precise, the pastor of a Boholano-speaking congregation in the rural town of Candijay, in the province of Bohol. He stayed in Bohol for a total of twenty years, from 1972 – the year of his internship at the BCP-run Baptist Theological College (BTC) – until 1992.

Before his mother’s death in 1982, it appears that Jerry Carian was primarily preoccupied with the traditional task of evangelism and church planting more than being committed to confront the issue of economic poverty in Bohol, which was the area of his pioneering ministry. For instance, having organised the new Baptist converts, his first major project, as one might have rightly expected, was the setting up of a permanent church building.4 The other major project, which could have been the first of its kind in Bohol, according to Carian, was the establishment of a Baptist cemetery because “we [church leaders] realised that many of our new converts were reluctant to attend church

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3 The origins of the Fundamental Baptist denomination in the Philippines can be traced back to the name Raphael Thomas and the founding of the Doane Evangelistic Institute in Iloilo, Philippines in 1928, which is one of the outcomes of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy within the Northern Baptist Convention in the US, which was partly alluded to in chapter 1. Thomas was also instrumental in the birth of what is known today as the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE). See http://www.abwe.org/about/our-history (accessed 25 June 2015).

4 Carian, Kwentuhan 2.1 (8 April 2011), clip 9/27.
for fear that they might lose their place in the Catholic cemetery, should death finally visit them.\textsuperscript{15} To some extent these projects were responses to an important need, though it was more of a response to an evangelistic concern rather than a move critically to confront economic injustice. But then, after a decade of a relatively successful ministry in Bohol, a tragic event occurred when his mother, back in his hometown in Kabankalan, died of a curable disease.

\textbf{5.1.1 Second Conversion as Crisis}

Carian recounted this story in 1999, (he was 52 years old), in his lectures in theology and missions, one of the first courses I took under him in an evangelical theological school in Kabankalan. Aside from his teaching load, Carian (from 1998 to 2010) was also the administrator of an evangelical denomination, overseeing around 40 local, mostly rural, churches scattered throughout the town of Kabankalan. Moving back to his classroom lectures in 1999, Carian discussed the issue of poverty which afflicted most of the 40 local churches where his students regularly ministered during the weekends. In several occasions in his lectures Carian highlighted the cruel nature of imposed poverty and how he himself had been a victim of it by narrating the story of the untimely death of his mother. He advanced the point that Christians must begin to think more critically if they intend to address the issue more effectively. The reason his lectures lodged themselves in my mind is probably because, of all the faculty members of that small evangelical Bible college, it was only Carian who opened

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., clip 8/27. The social anthropologist Melba Maggay, in her account of early American Protestant missions in the Philippines, also mentions some examples this same burial problem which deterred people “from crossing over to the new faith”. See Melba Maggay, \textit{A Clash of Cultures: Early American Protestant Missions and Filipino Religious Consciousness} (Manila: Anvil, 2011), 34-35.
the question of poverty as a topic worthy of serious discussion. It certainly did not occur to me at that time that eventually I would ask him to become one of my research subjects as, indeed, the whole idea of this research was simply non-existent to me at that time. But this important detail and the regular, informal, conversations I had with him during the years 1999-2003 were more than enough to bring me back to Kabankalan in 2011, when he finally agreed to share an extended account of his life for the purpose of this study. Naturally, one of the first things I wanted him to recount was his memory of his mother's death. To this, Carian began to disclose an overwhelming sense of loss combined with an unavoidable measure of regret:

My mother, before she died, developed some kind of a tumour which was complicated by a worsening urinary tract infection. She was clearly in pain, and badly in need of an operation. Unfortunately, at that time, no one in our family had the financial capacity to avail of proper medical treatment. Her untimely death became a source of deep regret. To this day I cannot help but think that during a most critical moment in her life, I was totally inutile. Imagine, I just went home to bury her.⁶

The feeling of deep regret must have forced the young Carian into a state of serious reflection. While there was no indication of an inclination to blame his God, or to denounce the prevailing economic system, we do notice a profound sense of responsibility and helplessness. The untimely death certainly was preventable had he possessed the necessary financial means which he clearly did not have. Such economic inutility must have been quite debilitating and

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frustrating. In fact, he used the term *gipit* (the closest English word might be ‘hard-pressed’) in an attempt, one may suppose, to articulate the unfortunate condition where one is reduced to bankruptcy or financial paralysis. Viewed from this angle, we can imagine a growing awareness of his miserable economic condition, which may partly explain how it became possible for him eventually to realise that poverty, at least this life-devouring variety which claimed prematurely the life of his mother, was the culprit.

“I was so angry at the cruelty of poverty” is how Carian described his feelings in our 2011 *kwentuhan*.

However, we must note that there is no indication in the story that he necessarily felt this indignation against poverty immediately after his mother died, although it is understandable that he must have been quite devastated. Indeed, more than merely devastating, the death was an irreversibly tragic loss. But this does not necessarily suggest a change in his perception of poverty. At any rate, the death of Carian’s mother can be regarded as a major crisis in his life which helped to trigger a decisive re-orientation. This, I argue, will become clearer as we examine in section four how this particular event was remembered and indeed was transformed into a key theological resource from which Carian drew his inspiration and motivation in his attempt to combat poverty.

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7 Carian, Kwentuhan 1.1 (7 April 2011), clip 4/8.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.
5.1.2 Second Conversion as Process

There are strong indications that the change in his perception of poverty was gradual, rather than abrupt, although he clearly traced its origins back to the crisis of his mother’s death. For example, in our 2011 kwentuhan, Carian said:

After she died, I developed some kind of a vindictive spirit against poverty. Already there seems to be a built-in anger in me, which has motivated me to consider the factors that contribute to poverty and to identify some remedies that are locally available. Today, with my family engaged in some small-scale economic projects, I can say that poverty is at a distance. But I can’t help noticing its presence in my neighbourhood, and that rouses the same anger in me… Personally, I already have some remedial measures. But collectively, in relation to the community, and especially to the people struggling around, I have no idea how to address the problem effectively.¹⁰

From this excerpt, we can sense that the drive to combat poverty was inspired by the death of his mother, which seems to underscore the point that perhaps his second conversion or the move towards a commitment to combat economic poverty was a process even though it may have been punctuated by a crisis episode. It should be stated, though, that there is no indication of an abrupt change in his perception of poverty. We can also sense that the desire to combat poverty started as a personal issue, although there now seems to be an ongoing restless awareness that Carian is seriously considering how economic poverty could be effectively addressed.

But, a death, even that of a loved one, accompanied by a profound feeling of being financially helpless, does not necessarily guarantee or even imply a second conversion. As such, one might rightly ask, how the death of his mother helped to trigger such a radical change in his perception of poverty. There is, therefore, a need to first examine his early formative years, and, in particular, his relationship with his mother, in order to understand the impact of his mother’s death. In short, we must find an answer to the question: Who was Jerry Carian prior to his mother’s death?

5.2

Poverty, Parents, Evangelical Conversion

5.2.1 Experiencing Poverty

The experience of economic poverty marked the life of Jerry from the beginning. Born in 1947, Jerry was the sixth son (they were seven brothers, not counting a 1949 miscarriage) of a poverty-stricken couple in Kabankalan. During his childhood years, he was temporarily adopted by his aunt in Sagay (about 180 kilometres north of his hometown Kabankalan). He stayed in Sagay from the age of six until his fifth grade (between the ages of 10 and 12), but even there, life was not smooth for the child, for, as Carian recalls, “I had to help in selling peanuts and avocado.”11 Back in Kabankalan, around the age of eleven or twelve, he assisted his mother in selling ginamos (brined fish), bulad (dried fish) and asin (salt), considered as the staple food of the poor. “But how much can you

earn in selling cheap products with several competitors in the marketplace?” asked Carian in our 2011 kwentuhan, indicating an awareness (from his current point of view) of an economic system that was unfavourable to the underprivileged, though we cannot assume that this is how Jerry would have perceived it as a child.12

Carian’s father, meanwhile, did not earn much either. He was a low-wage manual labourer, working for the Bureau of Public Highways, which usually meant “repairing roads, under the heat of the sun, and at mercy of the elements.”13 Not surprisingly, for three consecutive years, between ages twelve and fifteen, Carian was out of school, partly to help his parents earn, and partly because there was no public high school system in Kabankalan.14 The two schools available at that time were both private: one Catholic, the other Baptist, where Jerry earned his high school diploma.

Whilst Carian had a first-hand experience of poverty since childhood, it is important to note that there is nothing in the narrative that would suggest, at this particular juncture at least, that this out-of-school youth had already developed a critical posture against poverty. Indeed, a fully developed critical understanding that would change the way he perceived poverty was not yet there. In the meantime, he seemed somewhat satisfied in assisting his mother. “I was glad,” he recalls, for instance, “that I could earn by selling items like needle and thread

12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., clip 2/8.
14 Ibid.
on a consignment basis.”  

In addition, Jerry did not at the time seem bothered by the fact that he was out of school for three years. “During the three years I was out of school,” he recalls, “I also enjoyed the company of my barkada (gang)”.

We should notice the further evidence of his lack of awareness of the implications of being out of school as he continues to narrate:

We travelled around, riding the bagon [a train loaded with sugarcane] from Yarda to Talubangi – simply enjoying the ride. We skipped our regular meals since we were not home most of the time. Instead we went fishing, and usually caught some local fish: haluan, puyo, pantat. Then we just grilled them and ate together, just as we gambled, and smoked, and drank alcohol together. We also had some risky adventures together, as when we stole some bunch of sugarcane, even when a private armed guard was around.

Indeed, it was a life that did not seem at all promising. How then was it possible for him to transcend such a limiting condition, a life that was just about to be wasted? I suggest that an answer may be found in the nature of his relationship with his parents, which I shall now explore.

5.2.2 Relation with Parents

As suggested above, Carian’s relationship with his mother was crucial. This is indicated by the impact of her death, which seems to have been an important factor for Jerry’s second conversion to a commitment to economic justice. However, we do not yet fully understand how and why his mother’s

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16 Ibid., clip 3/8.
17 Ibid.
death made such an impact on him. For this purpose, I shall now attempt to explore, in this sub-section, his relationship with his mother, which inevitably is also an exploration of an equally crucial relationship: that with his father.

When asked to talk about his mother, Carian was immediately reminded of the intimacy that occurs between a mother and a child. He elaborated:

At the age of five, I remember that my mother was fond of me. I think I was her favourite son. Early in the morning, she used to take me with her to the bomba [he refers to an area in the village where people come to either fetch drinking water or do their laundry] where she used to handwash our clothes. Before we slept in the evening, she used to share to me some Bible stories; and we also sang hymns together, our favourite was The Old Rugged Cross. She was a devout Baptist. On Sundays [he was now a teenager] I used to accompany her to the nearby [Fundamental Baptist] church.\(^{18}\)

Aside from the intimacy, we can see that it was also his mother who introduced him to the Baptist tradition. Encouraged by his mother, who “gently would remind me each Sunday to attend church,”\(^ {19}\) the young Carian eventually picked up the habit of attending church services. It was also his mother’s initiative to enrol him in high school, which is yet another significant development considering that he seemed already accustomed to being out of school. “She must have been quite worried,” Carian reflects, “that I had been out of school for three consecutive years, and so she enrolled me at the

\(^{18}\) Carian, Kwentuhan 1.1 (7 April 2011), clip 8/8.

\(^{19}\) Ibid.
Fellowship Baptist Academy [also a Fundamental Baptist school opened in 1954]\(^\text{20}\) in spite of the fact that her income was quite unstable.”\(^\text{21}\)

All these experiences, as is evident in the way Carian recalls the influence of his mother, certainly left a positive impact that he came to treasure later in his adult life. This positive impact would be enhanced even further because of another dominant and feared presence: that of his father.

Unlike his mother, Jerry’s father did not seem to place a high value on education, perhaps because, as Carian recalls, “my father did not have any formal education at all.”\(^\text{22}\) “He was not,” Carian notes in addition, “a church-goer. Rarely if ever did he enter a church. In that sense, I don’t think he was religious.”\(^\text{23}\) Unlike the relationship he had with his mother, which was warm and nurturing, Carian’s relationship with his father, as far as he can remember, seemed rather cold.

But it seems that the most crucial contrast between his parents, as Carian sees it, had something to do with personality. Unlike his mother who was mild-mannered, Jerry’s father was hot-tempered.\(^\text{24}\) And this contributed to an early experience that was deeply traumatic for Jerry to an extent that he thought it was impossible to forgive his father. Carian recounts:


\(^{21}\) Carian, Kwentuhan 1.1 (7 April 2011), clip 8/8.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., clip 2/8.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., clip 2/8; Kwentuhan 1.2 (7 April 2011), clip 1/6.

\(^{24}\) Carian, Kwentuhan 1.2 (7 April 2011), clip 4/6.
My father used to come home late in the afternoon already under the influence of alcohol, and was very cranky. There were instances when, without any reason, he would grab his belt and start beating me. Then my mother would try to cover me and that belt hit her too. But I can remember that there was one other instance when [at the age of sixteen] I experienced once more my father’s excessive anger. And this time it was in public [he was stripped naked]…. The impact was such that I felt so personally violated and publicly humiliated, I was convinced I could never forgive my father. I don’t know for how long I carried such rancour. It probably got eliminated or suppressed when I got converted to Christianity [at the age of eighteen].

Indeed, these early relationships, and this memory in particular, cannot explain his second conversion. Nevertheless, this adolescent crisis must have compelled him to grope for a solution from the available resources in his environment – resources that include (1) his mother’s influence together with the religious aspects that it conveyed, and (2) the role of the Fundamental Baptist church and school during this particular stage of his life. We can therefore imagine how these underlying circumstances would likely incline him towards an evangelical conversion, two years later, in 1965.

The question ‘Who was Jerry Carian prior to his mother’s death?’ was raised in section one with the intention of understanding the impact of his mother’s death on the possibility of his second conversion. In this section, we have indeed learned more about the nurturing presence of his mother, certainly a positive factor which was further enhanced by the traumatic incident he experienced in the hands of his father. However, it is not yet possible to

25 Ibid., clip 1/6.
comprehend the change in his perception of poverty that led to his second conversion.

5.3

A New Identity, A New Direction

We must return, to the question as to how exactly the change in his perception of poverty which indicates the possibility of a second conversion came about. As suggested in the previous sections, his mother’s death, in and of itself, cannot fully account for this radical change. I further submit that even Jerry’s anger against the cruelty of poverty is insufficient to explain this change to our satisfaction. Indeed, one can be indignant without sensing at all the urgency to consider, in a critical manner, the complex problem of poverty. Therefore, while maintaining the importance of his mother’s death and its accompanying emotions as legitimate sources of his motivation to combat poverty, we must move a step further to inquire as to what other possible factors and influences could have enabled him to transform his perception of poverty, thereby nurturing in the process a second conversion.

5.3.1 ‘The bread and the word’

Apart from the death of his mother, I remember Carian (in the years 1999-2003) emphasising a point which he repeated several times in his theology courses, and that is the importance of both the ‘bread’ and the ‘word’ in doing ministry: where ‘bread’ refers to the recognition of the biological/physical/material needs of humanity which should be thoughtfully
addressed, while the ‘word’ essentially refers to the Bible which must be carefully studied and proclaimed. This holistic understanding of mission was another key point which led me to visit him again in 2011.

In our 2011 kwentuhan, I asked him to narrate how he arrived at this basic outlook, to which he replied: “The thought struck me, I think I was still at BTC, when I realised that the biblical phrase ‘not by bread alone’ already assumes that the bread is [his emphasis] important for man to live, even as the text clearly emphasised the importance of the Word of God. And I think this intuition was further reinforced by the books I read since then [he is thinking in particular of the writings of Francis Schaeffer].” Whether or not Carian’s appropriation of the biblical passage is exegetically sound is not our concern here. The point is that this signals a new development – a theological dimension – which adds a key for understanding the possibility of his second conversion. And in this, he takes us back to his theological training at BTC in the years 1968-1974.

5.3.2 Baptist Theological College

Prior to BTC, there is nothing in Carian’s story that would suggest the likelihood of a second conversion. In fact, as repeatedly emphasised, the awakening of a commitment to combat poverty came after his mother’s death, but – as hinted above, and, as we shall see below – not immediately after his mother’s death. Yet, in some ways reminiscent of Fermin Manalo’s experience

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26 Carian, Kwentuhan 2.1 (8 April 2011), clip 4/27.


28 Carian, Kwentuhan 2.1 (8 April 2011), clip 4/27.
at UP Diliman (chapter 4), Carian seems to have undergone some form of an intellectual awakening which must have opened up a rich theological resource that would help to inform and, indeed, to transform his initially naïve perception of economic poverty. This critical dimension gradually developed as he began to study at BTC. But what can we know about this development based on his narratives? What are some of its outcomes? We now turn to explore this concern in the next sub-sections.

5.3.3 Changing attitude towards Catholics

Carian did not mince words when describing his theological outlook before he enrolled at BTC. “It was too sectarian,” he admits. But as Carian moved away from his familiar context in Kabankalan and his Fundamental Baptist church to commence his theological studies at BTC in northern Cebu, an opportunity for change, I propose, was opened. The first important change which he traced back to BTC concerns his attitude towards Catholicism.

Towards my final years at BTC [around 1972, when he was 25 years of age], I was privileged to take ‘Roman Catholic Theology’ under an American Baptist missionary who graduated from a Catholic university in the US. From there, you can imagine some of the Catholic materials travelling with him to BTC in Cebu where he became one of our mentors. In short, that is how we started to learn about Pope John XXIII and the documents of the Second Vatican Council. That class had a lasting impact on me, and it probably explains why as a Baptist I have no feelings of resentment or hostility towards Catholics although I believe that without Christ they are lost. The class also introduced us to the recent writings of some Catholic thinkers such as Karl Rahner, Hans

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Küng, Edward Schillebeeckx as well as the *Confessions* of St. Augustine and the *Imitation of Christ* of Thomas à Kempis which also helped to moderate whatever bias I previously had against Catholics.\(^{30}\)

Whether this range of Catholic sources made an impact on him immediately is not clear. But we can consider this encounter as an example of the role of external agents in introducing what essentially was a new message for Carian who, as a Fundamental Baptist, initially regarded Catholicism with disdain. This initial change, he says, was reinforced when he stumbled upon the writings of C. S. Lewis, especially the book *Mere Christianity* which seems to have appealed to him the most because of its emphasis on the need to focus on the essentials of the Christian faith rather than on the divisive nature of less essential, and unreasonably dogmatic doctrines.

There are indications that the eventual outcome of his training at BTC informed his approach to the ministry. For example, in his 20-year pastoral work in Bohol (1972-1992), which included a 10-year pioneering ministry in Candijay mentioned in section one, Carian reports that his initial evangelistic strategy as he entered the community was to establish good relations with Catholics. Indeed, he did not seem to have much choice if he wanted to do evangelism in a predominantly Catholic province. But it also seems that his BTC training was a factor in developing a more dialogical, rather than an aggressively hostile, and one-sided approach to Catholics. “In fact,” he says, “the rural doctor, who was a Catholic, invited me to be a regular lecturer in the Rural Health Center. He asked me to conduct Bible study sessions as well as to lecture on family planning

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\(^{30}\) Carian, Kwentuhan 2.1 (8 April 2011), clip 11/27.
during the years 1977-1983.”

About the same time, Carian befriended a Catholic who was training for the priesthood, but, according to him, got converted through reading the Scriptures. “He shared to me his conversion experience of knowing Christ,” Carian recalls. “His being a Catholic and my being a Baptist did not prevent us from talking about our common experience of conversion in Christ. He continued to worship in the Catholic Church because he felt that as a ‘witness of Christ’ it was best for him to remain inside rather than outside the Church. And I assured him of my prayers.”

This is a significant detail because, generally, for conservative evangelicals in the Philippines, as observed by the ATS theologian Lorenzo C. Bautista, Catholicism was “still viewed as virtually irredeemable. This means for [evangelicals] the need to convert Catholics into the evangelical faith. Rarely will evangelicals share their faith with Catholics to help them become [good Christian Catholics].”

To the question of whether it is appropriate to evangelize and convert Catholics which evangelicals traditionally are known to do in contexts such as the Philippines, Carian’s reply illustrates how he may have transcended traditional sectarian boundaries, while retaining, like Magalit and Ruiz, the importance of evangelism.

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31 Carian, Kwentuhan 2.1 (8 April 2011), clip 11/27.
32 Ibid., clip 13/27.
**Researcher**: “Do you think that there is still a need to evangelize Catholics in the Philippines?”

**Carian**: “Very much so. Just as there is an equal need to evangelize evangelicals! But while accepting Christ can be a good start, the Christian life doesn’t end there.”

5.3.4 **The Impact of C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer**

Another dimension in the gradual transformation of his belief system lies in his discovery of two of the more influential Christian writers in the twentieth century. For someone who only attained an undergraduate degree in biblical studies from a conservative Baptist institution in the countryside, it is notable that Carian had acquired a reading habit while studying at BTC, and was able to sustain the discipline after his graduation. He confessed that nurturing an inquiring posture was not easy, considering that the rural context in which he ministered seemed less intellectually inclined. For example, he related that during his first ten years as a pioneer pastor in Bohol (1972-1983), “I couldn’t easily find an intellectual sparring-partner, someone with whom I could discuss ideas, and so I didn’t have much choice except to interact with books.”

Two Christian writers had an enduring impact on Carian. The first, as already mentioned, was C. S. Lewis (1898-1963) and the second was Francis

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34 Carian, Kwentuhan 4 (30 October 2014), clips 8/60; 29/60; 30/60; 32/60; 47/60.

35 Carian, Kwentuhan 1.4 (7 April 2011), clip 36/37; also Kwentuhan 3 (9 April 2011), clip 38/38.
Schaeffer (1912-1984). \(^{36}\) “I felt like I’d been personally tutored by Lewis and Schaeffer, although I met them only through their writings,” said Carian. \(^{37}\) This may not sound especially noteworthy to those in contexts where enormous, accessible, and regularly updated libraries have sustained a reading culture. But in a rural Philippines conservative evangelical church setting that was normally deprived of serious theological books in the 1970s and early 1980s, access to Lewis and Schaeffer is quite significant.

In C. S. Lewis’s *Mere Christianity*, as noted above, Carian discovered and came to treasure a presentation of the Christian faith through what he noticed as an effective use of logic and imagination. Aside from *Mere Christianity*, I have observed (in our discussions in the years 1999-2003 as well as in our 2011 *kwentuhan*) that Carian moved effortlessly in discussing the contents of Lewis’s books such as his Space trilogy, *Miracles, The Problem of Pain, A Grief Observed, Screwtape Letters*, the Narnia series, *Till We Have Faces*, and *Surprised by Joy* – to mention several. My encounter with Carian since 1999 already suggested to me a level of fluency wrought by years of engaging with Lewis’s writings. “As a whole, the experience was like growing up with Lewis’s books,” Carian reflected. “I found myself returning to his writings again and again since I stumbled upon his books at BTC. Indeed, Lewis has remained one of the major influences in the way I understand the Christian faith, although I am aware that


his view on the nature of the Bible\(^{38}\) does not seem to align with the evangelical view."\(^{39}\)

Aside from Lewis, the writings of Francis Schaeffer had also left an enduring impact on Carian. This was evident, again, in the classes I attended in the years 1999-2003. Carian seems to share Schaeffer's basic presupposition with regard to God and the Bible in particular. For instance, Carian referred to the passage which says: “So God made the universe, He made man to live in that universe, and He gives us the Bible, the verbalized, propositional, factual revelation, to tell us what we need to know.”\(^{40}\) And as far as our 2011 \textit{kwentuhan} went, Carian did not challenge this key presupposition of Schaeffer.

As such, it is not surprising that Carian, unlike Lewis, maintains a view of biblical inerrancy which must have affected the way he handled and interpreted the Bible. Nevertheless, while Carian seems to uphold Schaeffer’s presupposition, including the concern for doctrinal purity,\(^ {41}\) it is noteworthy that Carian has balanced this fundamentalist or conservative evangelical impulse with the principle of love which for him, again, following Schaeffer, is the ‘final apologetic’.\(^ {42}\) In our 2011 \textit{kwentuhan}, Carian elaborated his appropriation of

\(^{38}\) There is a brief discussion on C. S. Lewis’s view on the Bible in Stanley, \textit{The Global Diffusion}, 147.

\(^{39}\) Carian, Kwentuhan 1.4 (7 April 2011), clip 17/37.

\(^{40}\) Francis Schaeffer, \textit{He is There and He is Not Silent} (Leicester: IVP [1972] 1990), 327.

\(^{41}\) This was evident when he recommended to the class Schaeffer’s \textit{The Church Before the Watching World} (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1972).

Schaeffer’s thought by emphasising that “the bottom-line for Christians must be their common love for the Lord and for one another, and not the label of one’s church or denomination, and not even their doctrines.”

In the writings of Schaeffer, moreover, Carian was also introduced to a certain framework for dealing with church issues as well as social and cultural issues which were not normally tackled by the conservative evangelical churches at that time. This seems to confirm Professor Stanley’s observation that while many of Schaeffer's views have been exposed as intellectually inadequate today, his writings, nonetheless, “opened up whole areas of cultural analysis to evangelicals who had hitherto regarded such engagement as alien or even forbidden territory.” But in terms of writing style, or the way these two writers construct their arguments, Carian tends to favour the more imaginative, subtle but still logical approach which he came to treasure in the writings of C. S. Lewis. He concludes the influences of these two writers by saying: “How I wish Lewis had written more on contemporary social and cultural issues…” which is an interesting remark because it suggests that Carian may not have been quite locked within a Schaefferian view of cultural or political issues.

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43 Carian, Kwentuhan 2.1 (8 April 2011), clip 3/27.

44 And this includes, for Carian, Schaeffer’s trilogy The God Who Is There, Escape from Reason, and He Is There and He Is Not Silent.

45 Stanley, The Global Diffusion, 137.

46 Carian, Kwentuhan 2.1 (8 April 2011), clip 14/27.
All in all, it seems clear that from the time he studied at BTC in 1968 to the time I personally met him in 1999, Lewis and Schaeffer were the main Christian writers who provided Carian with a ‘new language' for making sense of the Christian faith which had a broadening effect on his intellectual development considering his initial sectarian Fundamental Baptist background. And because the writings of Lewis and Schaeffer went beyond mere evangelistic or pietistic concerns, they allowed Carian to nurture an interest in, at least, an intellectual engagement with some of the wider theological, social and cultural issues raised by these writers.

5.3.5 The Marcos Regime and the Emergence of a Filipino Identity

A prominent theme in Carian’s narrative is the emergence of a Filipino identity. This growing Filipino consciousness seems to have gradually emerged while he was studying at BTC in the years 1968-1974. According to Carian, access to the writings of Filipino nationalists such as Jose Rizal “was quite instrumental in the growth of a sensitivity to Filipino issues.”47 It is important to note that the timing of Carian’s study at BTC. Only about a decade earlier, in 1956, Recto’s ‘Rizal Bill’ had just become Republic Act No. 1425,48 which required all educational institutions to offer courses on the life, works and writings of Jose Rizal, and in particular, to study Rizal’s novels Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo. Since then it became obligatory for schools to secure in

47 Carian, Kwentuhan 4 (30 October 2014), clip 19/60.
48 See chapter 1, p.74, fn. 94.
their libraries, copies of Rizal’s novels. Carian reports: “Rizal, through his novels, awakened in me a concern for the future of the Filipinos.”

In addition, there are two related factors which seem to have led to the emergence of Carian’s Filipino identity and a concern for Philippine issues. The first was an incident which occurred just a few years after martial law was declared: one of his friends, who was a leftist and a member of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (IFI), was forcibly arrested by the military, and indefinitely detained without actual charges. Carian recalls that this incident was the beginning of his disillusionment with the Marcos regime, which he initially supported.

I was an enthusiastic follower of Marcos. In fact, I gladly read his *Today’s Revolution: Democracy* (1971) and *Notes on the New Society of the Philippines* (1976). I subscribed to his basic objectives, namely, nationalism, democratisation, and modernisation. But when my leftist friend was arrested by the military, and when I learned about the disappearance of some people in the town where I ministered, I gradually saw the contradiction between what I read in his books (which was good) and what was happening on the ground. In view of this contradiction, I decided, by the late 1970s, that I could no longer trust Marcos. That was the time when I became vocal [in and out of the church] against Marcos and his ‘New Society’ propaganda to the point that some friends who were in government warned me to tone down, or I might get arrested.

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49 Carian, Kwentuhan 4 (30 October 2014), clip 19/60.

50 Carian, Kwentuhan 2.2 (8 April 2011), clip 25/32.

51 Ibid. Carian also describes here the 1983 murder of Ninoy Aquino as “deeply moving”, adding that “[i]f I were in Manila I would have easily joined the 1986 people power revolution.”
The second factor dates back to his student days at BTC, which was the
time when American missionaries were still directly leading the Baptist mission.
Carian disclosed that he was an eyewitness to racist treatments by some
American missionaries who, according to him, had a propensity to look down
upon Filipino pastors in general. Later, there was an incident – this time Carian
was already one of the key leaders of BCP in the early 1980s – when one
American missionary uttered an offensive statement against the Filipinos in
general. Looking back, Carian noted: “I believe this incident helped to define my
idea of ‘nationalism’: I came to realise that love of country must not be used as a
platform to prejudice other nationalities. That is, I love my country as much as I
expect other nationalities to likewise love their own countries. But when
foreigners come to violate the Filipino interest I am strongly offended because I
have no intention of doing likewise to them. In other words, we must rebuke
Filipinos if they become prejudicial to other nationalities.”
52 “To be fair,” Carian continued, “there were American missionaries who were Christ-like in their
dealings with the people. And my respect and admiration for them has remained
undiminished.”

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5.3.6 A ‘Second Look’ at Poverty

As Carian continued to sustain his theological engagement with the
writings of Catholic authors, the writings of Lewis and Schaeffer, and the
writings of Filipino nationalists such as Rizal, it is worth underscoring that his

52 Ibid., clip 21/60.

53 Ibid.
20-year experience as a pioneering pastor in certain rural contexts in Bohol (1972-1992) did not reflect an explicit commitment to issues of economic justice. Such a commitment must have required some time to evolve. Even in the case of the 20-year old Manalo (chapter 4), who was directly influenced by a political scientist in the use of Marxist social analysis, commitment to issues of social justice required a considerable amount of time, experience and reflection.

In Bohol, as noted in section one, Carian’s ministry began as part of a traditional church growth program which was intentionally evangelistic. He reports in particular that during martial law (1972-1981) “the Baptist membership dramatically increased”, 54 which reinforces the style of post-war evangelicalism as reconstructed in chapter 1. Being in a rural context, nonetheless, Carian encountered once more the familiar experience of economic poverty. For seven years (1977-1983), and being motivated by the desire to evangelize, Carian regularly conducted Bible studies and lectured on family planning in the Rural Health Center. 55 But there is no indication that would suggest that he had developed a critical perspective on poverty.

Carian also ministered to some poor fishermen in Bohol. But he openly admits that there was no special project to combat economic poverty. “My immersion with them,” he said, “was more on the side of addressing ‘spiritual poverty’ or the lack of ‘intimacy with God’. So I befriended them with the ultimate purpose to win them for the Lord.” 56 But, although his intentions were

54 Ibid.

55 Carian, Kwentuhan 2.1 (8 April 2011), clip 11/27.

56 Ibid.
clearly evangelistic – and here we may recall a similar pattern in the stories of Magalit and Ruiz – it seems that it was also in this rural context of poverty where the capacity to empathise with the struggles of the poor gradually developed. “Indeed it is good to live with the poor,” Carian acknowledged, “for it is only in living with them that we can understand them.” And to think that this words came from the mouth of Carian, who was himself poor, is crucial. For this line seems to reveal certain traces of a quiet but redirecting episode. This is the first time, in the narrative of his 20-year ministry in Bohol, when the problem of the people’s poverty (which was also his problem) had become an object for reflection, and not just something that is naively accepted as a given. Indeed, what we may be looking at is an initial but necessary stage of conscientization, although understood within an evangelical frame. This 20-year rural ministry in Bohol, I suggest, opened up the opportunity to take a ‘second’ though not quite critical view of endemic poverty. Whereas the initial encounter with poverty during his formative years in Kabankalan was a naïve acquiescence as we saw in section two, the ‘second’ seems to have involved a capacity to reflect on its reality. But, there is, I suggest, a ‘third’ and more critical view of poverty in the narrative of Carian, which we shall explore in the next section.

In summary, we have isolated in this section some of the key elements which seem to have a bearing on Carian’s second conversion. We have seen that the possibility of transformation began as he moved away from his familiar context in Kabankalan in order to study in a new Baptist context in Cebu. We

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57 Carian, Kwentuhan 4 (30 October 2014), clip 57/60.
have seen the significant role of the American missionary who offered a positive view of the Catholic tradition, and how this became one of the first major encounters which must have challenged particularly Carian’s initial judgmental view of Catholicism shaped by his earlier Fundamental Baptist background. Moreover, we have seen the impact of Lewis and Schaeffer in providing Carian with a new language of making sense of the Christian faith, which moved him beyond the confines of mere dogmatic sectarianism, opening him up to develop at least an inquiring mind which learned to pay attention to wider social and cultural issues raised by these writers. In addition, the rediscovery of Rizal’s novels as well as the experience of being an eyewitness to certain racist tendencies of some American missionaries led him to become more aware of his emerging Filipino identity as well as to social questions related to the themes of freedom and nationalism. Finally, the 20-year ministry (1972-1992) in Bohol – which is the larger context of all these processes – gave Carian the chance to immerse and empathise with the lives of the rural poor in the province. These almost simultaneous processes which must have contributed to his theological transformation is, I propose, the proper context for understanding the impact of the death of his mother. Viewed within this context, his mother’s death must have been a major crisis which opened up much of the liminal space that was the precondition for a second conversion. It is not surprising therefore why this particular event was later remembered by Carian as a major turning point, which he shared to his class in Kabankalan in 1999.
5.4

A ‘Third Look’ at Poverty

We return to the year 1999, when the 52-year-old Carian had already settled back in his hometown Kabankalan. As we saw in section one, Carian was already conveying at this stage a passion to combat poverty, thus suggesting that a radical change in his outlook must have taken place. The previous section has helped us to imagine how certain factors might have contributed in what I propose was the emergence of the ‘third’ and more critical perspective on poverty. It was here in Kabankalan (in the years 1999-2010) when a more explicit and practical commitment to combat economic poverty came into view, both from the researcher’s perspective and from the narrative that emerged in our 2011 kwentuhan. We shall now turn to explore the key events of this specific period.

After arriving in Kabankalan in 1998, Carian was appointed as the director of an interdenominational institution (though largely Baptist in composition) where he was responsible to look after the growth of around 40, mostly rural, churches in Kabankalan. What struck Carian, after visiting these churches during his first year as director was the economic profile of most these churches, some of which were non-existent when he arrived.

“Historically,” according to Carian, “these churches, which were established around the 1970s and 1980s, were by the end of the 1990s beginning
to manifest issues of sustainability which threatened their very survival.”58 After doing an ocular inspection, Carian had identified less than five well-to-do and flourishing churches, mainly in the lowland. The rest, situated in the uplands, were quite unstable (with a few exceptions). These highland chapels built with lightweight construction materials were mostly dilapidated. The members who were poor or unemployed could not afford to support a full-time minister. As such, they relied heavily on weekend church workers who were students of the Bible school where Carian was also teaching. And this is the context behind the scene I introduced in section one, where we saw Jerry Carian lecturing on the need to address the issue of economic poverty.

Encountering the dire conditions of most of the poorer congregations must have opened another key opportunity for Carian to reflect upon the issue of economic poverty. The outcome of this reflection, or probably a series of reflections, came to inform his lectures, in the years 1999-2003, wherein the death of his mother was by this time interpreted as the turning point, and the main inspiration, for fighting economic poverty. It was a new theological development, but one that was rooted in the crisis of his mother’s death, which was now beginning to be more explicitly articulated.

Prior to his return to Kabankalan, Carian began to show signs of empathising with the poor in Bohol. However, the most he could do at that time

58 Carian, Kwentuhan 2.2 (8 April 2011), clip 2/32.
was a hand-out style of assistance rather than a full-scale social program that attempted critically to get at the roots of the problem of economic injustice.

It was only in the years 1999-2003 when Carian’s lectures began to aim at the roots of the problem, as he also discussed some practical and locally available remedies. “I am aware,” Carian acknowledged, “that the problem of poverty may not be eradicated completely. Probably the struggle to combat it will always remain with us. But it doesn’t mean we have to resign. I believe that there are ways in which we can undermine its cruelty in our own little way.”

During the years 1999-2009, Carian began to introduce cooperatives in Kabankalan and designed specific programs which encouraged a redistribution of resources “to offer our brethren a chance to exercise our Christian social responsibility.” For instance, he designed a program he called GAIN-Jesus, which stands for Givers Anonymous in the Name of Jesus. According to him, the program was explicitly based on Matthew’s “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Practically, the program was stimulated by the observation that most churches in the uplands were destitute, while only a few were well off. It was therefore an attempt to encourage the organisation at the level of its lay

59 This includes a feeding program for street kids and financial assistance for the poor.

60 Carian, Kwentuhan 4 (30 October 2014), clips 33/60; 36/60.

61 Carian, Kwentuhan 1.1 (7 April 2011), clip 5/8. Although this quote comes from our 2011 kwentuhan, such an idea was already uttered in 1999, and possibly even before.

62 Carian, Kwentuhan 4 (30 October 2014), clip 1/60.

63 Matthew 25:40, KJV.
membership to exercise some form of solidarity with their poorer brethren, and to address their material and spiritual needs “inasmuch as each one was personally capable.” Theological aim of the program, according to Carian, was ultimately to ‘gain Jesus’, which means that by nurturing a sense of solidarity with the ‘least of these’, one gains a renewed understanding of the meaning of the Incarnation of Jesus today: that Jesus is on the faces of the more vulnerable sections of society. We may rightly notice here an attempt to implement an alternative vision within the evangelical tradition, which had been more inclined to traditional evangelistic methods of inviting people to ‘accept Christ’.

His second contribution at the level of the leadership was more critical. Upon learning that the organisation was receiving a substantial amount of foreign funding – mainly from the US and Singapore – supposedly designated for the more impoverished highland churches, Carian suggested the creation of a board of local trustees represented by circuit leaders who would serve as a governing body. A major issue for Carian was financial transparency. Since funds were designated for the development of these churches, they (at least the representatives of the churches) had the right to know the exact amount of funding, in order to get a clearer picture of the available resources. At the same time, the establishment of the board was a strategy for creating a leadership

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64 Carian, Kwentuhan 4 (30 October 2014), clip 1/60.

65 The churches were organised by circuits each of which was headed by a circuit coordinator.
opportunity where representatives of these local churches could exercise the principle of self-reliance and empowerment.

Ultimately, both attempts failed. Even before Carian finally retired in 2010, “the board of trustees was abolished and replaced with an executive committee controlled by a few.”\textsuperscript{66} The other disturbing issue was that the general ethos of the local mission organisation, that is, the general posture of both the leaders and the parishioners affiliated with the local mission organisation, remained contented with an essentially dole-out approach in dealing with the needs of the churches, which, in Carian’s view, “had only served to perpetuate a form of paternalism while keeping the local churches in a state of dependency.”\textsuperscript{67} Thus it is possible to infer, on the basis of this later experience, that Carian’s further conscientization to issues of economic and social injustice arose in part through a realisation of the quasi imperialist tendencies of the local mission whose goals were ostensibly evangelistic, but whose ways of operating were less than fully ethical as shown especially, as Carian noted, in the way the leadership of the local mission organisation controlled the flow of foreign funding.

Not much was accomplished at this late stage in Carian’s career. The experience of trying to combat economic injustice, and yet failing in the process, must have left a deep mark on him. Nevertheless, what is interesting for our purposes is how a thirty-year theological pilgrimage (1968-1998) away from his hometown can prove to be a radically life-changing experience particularly to his

\textsuperscript{66} Carian, Kwentuhan 2.1 (8 April 2011), clip 23/27.

\textsuperscript{67} Carian, Kwentuhan 4 (30 October 2014), clip 1/60.
previously naïve view of poverty. This change became more manifest when – upon returning to his hometown in 1998 – he was confronted again with the problem of economic poverty, although this time, more than just a personal issue, it was a serious problem of a larger evangelical organisation. It is also noteworthy to underscore how his memory of the untimely death of his mother transformed into a meaningful resource which inspired him to combat the cruelty of economic injustice.

Unlike Manalo in chapter 4, the case of Carian shows little engagement with Marxism, although there are indications of a critical reaction to liberation theology. His main fear is that “salvation would merely be defined in terms of political and economic liberation,” exactly the same fear, as discussed in chapter 1, which concerned Bishop Stephen Neill, Lesslie Newbigin, John Stott and Harvey T. Hoekstra (to mention only four) when the WCC during the 1968 Uppsala Assembly began to define missions in terms of ‘humanization’. Like Magalit and Ruiz, Carian insists that salvation must not be reduced to political and psycho-social liberation, while sharing the seemingly common but intellectually highly problematic evangelical assumption, that “liberation theology is essentially a Marxist theology disguising as Christian.”

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68 Ibid. Clip 4/60.


70 Carian’s narrative indicates some awareness of Gustavo Gutierrez’s, A Theology of Liberation (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1971). The view that liberation theology is too Marxist is a view particularly challenged by Alistair Kee in his book Marx and the Failure of Liberation Theology (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990). Kee states at the outset that “Latin American theology of liberation is widely assumed to be too Marxist: in reality it is not Marxist enough. It is frequently criticized for its unquestioned acceptance of Marx: on closer inspection there are crucial aspects of Marx’s work which it simply ignores” (p.ix).
We have no quarrel with their goal, namely, liberation from all that limits or keeps man from fulfilling his potential. The ministry of Christ as seen in the Gospel seems to be focused on the poor,\(^{71}\) and so with the Epistle of James.\(^{72}\) I’m inclined to conclude that the Bible seems to be concerned with the welfare of the poor, whether materially or spiritually. In the early days, it seems that the Christian community was more of a lay movement among ordinary people. If so, this for me seems to carry some far-reaching theological implications such as the importance of making the church relate to the struggles of the poor in the community.\(^{73}\) But with regard to the means of achieving the goal, I think Christians should insist on the way of the cross. In other words, the responsibility of restructuring and transforming human society is biblical but we maintain that the centre of salvation is Christ.\(^{74}\)

Whether this particular reading is an example of *eisegesis*, a result of reading the Bible through the eyes of the poor, or a reflection of a tendency to fall into a ‘canon within a canon’, or simply a natural consequence of being a product of a certain context, we cannot deny that a social dimension has emerged in his understanding of the gospel. This is a clear indication that his reading of the Bible is no longer confined to the usual evangelistic and pietistic concerns. At the same time this is also a clear indication of the capacity to detect Bible passages which emphasise the need to pay attention to the concerns of the underprivileged.

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72 James 1:27


74 Carian, Kwentuhan 4 (30 October 2014), clip 4/60.
“Salvation,” Carian proposed in our 2014 kwentuhan, “is essentially freedom in Christ. This freedom involves the responsibility to engage with the issues of our global community. That is, once we become free in Christ, we are paradoxically constrained to get involved in the common struggles of mankind.”75 We cannot imagine Carian uttering this particular definition during his early years as a student in Cebu or as a pastor in Bohol, where, he admits, his view of salvation was narrowly evangelistic and pietistic.76 This is illustrated by his uncritical use in the 1970s and 1980s of American evangelistic methods such as D. James Kennedy’s ‘Evangelism Explosion’.77 “There was an instance when, as a student at BTC, we were assigned to a certain hospital in Cebu to apply what we learned from the seminar on Evangelism Explosion”, Carian recalls. “And there was this dying patient whom we asked the shocking and culturally offensive question: ‘if you were to die today would you know for sure where you are going?’ Needless to say the patient got so mad, he had us driven out of the room.”78

Although a change in his understanding of evangelism and salvation is now evident, the understanding that Christ is at the centre of salvation has remained unchanged. And here, we can see that while there is an identifiable shift in beliefs and values such as the emergence of a commitment to issues of economic justice, his old beliefs and values such as evangelism and salvation

75 Ibid.
76 Ibid., clip 31/60.
78 Carian, Kwentuhan 4 (30 October 2014), clips 3/60, 31/60.
have not necessarily disappeared but are re-interpreted to reflect the subject’s later, one might say, more mature understanding.

Perhaps it is best to end the discussion of Carian’s theological journey by allowing him to share his thoughts on what he calls his ‘bigger dream’, for it is a way to illustrate further the extent of his second conversion to a commitment to economic and social justice:

The bigger dream, which has been lingering in my mind for so long, is the possibility to create a kind of research institute comprising a mixed group of Christian, perhaps mostly evangelical, thinkers coming from different fields of expertise.\textsuperscript{79} Related to this, is the possibility of establishing a continuing dialogue with the leadership of Kabankalan on live issues by setting up some kind of a forum [he is thinking of something like L’Abri]\textsuperscript{80} where people are free to raise their questions. One purpose is simply to promote the freedom to ask questions, or encourage people to inquire without fear of contradiction. Of course, we must be careful not to give the impression that we have all the answers. That is why I am thinking of tapping experts and highly qualified resource persons who can contribute in clarifying or discussing a particular issue. I started something of that sort [he called it ‘Areopagus’, alluding to Acts 17] in one evangelical organisation [which, again, must remain anonymous]. Its main purpose was to encourage discussions on local and global issues, and to orient the evangelical community about what is going on in the intellectual world. That was short-lived… But here in Kabankalan, I’m still entertaining the possibility of gathering like-minded pastors and thinkers, students and researchers who are constantly engaging with the

\textsuperscript{79} Carian, Kwentuhan 2.2 (8 April 2011), clip 11/32.

live issues, both national and international. … This is one area I think I need to get more involved in the future. My desire is simply to offer something that will somehow provoke the thinking of the community. This, I believe, is a potent, albeit a disappointingly slow, way of combating poverty: to create an opportunity for people to think for themselves. I don’t know how that will work in this context. Of course, when you offer some giveaways such as food, money, or relief goods, immediately people will feel the benefits because many are deprived. It’s like the story of an invisible stray dog which has bitten many people around and then you are offering an antidote. And so people will crowd because many were bitten. But if we try to introduce something more intellectual, I am not so sure, and, we might only draw those who are intellectually inclined. And so we are back to the question: how exactly can we effectively transform society?

It is now the task of the next, and concluding chapter of this study, to discuss what wider conclusions regarding the possibility of a theological re-orientation within the evangelical tradition can be drawn based on the four evangelical theological pilgrimages which we have explored in this study.

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81 Carian, Kwentuhan 2.2 (8 April 2011), clip 6/32

82 Carian, Kwentuhan 2.2 (8 April 2011), clips 11/32, 13/32, 15/32.

83 Ibid.
CONCLUSION
Emerging Critical Social Awareness

In each of the trajectories of change examined in this study, we have encountered examples of post-war Filipino evangelicals who were products of a largely socially-disengaged theological background that emerged in the Philippines' evangelical community shortly after the Second World War. This theological background, as discussed in chapter 1, tended to lock Filipino/Filipina evangelicals in general into a certain style of thinking that prioritised the verbal proclamation of evangelism: a priority which, when combined with certain pietistic and premillennialist modes, seemed to have suppressed the impulse to engage with questions deeply affecting the economic, social and political well-being of their country. Nevertheless, through an in-depth analysis of this study’s four selected evangelical theological pilgrimages, this thesis has monitored the different ways in which these individual trajectories have moved from an initially socially-disengaged posture, examining the processes involved in the theological re-orientation that had taken place as observed in their gradual but nonetheless radical adoption of a more socially-engaged evangelical faith.

Magalit’s trajectory (chapter 2) suggested that theological re-orientation from the default setting of the dominant style of evangelicalism could occur when the primary concern to evangelize or to reach out the younger generation of intellectuals, particularly in the top-ranking universities in his country, was
directly challenged by competing and compelling ideologies such as Marxism and Maoism. In contrast, Ruiz’s trajectory (chapter 3) exemplified a process of gradual theological change that was driven by the realities of mission experience and displayed no signs of the crisis of faith experienced in varying degrees by Magalit, Manalo and Carian. Manalo’s trajectory (chapter 4) was closer to Magalit’s, in that it illustrated the potential of secular higher education to produce significant revision to prevailing evangelical attitudes. As a young evangelical and university student, at the age of twenty, Manalo went through a pivotal process of theological transformation after an encounter with what Manalo himself described as a witty political science professor. Finally, Carian’s trajectory (chapter 5) provided evidence that even within the existing evangelical tradition there was scope for reassessment and self-criticism. Carian’s story is one of a process of theological change initiated when a largely uncritical anti-Catholic bias was challenged by an encounter with a respected Baptist missionary who had a relatively positive view of post-Vatican II Catholicism, setting into motion what would become a life-long intellectual restlessness.

By isolating and examining in detail each of the four trajectories of change, this thesis provides an in-depth study of the phenomenon identified by David S. Lim and Al Tizon, namely the emergence a body of Filipino/Filipina transformational evangelicals,¹ who, like their Latin American counterparts,

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have been nurturing a holistic understanding of Christian mission. But while such studies have endeavoured to trace the emergence of a holistic understanding of mission among Filipino/Filipina evangelicals, their primary concern has been to chart theological change on a macro-level, whereas this thesis has been concerned to chart and explain how theological re-orientation can operate at the micro-level of autobiographical narratives or testimonies.

Tackling the issue of theological re-orientation at the level of autobiography, however, proved to be quite daunting right from the beginning due to the lack of the much-needed biographical archives. Even more daunting was the fact that the subjects themselves did not seem keen to write a full autobiographical account of their own theological pilgrimages. To remedy this deficiency, and to ensure the recording of ‘valid’, that is, subject-oriented rather than researcher-oriented, raw autobiographical data, this study employed a more indigenous Filipino model called the *kwentuhan* (as discussed in pp.27-32). The main advantage of conducting a series of *kwentuhans* occurring in the years 2008-2011 was that it offered an opportunity for sustained conversation and extended listening by the researcher *before* – it should be noted once more – the research question was finalised in 2012 (pp.16, 22-24, 30). Because the aim was simply to gather the story of individual lives, the use of ready-made questionnaires (which might have only functioned as unnecessary obstructions) was not considered appropriate. In other words, the series of minimal-prompting *kwentuhans* effectively facilitated a largely unrestricted and free-flowing account of testimonies not normally achievable using standard social scientific approaches.
The result was a rich storehouse of oral autobiographical narratives which lent themselves for an in-depth exploration of the topic of theological re-orientation.

There are at least three potential lines of further research which this study has opened up but could not possibly tackle given the limitation of this current thesis. The first would confront the issue of universalizability: to what extent might these emerging trajectories from the Philippines correlate for instance with those that might emerge from similar studies in Latin America and Africa, as well as in the inner cities of North America? The second, which is gender-related, would attempt to identify similar trajectories travelled by evangelical women in the Philippines and elsewhere, such as the life stories of Thelma Galvez-Nambu and Norma Liongoren (as mentioned in pp.21 & 25). The third potential line for further research would involve an exploration of the opposite case, that is, trajectories of social activists, e.g. Melba Maggay and Lorenzo Bautista, who converted to evangelical Christianity without abandoning their existing commitment to social justice.

Nevertheless, in focusing on the issue of theological re-orientation, this thesis has sought to achieve the three inter-related goals outlined in the Introduction (pp.16, 39-49). It will be recalled that the first goal raised the question of how far these four biographical case studies, instead of being merely idiosyncratic, might reveal some sort of a common pattern with regard to the

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2 For instance, it would be interesting to analyse what insights can be gleaned from a careful study of Jim Wallis’s conversion, which seems to follow the same trajectory that this study is concerned: from a previously socially-disengaged faith to one that is socially engaged. See Jim Wallis, The Call to Conversion: Why Faith is Always Personal But Never Private (New York: HarperCollins, [1981] 2005), xv.

3 See Introduction, pp.21-22 & 25.
development of a socially-engaged evangelical faith. The second goal, which was closely related to the first, posed the question of whether or not it would make sense to describe this theological re-orientation using the notion of ‘second conversion’. The third and final goal of the thesis was to assess the extent to which these critically examined stories might cast some light on the growth of the Filipino/Filipina evangelical tradition, and whether this tradition already contains the resources bearing the potential for encouraging theological change, and in particular, for the development of a socially-engaged evangelical faith. We shall now turn to an evaluation of how far the research has met each of these goals respectively.

A COMMON PATTERN?

As suggested in the Introduction (pp.46-48), for a process of religious change to be categorised as a ‘second conversion’, one would expect at least some of a series of eight features to be apparent. We will now turn to a consideration of how many of these eight features may be identified within the four seemingly idiosyncratic stories that have been narrated. Our discussion of these eight points may also help to identify what circumstances and influences are likely to propel conservative Protestants towards a commitment to social justice issues as part of their understanding of the gospel.

The first of the eight points – that second conversion, like the initial religious conversion to Christianity, should be understood more as a turning or re-orientation of what is already there than as a total replacement or absolute rupture with the past – seems to be confirmed by the fact that the trajectories of
change examined in this study were not necessarily about a categorical turning away from the subjects’ evangelical theological roots. Whether in the case of the doctor-turned-pastor Isabelo Magalit (chapter 2), the mission doctor Joel Ruiz (chapter 3), the community organizer Fermin Manalo (chapter 4), or the countryside Baptist pastor Jerry Carian (chapter 5), the trajectories of change which have unfolded here had been more about a theological re-orientation within, and not away from, the evangelical tradition. The possible exception might be the case of Manalo, in view of his incorporation of a Marxist view of social analysis, his apparent neglect of church-going, and his abandonment of the usual evangelistic task of verbal proclamation: it may indeed be objected that such an example already suggests, following Lynch (2006), some kind of a ‘de-conversion’ or conversion away from the evangelical tradition.\footnote{As pointed out in the Introduction, Lynch’s study is concerned with changes related to moving away from the evangelical tradition. See Gordon Lynch, ‘Beyond Conversion: Exploring the Process of Moving Away from Evangelical Christianity’, in Christopher Partridge and Helen Reid (eds.), Finding and Losing Faith: Studies in Conversion (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 23-38.} While there are those in the Philippine evangelical community and beyond it who would hesitate to consider Manalo to be an evangelical, the evidence presented to the researcher was that Manalo regarded himself an evangelical Christian from beginning to end, although the path on which he travelled gradually led him to become more ecumenically inclined, even as he had also adopted some tools of social analysis that drew from the thought of Marx. While the regularity of attending church services has diminished for Manalo, his faith community has remained largely evangelical, as is evident in the amount of time he continues to invest in facilitating courses on community development in evangelical theological
institutions. While the traditional evangelistic zeal of verbal proclamation may have disappeared, his theological orientation has remained practically evangelical in the sense that he continues to value the centrality of Christ, the notion of the kingdom of God, and the life-transforming role of the Spirit. Lastly, he continues to be regularly called on to speak at evangelical church gatherings, especially on topics having to do with the relationship of the evangelical faith to the social and political realities arising from the Philippine context.

The second important, albeit rather obvious point – that conversion is as much a process as a crisis – is supported by the ample evidence produced that the four trajectories of change described in this thesis were (and presumably still are) always in a process, a process which at times was precipitated or punctuated by crisis episodes. This point should already be obvious precisely because the stories hitherto explored were indeed stories that exemplified human change processes over a protracted period, stories whose trajectories had been shaped, to a greater or lesser extent, by the experience of certain forms of crisis. The importance of crisis episodes will be expanded under the third, fourth, and fifth points below.

Third, it should be apparent that the stories examined in this study all exhibited a growing sense of disquiet with the existing evangelical tradition, although it should be noted that the degree of disquiet did not necessarily translate into an all-out dissatisfaction or disappointment with their existing evangelical or fundamentalist frameworks leading to the wholesale abandonment of the evangelical tradition. Nonetheless, it remains noteworthy that one of the four stories presents a clear example of a relatively high degree of
disappointment with the evangelical tradition: namely the story of Fermin Manalo, in his interactions with fellow InterVarsity colleagues (and staff workers, with the possible exception of Isabelo Magalit and Melba Maggay), who puzzled him on account of their apparent lack of enthusiasm for wrestling with the issues raised by the imposition of martial law. This crisis of faith was provoked further by a particular traumatic episode, concerning Manalo’s relationship with a particular Scottish missionary, who was opposed to Manalo’s association with Catholic social activists engaging themselves in community organising activities during martial law (pp.203-5). Overall, Manalo’s disappointment with the evangelical community, and by extension, the evangelical tradition as a whole, is revealed in his experience of church life both in Batangas and in Manila, in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, particularly in these churches’ preoccupation with forging and maintaining an evangelical identity (akin to the ‘separatist impulse’ of fundamentalism in the North American context, as discussed by the historian Joel A. Carpenter), and thereby subordinating, if not effectively suppressing, the impulse to engage with issues of social justice. One can still wonder, however, if the same degree of disappointment would have been present had Manalo missed the opportunity to encounter the Marxist teacher from whom he learned the value of doing social analysis.

However, the same degree of dissatisfaction with the evangelical framework is not observable in the testimonies of Magalit, Ruiz and Carian,

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although a degree of disquiet has remained evident in each of their accounts. In Magalit’s case, for instance, this growing sense of unease emerged in his experience as general secretary of InterVarsity, working among university students in the 1960s and 1970s which brought him face to face with the ideologies of Marxist- or Maoist-inspired student activists. However, such encounters – and here we should note an experience which parallels that of Magalit’s counterparts in Latin America such as Samuel Escobar\textsuperscript{6} and C. René Padilla\textsuperscript{7} – did not lead Magalit to doubt the plausibility structure of his evangelical framework. On the contrary, Magalit did not lose hope that the evangelical tradition still had much to say about issues of economic or social justice, but, all the same, the encounter with the student activism during the presidency of Marcos had effectively caused a sense of theological disequilibrium.

In the stories of Ruiz and Carian, by contrast, the sense of unease emerged, not so much from an encounter with Marxist ideologies, as from a prolonged immersion in contexts of human deprivation. We have seen this in the medical ministry of Ruiz both in the upland province of Ifugao and in the remote islands that brought him closer to the immediate concerns of the underprivileged, and thus, face to face with the actual problem of economic poverty. In a somewhat similar way, the initially and largely evangelistic ministry of Carian in the countryside brought him into direct contact with the people’s economic


struggles, which, for Carian, turned out to be an opportunity – only enhanced even further by what he considered to be his mother’s untimely death – to reflect upon what already had been a familiar experience for him since childhood. Unlike Manalo, but in many ways like Magalit, the gradual sense of disquiet arising from the context of economic poverty did not in itself lead either Ruiz or Carian to question the plausibility structure of their respective evangelical frameworks. Nevertheless, their theological struggle eventually led them to find ways of relating the message of the gospel to the prevailing economic struggles of those in the margins of society. The case of Ruiz, as pointed out in chapter 3, reminds us once more of Dana L. Robert’s study of late nineteenth-century American women missionaries, who tended to adopt a more holistic approach to mission than their male counterparts because they were directly engaged in ministering to bodily needs more than they were in preaching and pastoring. However, in the case of Carian, his preoccupation with preaching and pastoring was not necessarily a hindrance in taking up a more holistic approach to mission. A shared personal history of human deprivation (a social reality specially made more visible to him after the crisis of his mother’s demise), even as he was quite heavily engaged in preaching and pastoring, had the potential to open the door towards an approach to mission that was holistic, although such personal experience of deprivation, still had to be reinforced by other factors such as the role of external agents, which is the key theme of our next point.

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The fourth common feature present in our ideal profile of second conversion identified the importance of the role of external agents in the process of theological re-orientation. In a process of second conversion we would expect to find at least one ‘missionary’ or ‘evangelist’ who was influential in introducing a new, and potentially transformative, message. Again, this point is illustrated in the story of Manalo, who, while he was in college, was introduced by a Marxist teacher to the importance of doing social analysis. This influence eventually created a degree of tension between Manalo’s emerging political theory and his acquired evangelical framework. In other words, the influence of the political science professor effectively enabled Manalo to question the plausibility structure of his recently embraced evangelical framework, a framework which apparently had not yet sunk in deep enough to be considered by him as beyond question.

Again, this degree of suspicion towards the evangelical tradition is not observable in Magalit, Ruiz and Carian, whose stories revealed a more trusting view of the evangelical tradition. Manalo’s relentlessly questioning stance, which may ultimately be rooted in his own personality, had only been reinforced further by what he observed was a striking general lack of a desire to engage with social issues among those within his own evangelical circle.

Unlike Manalo, whose trajectory was decisively influenced by the role of the Marxist teacher, the stories of Magalit and Carian revealed the significant roles of initially unlikely ‘missionaries’, who, in the end, effected a similar impact that worked towards achieving a fundamental theological re-orientation. In the case of Magalit, for instance, this role was clearly taken by John Stott, whose major influence on Magalit was initially confined to Stott’s modelling of
the evangelistic and expository ministry of verbal proclamation, but subsequently extended to Stott’s commendation of a holistic understanding of mission. In the case of Carian, this significant role was initially played by one American Baptist teacher, who introduced the young Carian to the fascinating theological developments of Roman Catholicism that occurred during and after the Second Vatican Council. Although this encounter did not automatically lead Carian towards a socially-engaged evangelical faith, it nonetheless marked the beginning of a major theological re-orientation, especially for a fundamentalist Baptist who was anti-Catholic by default. This theological re-orientation was then reinforced further by his discovery of, and increasing fascination with, the writers C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer, neither of whom was Baptist, and both of whom he considers to be his mentors. Both C. S. Lewis and the American Baptist teacher helped in reducing Carian’s previously anti-Catholic bias, thus, increasing his appreciation of the richness of the Christian tradition. But it was Schaeffer who introduced him to the intellectual engagement with issues of social and cultural import. To underscore this point, for instance, Carian maintained that his interpretation of the biblical phrase ‘not by bread alone’ (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4), to mean that the material needs of human life remain a key issue that should never be neglected, benefited from his reading of Schaeffer. Unlike the previous three, however, the case of Ruiz is unique in that the function of external agents was not primarily in terms of introducing a new theological message, but more in terms of effectively redirecting or at least influencing the

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9 For an authoritative study see Barry Hankins, Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). See also Brian Stanley, The Global Diffusion, 133-9.
future career path of the young surgeon. This role was carried out by a good friend of Ruiz, the American missionary Frank Allen, and by one InterVarsity colleague both of whom convinced Ruiz to embark on a career in medical missions which was a key factor for his theological re-orientation. Above all, it was Ruiz’s direct encounters with the ‘faces’ of the poor and exploited seaweed planters that functioned as the key external agents that moved him beyond the traditional medical missions approach to a position of active social engagement with the issues of economic injustice (pp.164-7).

The fifth point of our model of second conversion leads us to expect some form of crisis that triggers a decisive turning point. Each of our four trajectories reveals such a crisis point. For both Manalo and Magalit (and to some extent Carian), the key crisis that clearly triggered a decisive turning point that stirred them towards political action was the 1983 assassination of Ninoy Aquino. Manalo, who was in Saudi Arabia at the time of the assassination, found himself returning to the Philippines to participate more actively in anti-Marcos campaigns. Magalit, who was by this time the senior pastor of DBC and no longer content with the ‘underground study group’ which he helped form while he was with InterVarsity, found himself endorsing a public letter that essentially condemned the killing of Ninoy Aquino while forthrightly questioning the legitimacy of the Marcos regime. While the 1983 murder of Aquino also had a profound impact on the political awakening of Carian (p.249, fn.51), it was what he considered the untimely death of his mother that functioned as the more decisive turning point for him with regard to engaging with the issue of economic poverty. However, it should be noted that the story of Ruiz does not
seem to include this particular crisis episode that led the other three into a
decisive social and political re-orientation. Ruiz was not explicitly anti-Marcos
and the experience of martial law did not appear to be a problem to him at that
time. Moreover, his awareness of human rights violations under the Marcos
regime only came years after the toppling of the dictatorship. He was not
immediately aware of Aquino’s assassination, and even after he became aware of
it, it did not function as a crisis episode for him. Thus, the turning point for him
was not primarily the political situation under Marcos, or the murder of Aquino,
but the experience of exploitation by those to whom he regularly ministered as a
mission doctor (pp.164-9). The sighs and cries of his patients who were small-
time seaweed farmers had affected him deeply creating both a problem and an
opportunity to reflect upon the relevance and applicability of the gospel.

The sixth feature of our ideal representation of second conversion was
that it should involve an identifiable shift in beliefs and values. The nature of the
theological re-orientation revealed by these stories certainly seems to involve an
identifiable shift in beliefs and values. Old beliefs and values did not necessarily
disappear but were supplemented or re-interpreted by a newer set of beliefs and
values as a result of their evolving theological or ideological understanding. This
is evident in Magalit, whose unswerving prioritising of evangelism was not
abandoned, but rather, with the help of the 1974 Lausanne Congress, was
supplemented and balanced by the value of social responsibility, which he slowly
came to realise was also a crucial aspect of Christian mission. A similar trend is
also evident in the stories of Ruiz and Carian, although, unlike Magalit, they
were not directly influenced by the theological developments associated with the
1974 Lausanne Congress. In the case of Ruiz, it was his listening as a child to the story of Christ, whom Ruiz came to conceive as having both a healing and preaching ministry, that left an indelible mark on his psyche. In retrospect, this memorable and positive childhood experience had the effect of helping Ruiz eventually to embrace and articulate a more holistic understanding of mission, although at the outset there was no guarantee, and thus, no way of predicting, that this childhood experience in itself would necessarily lead Ruiz to embrace a holistic understanding of mission. For Carian, it was the newfound understanding, aided by his readings of Schaeffer, of the 'bread' and the 'word', which represented for him the importance of both the material and spiritual issues that should be simultaneously tackled in Christian ministry. While evangelism remained largely important in these three biographical examples, these subjects also began to see that there was no justification for neglecting the questions of economic or social justice. However, there was an instance, which is evident in the story of Manalo, when a major evangelical belief or value such as the verbal proclamation of evangelism was abandoned, and virtually supplanted by the quest for justice and peace, although this shift of theological emphasis was still understood in line with the biblical language of the 'will of God' and the 'kingdom of God'.

The seventh feature of our ideal profile was that theological re-orientation should be manifested in a new set of practical commitments in life. We have adduced evidence that all four subjects began to engage in social or political actions which were not visible before, namely, Magalit’s endorsement of the public letter which was critical of the Marcos regime; Manalo’s participation in
anti-dictatorship campaigns; and Carian’s preaching against human rights violations under the Marcos regime despite warnings by friends in government. Although Ruiz was not explicitly anti-Marcos, this point is still evident in Ruiz’s anti-poverty campaign when he organised the small-time seaweed planters (who were normally put at a disadvantageous position) to ensure that there was fair trade.

The eighth and final point stated that second conversion normally manifests itself through participation in an expanded or even new religious community. All four stories of theological transformation have pointed towards the subjects’ involvement in a different, or at least in an increasingly broadening, evangelical community. They were no longer confined by a separatist theology associated with their original congregations, even though they have remained active members in these congregations. Involvement in a new, and one might add, more intellectually stimulating, evangelical context proved to be one of the first doors, though not a guarantee, for theological change. All four subjects followed a trajectory from a local pietistic evangelical church towards an involvement in an evangelical parachurch movement such as InterVarsity, in the cases of Magalit, Ruiz and Manalo, or, as in the case of Carian, enrolment in a theological institution such as Baptist Theological College (BTC). In other words, active involvement in the InterVarsity movement was crucial for introducing the subjects to a wider evangelical and interdenominational network. In the 1960s and 1970s, more specifically, InterVarsity played a part in exposing these evangelicals to the writings of John Stott who began to develop a holistic understanding of Christian mission as a result of his participation in the National
Evangelical Anglican Congress at Keele in 1967 and the Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Uppsala in 1968. This was most obviously the case in the experience of Magalit, who considers Stott to be his main evangelical mentor. As such, InterVarsity – and here we may affirm the thesis of David S. Lim and Al Tizon – took Filipino evangelicals out of a primarily American-influenced evangelical environment (which was strongly separatist and incipiently fundamentalist) into one where some of the most influential thinkers were British and deeply committed to “mainline” evangelical denominations. To some extent, this influence may be extended to the cases of Ruiz and Manalo, both of whom encountered the literature of John Stott and other British writers when they joined InterVarsity. But it should also be noted that the impact of a broader strand of evangelical teaching such as those of Stott is less prominent in the stories of Ruiz and Manalo. What is more prominent in the case of Ruiz, for example, was his encounters with people such as the FEGC missionary Frank Allen, who, during an InterVarsity gathering in 1965, invited Ruiz to join the mission hospital in Ifugao, where Ruiz, in 1969, became the first Filipino director of the Good News Clinic. In 1983, another close friend and InterVarsity colleague invited Ruiz to join the FMS mission in Mindanao, where Ruiz became the director of Medical and Social Services until his retirement in 2000. These InterVarsity encounters, which were not explicitly intended to nurture a socially-engaged evangelical faith, still undoubtedly played a crucial role in redirecting Ruiz’s career towards medical missions which opened the door for

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what turned out to be a prolonged immersion in some of the poorest margins of Philippine society. A different pattern is suggested by the case of Manalo whose awakening to issues of social justice did not primarily come from the InterVarsity movement. Indeed, Manalo’s case exemplifies an evangelical who initially benefited from InterVarsity’s caring evangelical ethos, but who in the end, after being inoculated with Marxist tools of social analysis, grew disappointed with the local InterVarsity movement because the social issues he began to care so much about did not receive the same degree of priority by his InterVarsity colleagues. In the case of Carian, who was not a member of InterVarsity, the move from his local Fundamental Baptist church in Negros to Baptist Theological College in Cebu proved to be the key step in his theological pilgrimage. Again, it was in BTC where he encountered an American Baptist missionary who, perhaps surprisingly, had a generally positive view of post-Vatican II Catholicism. It was also in BTC where Carian started to devour the writings of C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer, hence, making this context a fertile ground for the possibility of theological re-orientation.

**RE-ORIENTATION AS SECOND CONVERSION?**

Does the evidence presented by these four trajectories therefore confirm the usefulness of the notion of ‘second conversion’ in describing the theological re-orientation unfolding in the four biographical case studies? Given that the stories examined in this thesis clearly featured the centrality of the idea of ‘conversion’, and judging from the degree of crisis and rupture involved in the process of re-orientation as teased out in the previous section, it does seem to
make sense to describe these examples of transformation in terms of ‘second conversion’.

As already acknowledged on pp. 43-45, this study is not the first to employ the notion of ‘second conversion’ by discussing briefly some of the recent literature, including that of Andrew F. Walls (2002), Lian Xi (1997), Arun Jones (2003), and Lida Nedilsky (2014). In this sense, this current thesis shares with these previous studies an attempt to deal with the theme of conversion or re-orientation towards a more socially-engaged posture of the Christian faith, although of the four studies cited above only Nedilsky had explicitly used (at least twice) the term ‘second conversion’. What sets this thesis apart from the historical studies of Walls, Lian Xi, and Jones, including that of the social scientific approach attempted by Nedilsky, is that this study had tackled the theme of re-orientation by a persevering tracking of, an attentive listening to, and a detailed analysis of, the largely unruly and unrestricted flow of extended oral accounts of the converts themselves made possible via the culturally-sensitive Filipino model of research, which by now should already be familiar, namely, the kwentuhan. The unique outcome of this approach is made evident in the further development of the eight distinctive features that should help to shed light on the processes involved in theological re-orientation at least within the conservative Protestant tradition. But whether or not it is useful to describe this transformation using the notion of ‘second conversion’ remains a valid question.

11 Lida V. Nedilsky, Converts to Civil Society: Christianity and Political Culture in Contemporary Hong Kong (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2014), 28, 90.
The term ‘second conversion’ (as discussed in pp.41-43) might seem to some to carry with it the idea of an absolute discontinuity with the religious past, and thus, it might be protested that ‘second conversion’ is too strong a term to describe a process of re-orientation that has by and large taken place within the same evangelical tradition. However, the term ‘conversion’ does not necessarily have to indicate, whether explicitly or implicitly, the idea of absolute rupture. As Walls had already suggested, the notion of conversion, and here I should add ‘second conversion’, can also refer to “critical internal religious change in persons within the Christian community.”12 Again we should emphasise the significance of the term ‘critical’ for, as already discussed in the common features above, we are not simply dealing with normal religious progression, but rather with a theological re-orientation involving certain forms of crisis or disjuncture in the individuals’ religious pilgrimages thereby challenging (and at times directly contesting) the existing and prevailing evangelical status quo. From this perspective, it can therefore be argued that the selected trajectories do indeed constitute examples of ‘second conversion’: they are examples of ‘second conversion’ precisely because, in one way or other, these stories clearly involved an element of rupture as evident in the selected evangelical subjects’ thinking and acting in ways not previously visible in the years immediately following their initial conversion to evangelical Christianity. But even if some readers may argue that the idea of a ‘second conversion’ does not entirely fit these autobiographical

narratives of change, what is undeniable is that we are still left with a theological re-orientation of a quite fundamental kind.

**POTENTIAL RESOURCES FOR THEOLOGICAL CHANGE WITHIN THE EVANGELICAL TRADITION IN THE PHILIPPINES**

We turn, finally, to the third goal of the thesis. Do the four personal trajectories we have analysed suggest that the particular evangelical tradition that thrived in the cultural climate of the Philippines following the Second World War at least contained some elements that had the potential to encourage its members to move from a socially-disengaged evangelical posture to one that is socially engaged? It surely would be foolhardy to suggest that the selected trajectories of this study are representative of the entire evangelical tradition in the Philippines. Nevertheless, the attempt made here to track the movement of particular evangelical theological pilgrimages and their emerging pattern has at least suggested that in a context of severe human deprivation and political repression such as was experienced in the Philippines, the evangelical tradition there did contain the potential to transcend its originally US-influenced pietistic and fundamentalist framework which tended, more narrowly, to carry on the task of evangelism at the expense of socio-political engagement. More specifically, this thesis has identified three potential resources for internal renewal within the evangelical tradition in the Philippines.

First, the conservative evangelical tradition in the Philippines, in some ways like in Latin America, seem to have emerged as a popular movement rather than as a movement of the elite. As a popular movement thriving in the
social and cultural climate of the Philippines, Philippine evangelicalism was inevitably placed in close encounter with the everyday concerns of ordinary people, particularly with the question of endemic poverty. This in itself did not guarantee that Filipino/Filipina evangelicals would necessarily respond critically to questions of economic, social and political import, but this experience at least opened up a potentiality for those belonging to this tradition, and indeed for the tradition itself, to evolve in the embodiment of their Christianity, and in the language used to make sense of their theology, steering some to take up more seriously the immediate material concerns of their context. Again, the prolonged exposure of Ruiz to people in highly marginalised communities became an important condition for the gradual awakening of his critical social awareness.

For Ruiz, ministering and treating people in extreme economic conditions turned out to be a rich entry point, which was reinforced by what became a more protracted communion with patients who were also some of the more vulnerable seaweed planters in Palawan. This exposure, which tested the resources of his faith, gradually disclosed some disturbing questions that moved Ruiz to organise the planters, thereby increasing their chances to overcome the exploitation by traders, who regularly bought their products at prices unfavourable to these poor planters. As a result, Ruiz’s understanding of medical missions gradually moved away from the typical treatment of individual illnesses, opening up a new horizon for conceptualising a public health system which would address the wider economic problems of the community beyond the narrow confines of the local church.
A slight variation of this particular point is to articulate it in terms of the capacity of the evangelical tradition to *incarnate* the Christian message in the history and emerging identity of a nation. Although an emphasis on the incarnation is more often associated with the Catholic tradition, evangelicalism has retained the biblical story that God in Christ became human. This story of the Incarnation that it was necessary for Christ to become human in order for God to serve and redeem humanity can indeed allow a variety of contextual appropriations including the understanding that Christianity, following in the example modelled by Christ, must become Filipino/Filipina, at least in the sense that it must be interested in tackling Filipino/Filipina questions and concerns, if indeed it intends truly to transform Filipino/Filipina communities. This understanding, while not explicitly articulated in such terms, seems to be implicit in the story of Carian, particularly in his reaction to the discriminatory acts committed by some American evangelical missionaries against some Filipino ministers. This also is apparent in the way Carian reacted against the Marcos regime (which he initially supported) after learning about the unlawful arrest (in some cases, the disappearance) of activists including one of his good friends. In these examples, Carian’s Christianity, or indeed his expression of evangelicalism had ‘become’ Filipino, in the sense that he, as an evangelical, identified with, and acted on the concrete issues faced by the more vulnerable Filipinos as part of his understanding of the gospel of Christ (e.g. chapter 5, pp.248-250). In the latter part of our 2011 *kwentuhan*, Carian explains all these somewhat nationalist impulses by saying: “I am a Filipino before I became a Christian, and I don’t think that my becoming a Christian had diminished even one bit my being a
Filipino.” What appears here to be an unproblematic marriage of Christianity and nationalism of sorts seems to be qualified further by an even more fundamental and somewhat cosmopolitan thought when he states: “But I am a human before I am both a Filipino and a Christian, and therefore I am inclined to put priority on my being a human, priority to identify and engage with the struggles of my fellow humans regardless of race and creed which I believe the Christian in me would most gladly be prepared to do, for I believe that this expression of love is in line with who God is, the God who revealed himself through Christ.” In other words, the capacity of evangelicalism to incarnate in the cultural climate of a nation can lead its members into a renewed understanding of the gospel, and therefore a renewed understanding of what it means to be human in relation to the common struggles of humanity.

A second resource for the potential transformation of the tradition may be found in the logic of competition between the evangelical tradition and other competing ideologies. In the highly charged political context of the 1960s and 1970s Filipino/Filipina evangelicals who were deeply involved in the task of evangelism found themselves directly challenged by influential ideologies that seemed to threaten the evangelistic task of winning converts. This reminds us once more of David Bebbington’s historical observation of nineteenth-century British evangelicals who became more and more involved in issues of social reform partly as a result of identifying issues that seemed to function as an

13 Jerry Carian, Kwentuhan 3 (9 April 2011), clip 24/38.

14 Ibid.
obstacle to their pre-eminent goal, namely the progress of the gospel.\textsuperscript{15}

Evangelicalism is an activist form of Christianity that places a high priority on the winning of converts, and, as such, its most reflective practitioners are inherently likely to be self-critical when they find themselves losing the battle of ideas. Such confrontation between evangelical theology and rival ideologies is illustrated by the career of Magalit, who was disturbed by the steady increase in the number of students who were getting persuaded by Marxist or Maoist ideologies in the 1960s and 1970s. Magalit saw these leftist ideologies and movements as powerful competitors of the mission of the evangelical student movement. This threat to his evangelistic work soon compelled him to confront the Marxist or Maoist challenge with the hope that this would equip him to tackle, more intelligently, the urgent ideological concerns of the students. The outcome was that while he ultimately rejected the Marxist option, Magalit remained convinced of the importance of social justice which eventually became a permanent dimension of his understanding of mission. Again, this experience interestingly parallels the stories of some Latin American evangelicals, and in particular Padilla and Escobar, who were similarly propelled in the direction of integral mission by their work with students in Latin American universities at a time when Marxism was the dominant student ideology.\textsuperscript{16}


A third resource intrinsic to evangelicalism may be found in the degree of ambiguity between, on the one hand, the theological impulse to maintain the ‘tradition handed down to us’, exhibited for instance in the conservative urge to defend what the subjects have regarded as a set of essential beliefs and values, and, on the other hand, the potentially radical inclination to care about transformed lives. This inclination has frequently been expressed in evangelical history in the conviction that the heart of Christianity is the experience of Christ, that should, through the power of the Spirit, manifest in a renewed life of doing works of love. While this tension is not as pronounced in the story of Manalo, whose trajectory revealed an abandonment of traditional evangelical features such as the task of the verbal proclamation of evangelism, and emphasising more of the life-transforming power of the Spirit, the other three evangelical cases have illustrated this specific point in a much clearer fashion. For instance, it is clear that Magalit subscribed to the traditional language that in the mission of the church ‘evangelism is primary’ (p.133). What finally convinced the evangelist Magalit of the importance of tackling social and political issues was when he began to see the possibility that “social responsibility can be placed high on the evangelical agenda without jeopardizing the evangelistic mandate” (pp.132-3). A similar ambiguity is also observed in the story of Ruiz, who tended to use a language that seemed to instrumentalise medical missions as a tool for evangelism (pp.154-9), although a crucial outcome of Ruiz’s protracted career in medical missions led him to regard health care as an integral part of the mission of the local church (pp.169-70, 185-6). Lastly, we have also seen this ambiguity at work in Carian’s impulse to protect the evangelical tradition from the
perceived dangers of liberation theology which he understood as ‘essentially Marxist’ (p.259). Yet Carian had come to recognise the biblical roots of human liberation and social transformation (pp.260-2).

This thesis set out with a three-fold goal in an attempt to make sense of the re-orientation that had taken place in each of the four selected evangelical theological pilgrimages. The first goal, which was concerned with the issue of commonality, was addressed by teasing out the extent of a common pattern discernible in the narratives. This emerging pattern shed light on the processes involved in theological re-orientation which can be further developed in spite of the seemingly idiosyncratic nature of the individual stories. The second goal was concerned with exploring the value of the notion of second conversion. While it remains valid to question the usefulness of the term ‘conversion’ as a key heuristic device, it was argued that based on the centrality of the idea of conversion and the element of rupture revealed in the narratives in question, it therefore was deemed legitimate to describe each of the examples of theological re-orientation in terms of second conversion. The third and final goal was concerned with a much wider implication with regard to the Philippine evangelical tradition. Even if the selected evangelical narratives examined in this thesis could not be regarded as representative of the wider Philippine evangelical community, it was argued that collectively these trajectories of change have tended to suggest that the conservative evangelical tradition that had thrived in the Philippines after the Second World War contained at least the potentiality for effecting theological transformation.
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