

RAYMUNDO GO

The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches



Its Background, Context, and Formation
among Post-World War II Churches

Raymundo Go's historical exposition of the formation and development of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches is logically arranged, thorough, detailed, and well documented. The fascinating story of the PCEC's formation and growth are properly set within the context of the Liberal/Modernist and Fundamentalist/Evangelical divergence among North American denominations and church groups over the fundamental beliefs of the evangelical faith, like the Bible as the ultimate authority for Christian faith and practice, the person and work of Christ as the sole basis of salvation, and repentance and faith as the human response to the gospel message. Utilizing Paul Hiebert's concept of the bounded and centrist set, he demonstrates that the PCEC has avoided the fundamentalist/separatist attitude on the one hand, and the liberal/modernist perspective on the other hand, situating itself in the centrist position theologically and in terms of beliefs and practices. Within this balanced evangelical position, the PCEC has welcomed a variety of evangelical denominations and diverse groups and agencies as members under the umbrella of evangelical faith and practice. With the steady hand of Dr Agustin Vencer, Jr. and Bishop Efraim Tendero, who each served extensively in the position as Executive Secretary, the Council has grown in membership and programs, serving the larger body of Christ in the Philippines and the Filipino people. Today, the PCEC is a respected organization among Protestant denominations, the Roman Catholics in the Philippines, and other Christian agencies.

Rodrigo D. Tano, PhD

President,

Alliance Graduate School, Quezon City, Philippines

My thanks to Dr Raymundo Go for this excellent work on the history, background, context and formation of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches. I appreciate this work and I believe that this is so far the most extensive research I have seen on the beginnings and growth of the PCEC sourced from different streams. It is most helpful to me as a new servant leader of the PCEC in appreciating what happened in the past that led to the organization of the largest group of evangelical denominations, parachurch organizations and local churches in the Philippines today. Surely the Lord's hand was very evident in all circumstances and situations including the calling of evangelical leaders who would be used by God to chart the course of the PCEC in pursuing the vision of a disciplined nation. This book will serve as a

tremendous source of encouragement for present and future PCEC leaders to carry the torch of national and global evangelization.

Bishop Noel Pantoja

National Director, PCEC

Member, Executive Council, Asia Evangelical Alliance

Member, International Council, World Evangelical Alliance

In writing this book, Dr Raymundo Go has given a great service to us all and to future generations of evangelicals. He has written the history and evolution of the growth of churches from various Christian streams in our country – this is a book that will contemporize the work of Tuggy and Toliver. It is comprehensive and analytical. It is insightful. It educates our consciousness as to the richness of our legacy. By plumbing the depth of our evangelical roots, Dr Go has dignified us to take our place among God’s people to pursue our hope that his kingdom in heaven be done here on earth. Indeed, it is not just our hope but our destiny. This is a book that must not be found only in the libraries of bible institutions but more so in the archives of history. Thank you so much for writing our meta-story. I highly recommend it as a must-read for church leaders.

Agustin B. Vencer, Jr, PhD

Former Executive Secretary, PCEC

Former International Director, World Evangelical Fellowship

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This study is dedicated:

To Lut, my wife and inspiration. I thank her for the love and support she gave in helping produce this work especially during those difficult times.

To my colleagues at the International Graduate School of Leadership, my friends and co-laborers who gave me the time and their support to complete my PhD studies.

To my students whose questions and opinions helped me see the importance of “looking into the past.”

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List of Abbreviations

ABCL	Association of Baptist Church in Luzon
ABCLVM	Association of Baptist Churches in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao
ABCCOP	Alliance of Bible Christian Communities of the Philippines
ABEO	Association of Baptists for the Evangelism in the Orient
ABFMS	American Baptist Foreign Mission Society
ABWE	Association of Baptists for World Evangelism
AFBCP	Association of Fundamentalist Baptist Churches of the Philippines
AG	Assemblies of God
BABC	Bukidnon Association of Baptist Churches
CAMACOP	Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines
CBAP	Conservative Baptist Association of the Philippines
CBFMS	Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society
CCWM	Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission
C-GRIP	Church Growth Research in the Philippines
CIM	China Inland Mission
CMA	Christian Missionary Alliance
CORE	Christian Organized for Renewal and Evangelism
CPCM	Commission on Philippine Chinese Mission
DAWN 2000	Discipling A Whole Nation Movement 2000
DEI	Doane Evangelistic Institute

ECP	Evangelical Church of the Philippines
ECP-IP	Evangelical Church of the Philippines (Independent Presbyterian)
EFMA	Evangelical Foreign Missions Association
EXCOM	Executive Committee
FBCM	First Baptist Church of Manila
FEBE	Far East Broadcasting Company
FEBIAS	Far Eastern Bible Institute and Seminary
FECCC	Far Eastern Council of Christian Churches
FECP	Federation of Evangelical Churches in the Philippines
FEGC	Far Eastern Gospel Crusade
GCMCA	General Conference of the Methodist Church of America
GI	lit. Government Issue, refers to the US mili- tary servicemen
ICCC	International Council of Christian Churches
ICFG	International Church of the Foursquare Gospel
IEMELIF	<i>La Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas</i>
IFI	<i>Iglesia Filipina Independiente</i> (Philippine Independent Church) aka. The Aglipayans
IFMA	Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association
LICWE	Lausanne International Congress on World Evangelism
MEI	Manila Evangelistic Institute
NAE	National Association of Evangelicals for United Action
NCCP	National Council of Churches in the Philippines
NEA	National Evangelical Association
NECCOM	National Ecumenical Consultative Committee
NEF	New England Fellowship
NIV	The New International Version
NPA	National People's Army

OMF	Overseas Missionary Fellowship
PABWE	Philippine Association of Baptists for World Evangelism
PBTS	Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary
PCEC	Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches
PCFC	Philippine Council of Fundamentalist Churches
PCFEC	Philippine Council of Fundamentalist and Evangelical Churches
PEC	Philippine Episcopal Church
PFCC	Philippine Federation of Christian Churches
PFEC	Philippine Federation of Evangelical Churches
PHILRADS	Philippine Relief and Development Services
PMC	Philippine Methodist Church
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
SBC	Southern Baptist Convention
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
UCCP	United Church of Christ in the Philippines
UCM	Union Church of Manila
UECPI	United Evangelical Church in the Philippines Islands
UNIDA	United Evangelical Church of the Philippines or <i>La Iglesia Evangelica Unida de Filipinas</i>
VFFBC	Visayas Fellowship of Fundamental Baptist Churches
WCC	World Council of Churches
WEF	World Evangelical Fellowship
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

Foreword

During certain events such as weddings and other family celebrations, one gets to meet different people and hear about stories regarding their lives and relationships to each other. While it is easy to keep track of details in a smaller gathering, a larger group becomes a greater challenge especially when one tries to recall personal details and relationships. Similarly, the evangelical community within the Philippines has grown in number through the years and it can be quite challenging to identify the relationships of one church to another.

This monograph is an attempt to historically trace the relationships of the different churches within the Philippines and to understand the motivations behind some of the cooperative and conciliar efforts among them. It introduces the context behind some of the approaches and predispositions of these Filipino Christians by showing their western roots. The victories and difficulties that these Christian leaders experienced to gain a “voice” are recounted to give this new generation of Christian leaders an example to study as they develop their own plans for the future of Christianity in our beloved country.

Another contribution of this book is its effort to preserve the details of the past. As the memories of past events of the last one hundred years begin to fade with the passage of time, this monograph is an effort to preserve some of the details that happened within Christianity in Philippines. Sadly, most of the records are unavailable for careful study as these details have not been written down, have been misplaced or lost, and have been simply forgotten. Thus, the appendices offer a valuable resource as personal interviews with some of the leaders (three of whom are no longer with us) of these churches and movements recall the past.

This book is important for Filipino Christians who want to understand their spiritual roots, to see the values and visions of their forebears and to give them a hope that the same God who guided the leaders in the past is still at work today within the churches in the Philippines. Let it be a vanguard for other books and papers that would chronicle the rich Christian heritage that we have as Filipinos and as God's people.

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General Introduction

In the early 1960s, several Filipino fundamentalist and evangelical leaders met in the First Baptist Church of Manila (FBCM) to discuss the possibility of establishing a council of churches that would adequately represent their theology and ministry philosophy. While their action was not uncommon, their decision was, to some extent, intriguing since it would have been easier and more convenient to simply join the pre-war Filipino Protestant churches that had recently merged to form the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) in 1963;¹ instead they chose to form the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC).

Background of the Study

In order to understand the reason for their alternative choice, it is important to view this in light of Philippine Protestantism's history and context.

One of the foremost desires of most Christians is to fulfill the prayer of the Lord Jesus for unity (John 17:21).² While churches and Christian organizations have made great strides in the past to fulfill this prayer, it continues to be an elusive dream. From a brief survey of the history of Christianity in the Philippines, there have been several efforts to fulfill this dream by establishing a united and organic Filipino Protestant church. At the eve of Protestantism's arrival in 1899, several American missionary organizations

1. For details on the establishment of the UCCP and the NCCP, see T. Valentino Sitoy, Jr, *Comity and Unity: Ardent Aspirations of Six Decades of Protestantism in the Philippines (1901-1961)* (Quezon City, Philippines: National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 1989).

2. An example of such an effort to call for the "reunification" of the Christian Church is the papal declaration of John Paul II *Ut Unum Sint* in 1995.

began to initiate strategies and agreements to find a way to unite the fruit of their efforts and to form a single Filipino church. As a result of this desire for cooperative efforts, these early western missionaries established the Evangelical Union in 1901 to guide its members in unity and cooperation through the Comity Agreement (e.g. adoption of a common name – *Iglesia Evangelica*, the division of the archipelago into distinct areas, etc.).³

However, this cooperative effort had its own difficulties as conflicts persisted due to the continued competition and rivalry among its member parties. For example, the theological and practical distinctions among these groups became a major hindrance in the planned union among the “fruit of the labors.” In addition, the confusion and violation of the territorial divisions previously agreed upon by the comity members proved to be a continued strain in the relationship among these Protestant churches.⁴

While efforts by comity members to settle their differences and difficulties continued, by the 1920s and 1930s, this dream of a unified organic Filipino church was adopted and acquired by several Filipino leaders and their churches. Although there had been successful mergers (e.g. United Church of Manila – 1924; the UNIDA – 1932; and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines – 1948), the goal of forming an all-inclusive unified Filipino Protestant church was beyond their abilities as each of these churches were unwilling to give up their commitment to their particular theology, tradition, and praxis.

Thus, the less strenuous option of forming conciliar union became the accepted alternative, since this arrangement could fulfill the requirement of unity and cooperation while allowing each member to continue their distinctives and autonomy (e.g. National Christian Council – 1929; Philippine Federation of Evangelical Churches – 1938; and the Philippine Federation of Christian Churches – 1949). As a result, by 3 March 1950, the Comity Agreement was dissolved when its member organizations felt that the agreement was already obsolete, its provisions and rulings were often disregarded, and several councils followed this to achieve the desired goal.⁵

3. Sitoy, *Comity and Unity*, 10.

4. Sitoy, 23–39.

5. Richard L. Deats, *The Story of Methodism in the Philippines* (Manila: G. Rangel & Sons, 1964), 109–111.

In 1963, several of these mainline Filipino Protestant churches formed the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) to fulfill the dream of finally uniting all the churches in the Philippines. Efforts to unify these churches by “dissolving” the denominational distinctives were initiated so that “within the first two years of its existence, the NCCP also sponsored a thorough study on interdenominational worship services and held a national conference on the life and mission of the Church.”⁶

While there was some excitement over the formation of the NCCP, several fundamentalist and evangelical leaders remained unwilling to enlist themselves in the newly formed council. Their decision was not made for a lack of passion for unity;⁷ instead, it was born out of a conviction that the formation of a parallel council was a better alternative since it could represent their conservative theology and views – as some perceived that several members of the NCCP were too “modernist” or “liberal” in their theology and praxis.⁸ This “tension” that exists among these churches and mission organizations can ultimately be traced back to the “modernist/fundamentalist” controversy and even the “fundamentalist/evangelical” controversy in the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, respectively.

6. Sitoy, *Comity and Unity*, 130.

7. In an article written by Rev Agustin B. Vencer, Jr, PCEC's former General Secretary, he makes a strong case against the apparent divisions among the Body of Christ and calls it “scandalous” and a “stumbling block” (Agustin B. Vencer, Jr, “Evangelical Unity and Cooperation in Asia: A Biblical Basis,” *Evangelical Thrust* 10, no. 1 [January 1983], 20). He further adds that “disunity is a satanic ploy that saps our strength so that we have little left for the furtherance of the Gospel” (Vencer, “Evangelical Unity,” 20). In fact, the decision to establish a parallel council brought several problems to Protestantism. For one, it did not end the gap between the old pre-war churches and these fundamentalist/evangelical churches and organization. It also alienated some key sectors of society which had strong ties with the NCCP. For example, anyone who would want to serve as a Protestant chaplain in the armed forces of the Philippines must get an endorsement from the NCCP. This has prevented evangelical pastors from joining the chaplaincy service since they belong to the “opposing” council (“Topic: Army Chaplain,” *Philippine Defense Forum*, accessed 18 June 2012, <http://www.timawa.net/forum/index.php?topic=19859.0>).

8. Averell U. Aragon, “The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches,” in *Chapters in Philippine Church History*, ed. Anne C. Kwantes (Manila, Philippines: OMF Literature, 2001), 372.

Statement of the Problem

As a result, an understanding of the historical context and issues that confronted the founding members of PCEC can help explain the “path” that they took and the decisions that they made. Hence, this study attempts to answer the question, “What caused a group of post-World War II churches to refrain from uniting with the newly established National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) and to form their own parallel council, the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC)?”

Outline of the Study

In order to adequately address and explain the reason for the inquiry, this study will take the following course:

Chapter 1 serves as the introduction. It provides the following: the statement of the problem, scope and limitations, significance of the problem, and methodology.

Chapter 2 is entitled the “The Modernist/Liberal-Fundamentalist Controversy and the Fundamentalist/Evangelical Controversy in North America (1800–1960).” This chapter examines the particular events that took place in North America that led to the emergence of the modernist/liberal-fundamentalist controversy and the resulting Protestant “landscape” in the aftermath of the debate prior to the Second World War. It recounts the accomplishments and developments within the two major divisions (i.e. the modernist/liberal side versus the fundamentalist side) as the gap widened between the two. It also recounts the background that paved the way for the rise and the formation of the National Evangelical Association (NEA) in the post-World War II era. It also briefly narrates the resulting controversy among these non-mainline Protestant churches as their emphases and policies began to cause schisms, which broke these churches into two further groups; namely, the evangelicals and fundamentalists.

Chapter 3 is entitled “Protestantism in the Philippines: From Inception to the Post-World War II Era (1890s–1950s).” This brief historical account describes the arrival of the early North American Protestant missionaries and the establishment of Protestantism in the Philippines. It describes their efforts to balance both evangelism and social transformation as they sought to

someday replace Roman Catholicism as the main religion of the Philippines. As Philippine Protestantism entered its second decade, calls for autonomy and independence began to influence these Filipino churches and their leaders. As a result, several mergers and schisms took place within the period as Filipino Protestants sought to form an independent national church. In addition, several new denominations and councils were formed. This chapter also introduces the arrival of the modernist/liberal-fundamentalist controversy in the country and the resulting schisms among these missionary organizations and churches. It also recounts the arrival of several fundamentalist/conservative churches during the pre-war period. The chapter also discusses the events that took place among the mainline Protestant churches and the fundamentalist/conservative churches both during and immediately after the war in the Pacific, recalling the mergers and unions among the mainline Protestant churches and the mergers and arrival of several fundamentalist/conservative churches.

Chapter 4, “The Formation of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (1960s)” is divided into two sections, where the first section discusses the historical context of the second section, which is the actual formation of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC). The first section discusses the arrival of several fundamentalist/evangelical churches and missionary organizations (e.g. western missionaries who were expelled from China) in the 1950s. It also recalls several developments within the mainline Protestant churches leading up to the establishment of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) in 1963. The section also includes the differences between the fundamentalist/evangelicals and the mainline Protestant churches, ending the section with a brief summary. The second section recalls the actions and the motivations that led a group of Filipino evangelicals to form a parallel council – the PCEC. It discusses briefly the perceived differences between the two councils which provided a basis for their separation from one another. It also narrates the struggle between the fundamentalists and the evangelicals within the PCEC which eventually led to its own schism. This would be followed by the changes that took place within the council as a result of the departure of the fundamentalists, the efforts by the evangelicals to redefine and refocus their efforts resulting in major changes during the leadership of Dr Agustin B. Vencer, Jr.

Chapter 5 is entitled “Analysis and Synthesis of the Formation and Developments within PCEC Using Hiebert’s Bounded versus Centered Set Categories.” A brief description of Paul Hiebert’s bounded and centered set categories is provided, which the remaining section employed to evaluate the actions and choices of these Filipino Protestants. The Association of Fundamentalist Baptist Churches of the Philippines (AFBCP), the PCEC, and the NCCP are assessed in light of Hiebert’s categories to show the differences between a bounded set union and a centered set union. The chapter also shows that the direction and emphasis of the PCEC during its early years (1964–1975) were consistent with a bounded set union, as it was influenced by its association with the fundamentalist leaders who had helped establish this council of churches. This is followed by a brief discussion of the events and the reasons to explain why during the 1960s and the 1970s the PCEC, which had initially sided with the fundamentalists, shifted itself to a centered set union under the leadership of Dr Vencer and redefined the council’s relationship with the NCCP and the other religious groups in the country. It shows that the resulting changes in its purposes were consistent with a centered set union. Under Dr Vencer’s leadership, “knowing and making Jesus Christ known” became the council’s center where proclamation and social engagement/transformation became the focus of the PCEC. Finally, the chapter ends with the PCEC’s definition and declaration of the council’s centrist position.

Chapter 6 serves as the Conclusion. It summarizes all the findings by evaluating historical data that has been presented and the lessons learned from the formation of the PCEC. It also offers several recommendations as a result of the study.

Scope and Limitations

This study evaluates the events and issues that served as the historical context of these evangelical leaders during the post-war period. It also studies the motivations and the rationale of the PCEC’s leaders as they sought to define the council’s identity in the light of the current needs and trends within the Philippine society and the world.

Scope

This study explores the historical background and contexts that became the basis by which the PCEC was formed; namely the theological arguments and positions, the desire to gain a strategic position in society, and other historical events that guided the decisions of the leaders of this council. It includes a summary of events in North America, the primary sending country of Protestant missionaries to the Philippines, which explains the schism that formed along the fundamentalist and modernist/liberal lines. It also studies the emergence of evangelicalism from among the member churches within the fundamentalist movement in the 1940s. This paper explores the early beginnings of the Protestant movement within the Philippines, tracing its development through the different missionary groups that came and formed the NCCP. Finally, it examines the arrival and the establishment of evangelical churches and missionary agencies in the post-World War II period and the resulting formation of the PCEC and the reasons for the changes instituted by Dr Vencer in the late 1970s which redirected and refocused the efforts and emphasis of the Council.

Limitations

This dissertation does not discuss each and every denomination that emerged from the schisms in North America and it only refers to a few representative churches that were directly involved in the growth and establishment of the Protestant church in the Philippines. It also does not discuss the condition and the growth of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines from the onset of the Protestant period (1899) to the present, and the other independent churches that were established in the Philippines (e.g. the *Iglesia ni Kristo*) that had no direct connection to the formation of the PCEC. Finally, it limits itself by simply summarizing the growth and establishment of the PCEC from 1970 to its current condition. The focus is primarily on its founding, internal struggles among its leaders, its early years and the shift in direction during the leadership of Dr Vencer.

Significance of the Problem

This study can provide a fresh understanding of the historical contexts that influenced and guided the early founders of the PCEC to form their

own council, which can account for the apparent factionalism among the Protestant churches in the Philippines. Employing Hiebert's categories helps provide an understanding of the actions and characteristics of these evangelicals that led them to unite, but at the same time reject union with the modernist/liberal and the fundamentalist groups. Further, it can enlighten and help explore the possibility of a future merger among these groups since this study provides the rationale for this dividedness, which can be reassessed in light of the current developments among the Filipino churches.

Methodology

This work is a descriptive narrative of key events that took place and became the historical context by which the PCEC was formed, using historical analysis and analytical interpretations of these events. The work is a qualitative study as available resources and persons were used to determine the facts presented. Thus, information from resources such as personal interviews, emails, websites, archives, formal documents, news reports, and other official literature from churches and organizations that are connected with both the PCEC and the NCCP were studied and consulted.

Although there is an abundance of written sources that account for the growth of the Roman Catholic Church and the Mainline Protestant churches connected with the NCCP in the Philippines, there has been a limited number of books that narrate the history of evangelicalism in the Philippines. Part of the challenge in this study was to locate the limited number of archives, records, and other historical documents that survived and were preserved.⁹ As for this apparent scarcity of material, there are several reasons for this: first, the evangelical movement in the Philippines is a relatively recent entity and few have taken the time to write their memoirs or chronicle the events that took place right after World War II; second, these churches and mission organizations were very active and were often so preoccupied with their efforts that they failed to record their efforts; and finally, most did

9. At the present, the research material gathered for this study came from personal collections and from old church files. Several yearbooks obtained from libraries and other sources also helped in giving details to key events such as names, locations, and other details. Unfortunately, majority of the original documents were either damaged or lost since there was no intentional effort to preserve them.

not consider their actions and words worthy of cataloguing as they did not reckon their actions to be extraordinary or remarkable.¹⁰

As a result, much of the crucial information and detailed accounting of their accomplishments were forgotten and remained undocumented.¹¹ Some of the details given in this study are based on the recollection of individuals which have been gathered to form a narrative as indicated in their corresponding footnotes. As a result, some of the narrative written in this work is a reconstruction of information and material gathered from available sources.¹²

Review of Related Literature

The following is a brief review of works that have been used in this study. These sources proved invaluable in providing the necessary framework to piece together the details to complete the historical “picture” of Protestantism in the Philippines.

The book entitled *Comity and Unity: Ardent Aspirations of Six Decades of Protestantism in the Philippines (1901–1961)* by Valentino Sitoy, Jr is a brief chronicle of key events that took place from the arrival of the first North American Protestant missionaries in 1899 to the formation of the NCCP in 1963. It followed the efforts of these western and Filipino leaders in seeing the fulfillment of their aspirations to form a unified and autonomous Filipino church. It provided abbreviated details of the varied attempts of several councils and churches to unite through organic union, cooperatives, or conciliar cooperation. Sitoy’s primary focus was to narrate the path taken

10. During the interviews and consultation with some of the sources, most of these individuals did not consider their efforts as remarkable but merely a continuing affirmation and commitment to what they considered as their basic beliefs and praxis that was seen within the first-century church.

11. There are many details and information that have been “lost” as these have been forgotten or those who could possibly answer the inquiry are no longer available. In an email that was sent to the author on 9 June 2010, Dr Faustino Ruivivar, one of the earliest members of PCEC, wrote that it was unfortunate that he could no longer “recall” those who were in the very first meeting and even its exact location (See Appendix L).

12. For more details, see chapter 4 on the Formation of PCEC and other information in the appendices. In addition, this work attempted to avoid gathering erroneous data. Several guidelines were observed: first, the information gathered must have been verified by at least another person or document; second, the details must be cross-checked with actual historical facts gathered from reliable sources; and third, efforts are made to reconcile discrepancies and conflicting details.

towards the formation of the NCCP; it does not provide adequate analysis of the effects of the modernist-fundamentalist controversy in North America on the Philippine Protestant churches. Thus, this work employed the details of Sitoy's book as "milestones" and added supplemental information on the arrival and emergence of fundamentalist/evangelical groups within the Protestant landscape of the Philippines.

The short chapter entitled "The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches" written by Averell Aragon found in *Chapters in Philippine Church History* gives an account of the emergence of the PCEC from the initial meeting of several leaders in 1964 to PCEC's recent accomplishments. It provides details of how these evangelical leaders struggled and triumphed in the formation of the council which was initially called the Philippine Council of Fundamentalist Churches (PCFC) and the internal struggle which changed this group to its present composition and name, PCEC. It also gives the list of accomplishments by the said group. Thus, this study employed several details provided by Aragon's work. However, Aragon's work limited itself to the efforts of the evangelicals and does not give a full account of the NCCP and the fundamentalists' role in the formation of the PCEC. Hence, this study provides some additional details to "complete" the narrative. While, Aragon's work mentions some of the changes that took place in the later years of the council (e.g. the PCEC's membership in the National Ecumenical Consultative Committee, the establishment of PHILRADS, etc.); it does not provide the rationale for these actions and the changes that took place as part of the council's evolution.

Conclusion

In 1963, a group of fundamentalist and evangelical leaders were prompted by the formation of the NCCP to establish their own parallel council which they believed would represent their beliefs and convictions. The conciliar union forged between the fundamentalists and the evangelicals is an amazing accomplishment as its leaders were able to work out their differences and work together. However, their divergent emphases and directions continued to pull the council apart so that this fragile union began to disintegrate and eventually break apart, leaving behind the evangelicals to redefine the council's purpose. It was under the leadership of Dr Vencer that the council

became a centered set union. The PCEC was a product of its history, tradition, and the needs of the time. It is clear that these factors influenced its leaders as they established, redefined, and developed the council to its current form and function.

CHAPTER 2

The Modernist/Liberal-Fundamentalist Controversy and the Fundamentalist/Evangelical Controversy in North America (1800–1960)

A survey of Philippine Protestantism reveals factions and autonomous congregations among these churches and organizations.¹ While there have been efforts to establish a unified organic Philippine church; differences in theology, traditions, praxis, and other issues have become major obstacles to that goal. As a result, conciliar unity became an alternative utilized by these churches to achieve harmony and cooperation where mergers proved to be difficult.²

In 1963, several mainline Protestant churches agreed to “lay aside” their differences to establish a cooperative council – the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP).³ While the possibility of finally see-

1. Among these churches and organizations, distinctions are made by names that they adopt to refer to themselves (e.g. protestants, evangelical, fundamental, etc.). This is a common characteristic that can be observed in other countries as well. Fuller states, “There are about 23,000 denominations in the World, each claiming to proclaim Christ as the only way,” (W. Harold Fuller, *Global Crossroads: Focusing the Strength of Local Churches* [Mandaluyong City, Philippines: OMF Literature, 1998], 16).

2. For a brief survey of the efforts of several mainline protestant churches in the Philippines to form a council, see Sitoy, *Comity and Unity*.

3. Its founding members were initially from seven Filipino churches; namely, the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (the Philippine Independent Church), Episcopal Church of the Philippines, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, United Methodist Church of the Philippines, Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, *Iglesia Evangelica Metodista En Las Islas Filipinas*, and the *Iglesia Unida Ekyumenikal*.

ing national cooperation and solidarity among these Protestant churches and organizations was within reach, several evangelical⁴ and fundamentalist leaders remained unwilling to join the NCCP and instead formed a parallel council – the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC).

To appreciate the *raison d'être* of the PCEC, it is important to understand the historical and theological roots of the modernist-fundamentalist controversy and the fundamentalist/evangelical controversy among the Protestant churches and organizations in the United States of America. Although these controversies took place in North America, they strongly influenced the Filipino churches as these attitudes and perspectives were “passed on” and “inherited” by their adherents in the Philippines. This chapter seeks to follow the key events in North America which brought about these Protestant controversies and divisions.

The “Awakenings” and Evangelicalism (1700s–1800s)

By the eighteenth century, revivalist movements were taking place in Germany,⁵ England, and the North American colonies. The spiritual move-

4. While the term “evangelical” could be applied to any branch within Christendom that places a strong emphasis on the preaching of the gospel or *euangelion*, the name *evangelische* (evangelical) was used to describe Luther’s church during the Protestant Reformation period (Frank S. Mead and Samuel S. Hill, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, new 9th ed., [Nashville: Abingdon, 1990], 254). However, the name has been adopted to refer to American evangelicalism which came out of the revivalist movement during the Great Awakening. Unlike the Puritans that were involved in English politics, the evangelicals were unencumbered by this concern as they saw that the proclamation of the gospel was their primary task. However, they were “not detached from politics, as the Pietists were” as their later involvement in societal issues reveal their passion for the transformation of society (Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, updated 2nd ed. [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995], 332). Today, the name has been commonly used to refer to a group of conservative churches in North America (and their progeny in the rest of the world) that banded together during the mid-twentieth century and that seeks to return to the values of the Great Awakenings.

5. For example, Lutheranism was experiencing its own form of revivalism, which is commonly referred to as Pietism or the Pietist movement in Germany during the seventeenth century. As Cairns describes the movement, it was “an internal evangelical corrective to the cold orthodoxy of the seventeenth-century Lutheran church . . . [it] emphasized an internal, subjective, and individual return to Bible study and prayer” (Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed., rev. and expanded [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 383). For further details on the movement, see Paul E. Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission: History through a Missiological Perspective* (Pasadena, CA:

ments which took place in North America and in England were commonly referred to as the Great Awakenings. Revivalist movements were taking place in the midst of the non-conformist churches (i.e. Baptist, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists)⁶ in the New World and among the Anglican churches in England; independent preachers like Jonathan Edwards held revival meetings in Massachusetts and the other colonies, which spread to England as John Wesley and George Whitefield were influenced by the revivals in the colonies.⁷ This sudden revitalization and renewal of faith greatly affected the church and society in the New World and England such that the phenomena were referred to as the “awakenings” or revivals.

Personal Repentance

Prior to these revivalist movements, there was an overall spiritual “lethargy” among the American colonies and England. For example, during the eighteenth century, “alcoholism was at an all-time high, capital punishment was used routinely for trivial crimes, slavery was practiced throughout the

William Carey International University Press, 2009), 177–186; Mark A. Noll, “Pietism,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed., Baker Reference Library, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 955–956. While Pietism would have its influence in North American Protestantism; for the sake of brevity, this study would not elaborate on its growth and influence.

6. Even from the beginning, Protestantism in North America was divided among the varied denominations which were brought by the migrants from the Old World. Some followed state religions such as Anglicanism while others subscribed to separatist groups such as the Puritans and the Quakers. Each church/denomination had its own doctrine, church life, and government (Mead and Hill, *Handbook of Denominations*, 254).

7. In fact, it was the First Great Awakenings in the American colonies that motivated and inspired John Wesley to take upon the task of preaching the gospel in England after reading Jonathan Edwards’ *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton* published in 1737. It was this essay and other reports of revivals in the American colonies (as early as 1725), which helped stir revivals in in England. One of those who personally experienced the revivalist movement in the colonies, George Whitefield, was “considered the greatest English-speaking preacher of his day” and was reported to have “preached out of doors to crowds as large as thirty thousand” (Pierson, *Dynamics of Christian Mission*, 214). He had crossed the Atlantic to make at least “seven visits between 1738 and 1769” where he experienced great success in seeing many turn from a life of immorality back to God (Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, 368). In 1739, Whitefield and Wesley began their revival movement in England, starting among the coal miners of Bristol. Thus, “the Great Awakening in New England had a direct influence upon the Wesleyan revival in the mother country” (Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, 336).

British Empire, [and] the churches were out of touch.”⁸ However, in the midst of this spiritual lethargy, the revivalist movement or the “awakenings” began to influence society, spurring spiritual growth and personal devotion among the populace.

Growth in Numbers

From having few attendees, these New England churches became swamped with new committed members as whole communities turned to God. All the churches experienced growth in the number of new congregations formed. This led to the need to recruit and train more pastors and spiritual leaders. Overall, there was an increase in the number of worshippers in the different churches. Cairns gives this example,

Between thirty and forty thousand people and 150 new churches were added to those in New England alone out of a population of three hundred thousand. Thousands more came into the churches in the southern and middle colonies. A higher moral tone was noticed in the homes, work, and amusements of the people.⁹

Itinerant Evangelists

Another feature of this period was the ministry of itinerant and lay preachers who went from town to town, colony to colony to preach the gospel with those who were willing to listen. While Wesley, Whitefield, and Edwards were ordained ministers, the laity became involved as there were those who simply took up the task of preaching the gospel and traveled on horseback, gathering people in churches, tents, and even in open fields. While there were some rejections, the majority of the responses to their efforts were positive. As the momentum grew, the number of preachers and their audiences grew; at times, they would gather in open fields when the local churches were either unable or unwilling to accommodate them.¹⁰ In fact, during the

8. “Patterns of Spiritual Renewal,” *Christian History and Biography* 23 (July 1989), from *Christian History: The Entire Collection of “Christian History and Biography” Magazine*, CD-ROM (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today International, n.d.).

9. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, 368.

10. For a brief list of evangelists that were involved in the First Great Awakening, see “Jonathan Edwards: A Gallery of Friends, Foes and Followers,” *Christian History and Biography*

First Great Awakening (1730–1740), the revivals were spreading so quickly among the different territories that it became somewhat ecumenical since it did not distinguish between one church over another.

Growth in Missions

As the burden to bring the gospel to the “lost” became a topic among these churches, individuals began volunteering to serve as missionaries to reach the West and the Native American Indian tribes.¹¹ In fact, a strategy was developed by these churches to reach the different Native American tribes through the American Indian converts who were trained in seminaries that enabled them to reach out to their fellow tribesmen. For example, Rev Eleazer Wheelock established the Moor’s School in 1754 with the specific task of recruiting and training Native Americans to become evangelists and ministers, and “the school was moved to Hanover, New Hampshire in 1769 and renamed Dartmouth College.”¹² This passion for evangelism and missions was common among those who were involved in these revivals.

By the Second Great Awakening (1795–1830), calls for foreign missions began as students responded to the call of bringing the gospel to the nations. In 1806, a group of college students held regular prayer meetings where they beseeched God for a revival among the colleges. During one stormy day, Samuel Mills and several students continued their prayer meeting inside a haystack which resulted in their commitment to serve God as missionaries to foreign nations. In time, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was formed in 1810 which started the cross-cultural missionary effort of America.¹³

Social Reformations

The effects of the awakening were not limited to spiritual or religious activities. As individuals and whole communities became spiritually renewed,

8 (October 1985) from, *Christian History: The Entire Collection*.

11. These spiritual movements spread from New England in the east and “also grew the later revivalism of the American frontier” (Millard J. Erickson, *The Evangelical Left: Encountering Postconservative Evangelical Theology* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997], 17).

12. “In the Wake of the Great Awakening,” *Christian History and Biography* 23 (July 1989) from, *Christian History: The Entire Collection*.

13. Pierson, *Dynamics of Christian Mission*, 215–216.

several calls and efforts were made to see their faith manifested in the reformation of their communities. Thus, North America saw major social developments as those who were “awakened” became active in helping address social issues and enacting social reforms, which coincided with America’s efforts to establish itself as a modern nation through the creation of key institutions.¹⁴ A few examples are listed below.

The Establishment of Educational Institutions

The surge to build educational institutions in North America coincided with the resulting effects of the revivalist movement.¹⁵ In fact, several universities (e.g. the University of Pennsylvania – 1740, the Brown University – 1764, Rutgers University – 1766, and Princeton Theological Seminary – 1812) were founded not only to provide better secular education to the American people but to also help fill the demand for local ministers and missionaries to lead the newly established churches in the country and help with its expansion.¹⁶ Since the majority of the academe were originally from the clergy, most of these universities and colleges were established by Christian faculty and administrators who held to the ideals and theology of the “Great Awakenings.”¹⁷ These institutions provided support in helping spread and further Christian values and education within the American society as they produced the theological educators and leaders of the evangelical movement, even providing some of the political leaders of the fledgling United States of America. For example, Princeton Theological Seminary (founded in 1812) was initially led by strong Christian leaders who helped produce

14. These spiritual renewal movements had a strong impact on American society resulting in succeeding movements such as “the temperance crusade where, church leaders . . . provided the initial impulse . . . nearly all the campaigns were pervaded by appeals to ‘Christian principles’” (Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* [New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1972], 640).

15. In fact, six out of the nine colonial colleges were founded during the Great Awakening (1730–1770). These are, College of New Jersey – 1746, King’s College – 1754, College of Philadelphia – 1755, College of Rhode Island – 1764, Queen’s College – 1766, and Dartmouth College – 1769 (“Spiritual Awakenings in North America: Did You Know?,” *Christian History and Biography* 23 [July 1989] from, *Christian History: The Entire Collection*).

16. Some of these universities and colleges were initially centers for Christian values and knowledge during this period. As Ahlstrom observes, “in view of the country’s dominant Protestant ethos, and the fact that the clergy was still the leading intellectual class, these universities were rarely secular in spirit” (Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 641).

17. Erickson, *Evangelical Left*, 17.