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# Asia Pacific: **PERSPECTIVES** *an electronic journal*

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Our task is to inform public opinion through a broad hospitality to divergent views and ideas that promote cross-cultural understanding, tolerance, and the dissemination of knowledge unreservedly. Papers adopting a comparative, interdisciplinary approach to issues of interrelatedness in the Pacific Rim region\* will be especially welcome. Graduate students, as well as established scholars, are encouraged to submit their work.

\* 'Pacific Rim region' as used here includes North America, Pacific Central and South America, Oceania, Australia, New Zealand, Southeast Asia, East Asia, South Asia (India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka), and the Russian Far East.

# Transnationalization of Faith: The Americanization of Christianity in the Philippines and the Filipinization of Christianity in the United States

by Joaquin L. Gonzalez III, Ph.D.

## Abstract

The historical coverage of bilateral relations between the Philippines and the United States has always been stacked in favor of the latter. For decades, scholars have written about America's impact on Philippine society, government, economics, and culture. However, the mass migration of Filipinos globally, and in particular to the United States, has turned the focus of attention to the growing influence and contributions of the former to American society. This article moves from a one-sided bilateral view of relations between the two states to a more two-way, transnational perspective. An interesting area that has emerged is religion, since Filipino immigrants not only bring with them their political ideals and economic quest but their deep faith. It argues that the Spanish and American Christianization of the Philippines also precipitated a Filipinization of American Christian churches, especially in California, which is the adopted home of close to a million Filipino immigrants.

## I. Introduction

More than a century of bilateral and transnational relations (from 1898 to 2002) between the Philippines and the United States has not only seriously affected both countries economically, militarily, environmentally, and politically.<sup>1</sup> Depending on which side of the Pacific Ocean you are looking from, cross-cultural and social exchanges between the two countries have also been quite evident throughout their long colonial and post-colonial relationships. Unlike other studies that have concentrated heavily on the broad socio-cultural outcomes of this transnational exchange (see Pido 1985; Vergara 1996; Posadas 1999; Bonus 2000; among others), this article seeks to re-visit the specific crossing of boundaries by American and Filipino socio-religious experiences. This approach moves away from the traditional emphasis on America's contributions to religious life in the Philippines, especially the Protestant churches, (see Anderson 1969; Miller 1982; Maggay 1989; Kwantes 1998; Apilado 1999; among others) to a focus on Filipino sociological influences to a broad range of church denominations in the United States (see Cordova 1983; San Buenaventura 1999). Interestingly, the latter as a transnational cultural phenomenon has gained greater relevance as waves of Filipino immigrants started flowing into the major gateway cities of the United States beginning in the early 1900s.

Although known largely for their economic contributions into their new homeland (See Rodriguez 1996; Menjivar et al. 1998; Gonzalez 1998), many Filipino and American sojourners have automatically brought with them their Hispanic, Anglo-Saxon, and indigenously-inspired religious belief systems and

practices. Through the Christian Church, a societal institution with which they are already comfortable, new Filipino immigrants and their American counterparts are able to deal effectively with acculturative stress, assimilate politically, and contribute social energy to the cultures they come in contact with and the communities in their newly-adopted homes. Hence, using acute transnational lenses, this paper examines the "second comings of Christianity": firstly, as manifested in the Americanization of Christianity in the Philippines starting with the gateway city of Manila, and secondly, as illustrated by the growing Filipinization of churches in the United States through the gateway city of San Francisco, California.

## II. Americanization of Christianity in Manila

The emergence of the United States as the new global hegemon at the end of the 19th century brought to the forefront international economics and security as key determinants of power relations between and among nation states. Many scholars have noted that the tenor of Philippine-American relations at the turn of the century was shaped by these formal geo-economic and geo-political forces (see Williams 1926; Fast and Richardson 1982; Schirmer and Shalom 1987; Baviera and Yu-Jose 1998). The quotes below from high-ranking Washington political and military officials reinforce the primacy of these over-riding themes in the early institutional exchange between the two countries.

In a stirring privilege speech to Congress, American Senator Albert Beveridge outlined the economic imperative for the United States in colonizing the Philippines in the following statement:

The Philippines are ours forever...and just beyond the Philippines are China's illimitable markets.... The Pacific is our Ocean. Where shall we turn for consumers of our surplus? Geography answers the question. China is our natural customer. The Philippines will give us a base at the door of all the East. No land in America surpasses in fertility the plains and valleys of Luzon: rice, coffee, sugar and coconuts, hems and tobacco. The wood of the Philippines can supply the furniture of the world for a century to come (Lyon and Wilson 1987, p. 62).<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, from a military standpoint, General Arthur MacArthur justified the strategic security importance of the Philippines in saying:

The Philippines are the finest group of islands in the world. Its strategic location is unexcelled by that of any other position in the globe. The China Sea, which separates it by something like 750 miles from the continent, is nothing more not less than a safety moat. It lies on the flank of what might be called a position of several thousand miles of coastline: it is in the center of that position. It is therefore relatively better placed than Japan, which is on a flank, and therefore remote from the other extremity; likewise India, on another flank. It affords a means of protecting American interests, which with the very least output of physical power has the effect of a commanding position in itself to retard hostile action (Quoted in Bello 1983, p. 3.).

Hence, scholarly critical analyses of the relations have tended to place a heavy emphasis on - the dysfunctional economic and political institutions created by the colonial and post-colonial linkages (Pomeroy 1970; Shalom 1981; Brands 1992; Golay 1998; Delmendo 1998). As the US-Philippine

bilateral relationship deepened, many researchers from both ends of the Pacific also began to examine the converging socio-cultural experiences between the two countries (see Shaw and Francia 2001). This was a significant shift from looking at bilateral ties founded on state institutions and business organizations to more informal transnational arrangements based on people, communities, non-governmental groups. The latter presents fertile ground for social research. This includes examining the transnational religious link that developed between colony and former colony—one that would actually usher in a “second coming of Christianity” into the Philippines.

Just like the economic and security imperatives for colonizing the Philippines, which were trumpeted by leaders from Washington, a religious “call” was announced from the highest political pulpit in the land. In 1899, American President William McKinley, a devout Methodist, proclaimed that there was a burning need for the “benevolent assimilation” of the Philippines islands. McKinley elaborated on this political revelation with the following remarks to a delegation of Methodist church leaders who called on him at the White House:

I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight, and I am not ashamed to tell you, gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed to Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night. And one late night it came to me this way—I don't know how it was, but it came... *that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellowmen for whom Christ also died.* (quoted in Shirmer and Shalom 1983, p 22) [emphasis mine].

To many of his astonished guests, it seemed that somebody had forgotten to brief the honorable US president that the country he was referring to was already very Christian after more than 300 years of evangelization by Spanish Catholic religious orders. Nonetheless, as his tirade continued it became apparent that what McKinley really meant was that his fellow Methodists should spread the word of an American brand of Christianity to what he perceived as wayward Filipino Christians. His visitors left the White House with McKinley's civilization-Christianization mantra still ringing in their ears—the church must go where America chooses to go!

### **A. Arrival of American Protestant Churches**

Like its European colonial predecessors, the United States needed to use the Christian Church to effectively and efficiently make the Filipinos embrace the patterns of behavior for an Anglo-Saxon civilization. Although at first hesitant to provide support to what seemed to them as the beginning of American imperialism, church leaders would eventually stand behind their beloved President's appeal. In the years to follow, many American Christian missionaries boarded the same ships that carried businessmen, civil servants, teachers, and military officers who were going to the Philippines for commercial, public administration, educational, and security concerns. Initially concentrating their religious activities in the gateway city of Manila, American Methodists, Congrega-

tionalists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Baptists, Adventists, Episcopalians, Mormons, Witnesses, and other Christian missionaries came to convince Filipinos to embrace American Protestant teachings. They also ministered to the thousands of American Protestants who had gone with them to the Philippines to work (See Anderson 1969; Kwantes 1998; Apilado 1999).

They were very effective since unlike their Spanish religious counterparts who discouraged the masses to learn Spanish and banned the reading of the Bible, American Protestant Christian missionaries immediately began teaching English and set up many mission schools, especially for the poor. They also encouraged the translation of the Bible into the various Philippine languages and dialects. American Protestants believed that there was a need to reform the Spanish-style practice of Christianity, which was not strongly Bible-based, and tainted with folk beliefs, idolatry, as well as the veneration of saints and the Virgin Mary.<sup>3</sup>

Historically, even before America's turn-of-the-century annexation of the Philippines, the first missionaries had already arrived as soldiers deployed to fight in the Spanish-American war of 1898. For instance, Methodist Chaplain George C. Stull of the First Montana Volunteers held the first Protestant service in the Philippines. At about the same time, two American YMCA workers, Charles A. Glunz and Frank A. Jackson, were already actively ministering to US soldiers in downtown Manila. Additionally, two artillery batteries arrived from Utah with Mormon missionaries William Call and George Seaman.<sup>4</sup> On two Sundays in March 1899, Bishop James M. Thoburn of the Methodist Episcopal Church ministered at a rented theater in Manila. In April 1899, the Reverend James Burton Rodgers established the Philippine Presbyterian Mission. This was the first permanent American Protestant mission in the country. Reverend Burton stayed for 40 years to help guide the work of the Presbyterians. Following the lead of the Presbyterians came the numerous American Bible Societies in the same year. Men and women working for the American Bible Societies put themselves to the task of translating and printing thousands of bibles into the local dialects.

America's insistence on its “manifest destiny” of colonizing the country led to the Philippine-American war, a struggle that would break out in 1899 and last until 1902 with the capture of Philippine General Emilio Aguinaldo. During the war, Filipinos were literally “baptized by fire.” Instead of water over their heads, many of their bodies were immersed in pools of their own blood. Numerous Philippine towns were burned to the ground. Persons who collaborated with the Filipino revolutionaries were tortured. Churches were not spared the destructive wrath of the American army. More than half a million Filipinos died in the conflict. These rites of war were performed by American troops both “in the name of God” and because they were perceived to be “part of the white man's burden” (Constantino 1989; Agoncillo 1990).<sup>5</sup> While all of these wanton acts were being done in areas outside of Manila, American clergy proceeded with their conversion work in the capital city as if nothing unusual were happening. Some members of the Christian clergy even

welcomed the conflict and viewed it as proof of divine favor of American expansion; that “The Lord Jesus Christ...is behind the bayonets.” (Miller 1982; Brechin 1999).

In January 1900, the Methodist church formally established their Philippine presence when the Reverend Thomas H. Martin of Helena, Montana started missionary work in Manila. By March of the same year, Nicolas Zamora, the first Filipino Methodist deacon was ordained with authority from the South Kansas Conference. Concentrating largely in Manila and its environs, the Methodists held regular meetings at Rosario, Pandacan, San Sebastian, and Trozo. Following the ordination of Reverend Zamora was the establishment of the first Methodist Church in Pandacan, Manila. On May 9, a second American Methodist missionary arrived.

The beginning of the 20th century also brought the American Northern Baptist Church to the country. Encouraged by the positive reports from the Foreign Missions of the first batch of American Protestant Churches, an annual influx of other Christian congregations arrived to claim a share of the evangelical bounty in the new colony. These included: the United Brethren in 1901, the Disciples of Christ in 1901, the Protestant Episcopalians in 1901, and the Congregationalists in 1902. Harassment from local Catholic clergy and their staunch supporters did not deter these missionary pioneers from their work.

After the Philippine-American War, the Seventh Day Adventist Church sent their first mission to the Philippines in 1905.<sup>6</sup> The following year Adventists J. L. McElhany and his wife arrived and worked among the American soldiers, businessmen, and teachers who were sent to Manila. Founded in 1870, the work of Jehovah’s Witnesses also began in the Philippines, when American Charles T. Russell, president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in New York, gave an intriguing talk entitled “Where Are the Dead?” at the Manila Grand Opera House on January 12, 1912. Russell’s evangelical talk was attended by close to 1000 persons including the General J. Franklin Bell, the commander in chief of the 20,000 American troops stationed in the Philippines at that time. To spread the gospel, organized missionary work followed in the years to come with Bible literature being provided by the headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. More than two decades after Russell’s pioneering visit a Philippine branch was formally established in Manila.

In October 1914, more than thirty years before the founding of the ecumenical World Council of Churches, Philippine-based Presbyterians, Methodists, and Disciples of Christ decided to form the Union Church of Manila. The union of these Protestant churches was formally established at a liturgical service officiated by Bishop Charles Henry Brent of the Episcopal Church, Reverend George W. Wright of the Presbyterian Church, and Reverend Edwin F. Lee of the Methodist Church. The Union Church of Manila congregation eventually grew to include 22 denominations representing Baptists, Congregationalists, Disciples of Christ, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Federated churches, United Brethren, Church of God, Latter Day Saints, Greek Orthodox, Hebrew, Dutch Reformed, Evangelical, Mennonite, Nazarene, and some Roman Catholics. Union Church has historically

been the premier place of worship for expatriate Americans and Europeans based in Manila. At this church, they are able to interact with persons from their hometowns, organize picnics and socials, and maintain a predominantly western atmosphere while based in the Philippines. They are also able to use the church to contribute to local social charities as well as the alleviation of poverty both domestically and internationally.

The early Filipino converts from Catholicism and other Christian faiths were very helpful in spreading the gospel. But many lay expatriate American citizens, non-missionaries, who were simply serving in official military and civilian functions, setting up businesses, teaching classes in Manila and other parts of the Philippines were also responsible for promoting Protestant Bible and gospel teachings. Canadian and European Protestant missions also supplemented the work of the Americans. In the decades to come, protestant missionaries would spread the word to all the regions of the country. They would not only build churches but also seminaries, schools, hospitals, publishing houses, shelters, and social services in Manila all of the major cities and towns, even reaching hinterland areas that the Spanish Catholic friars were not able to cover.

### **B. Americanization of the Hispanic Catholic Church Regime**

Many scholarly works have been written about the systematic conversion of the native Filipinos by Spanish Catholic religious orders, or friars. The Order of Saint Augustine sent the first Catholic priests to the Philippines. They came with the conquistador Legazpi expedition of 1564. The Augustinians were followed by: the Franciscans in 1577, the Jesuits in 1581, the Dominicans in 1587, and then the Recollects in 1606. In the second half of the 19th century, the first batch of Spanish religious groups was joined by: the Sons of Saint Vincent de Paul in 1862, the Sisters of Charity in 1862, the Capuchins in 1886, and the Benedictines in 1895. For more than three centuries, these religious orders facilitated the conversion of more than 85 of the population (or 6.5 million out of an estimated 8 million Filipinos) into Catholicism (See Anderson 1969; De La Rosa 1990; Kwantes 1998; Apilado 1999).

The American political administrators that arrived at the turn of the century had no choice but to get involved early on in the religious situation in the Philippines since the 1896 Philippine revolution released the anger and fury of the Filipinos not only against the Spain’s provincial government in the islands but also against the entrenched friar establishment (see Ileta 1989; Schumacher 1991). At the outbreak of hostilities, thousands of friars were able to flee to the safe confines of Manila. But some who were not lucky enough to reach the capital city were taken prisoners, while others were beaten or killed. Fearing for their lives and the sequestration of their vast properties, the friar leadership ensured that the terms of surrender between Admiral George Dewey and the Spanish authorities as well as the Treaty of Paris, which formally ceded the Philippines to the United States, included provisions that guaranteed American army protection for

their churches and “ecclesiastical lands.” The Vatican had no objection to this arrangement. American military governor, General Elwell Otis created added controversy when he allowed Spanish Archbishop Nozaleda, a hated friar, to replace the Filipino pastor at Paco Church in Manila. Made without their involvement, these policies and actions angered many Filipinos, especially the clergy, who began to suspect that their battle to gain control and influence over both church and state had not ended with the ousting of their Spanish conquistadors. Their new enemies were now the American religious authorities and the American government (see Anderson 1969; Giordano 1988).

The changeover to American rule in 1898 and the end of Philippine-American hostilities brought many American and other non-Spanish, European Catholic orders and congregations to the Philippines. These included: the Redemptorists (1906), the Benedictine Sisters (1906), the Congregations of San Jose (1906), the Fathers of the Divine Word (1907), and the Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart (1907). The Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans also made adjustments in their Philippine congregations by sending more Americans priests. Because of local Filipino resentment against the abuses and excesses of the Spanish friars, the American religious orders tried to create a new image of the Roman Catholic clergy. The American religious also tried very hard to show to the local populace that even though they were Catholic priests that they were different from the Spanish friar stereotypes that the Filipinos disliked. They also opened public schools to everyone to appease their apprehensions. Not surprisingly, the person who was put in charge of educational initiatives was a Catholic priest, Reverend Father William D. McKinnon, the Chaplain of the First California Volunteers. He was directed by Governor General Otis to begin the organization and construction of primary and secondary institutions in Manila. Father McKinnon’s rapport with the Catholic laity, the predominantly Catholic population, and knowledge of Spanish contributed heavily to his initial successes at setting up an American educational system in the capital city. In the early 1920s, American Jesuits from the Maryland-New York Province were sent to replace Spanish Jesuits. They introduced new missions in education, research, and social activism (Giordano 1988: 17).

Some changes were also implemented in the Catholic Church hierarchy in the Philippines. Spanish priests were not expelled unlike the Spanish military personnel and government officials. However, given the resentment against them by the Filipinos, many had decided to go back to Spain or get reassigned. Immediately after the take-over, high-ranking positions held by the Spanish clergy were assumed by American priests, many of who were of Irish-American descent. In 1903, Missouri native Reverend Father Jeremiah James Hart became the first American archbishop of Manila. Many parishes with Spanish pastors were redistributed to diocesan priests from Ireland, Germany, Belgium, and France. Religious societies of monks, brothers, and sisters from America and Europe also established missions, monasteries, convents, and schools all over the country. By the end of the year, the number of Spanish friars in the Philippines was

reduced from a peak of more than 1,100 in 1896 to a mere 246 five years after American takeover. In 1904, the last Spanish bishop had left the Philippines and almost all of the high positions in the Catholic Church were occupied by American bishops (Anderson 1969: 217).

These new Christian leaders tried to create an American-style church regime, and began by promoting the separation of church and state and the freedom to believe in any religion. These attempts to promote American liberal democracy in the religious realm of Filipino society were actively supported by both American Catholic and Protestant church leaders. Many Filipinos also warmly received this change after experiencing centuries of Spanish Catholic church intervention in the running of government and even their personal lives.

Dogmatically, the American Roman Catholic orders agreed with some of the observations of American Protestant Christians that there was a need to reform the Spanish-style practice of Christianity, which was not strongly Bible-based and tainted with idolatry and veneration of saints and the Virgin Mary. Apparently, both American Catholic and Protestant missionaries were after the creation of a more Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic culture in the practice of religion. English became the language of education, government, military, business, and of course, the church.

### C. Founding of Filipino Independent Congregations

If the Spaniards used the Catholic Church to effectively conquer the hearts of the Filipinos, the Americans utilized the Protestant Church to “uplift their kindred spirits.” Many Filipino nationalists noticed this and concluded that the American *modus operandi* for colonizing the country was no different from Spain’s. As proof, just as in the government, very few Filipino religious leaders were granted positions of influence and leadership in the early American period Protestant and Catholic Church hierarchies. Besides, Americans controlled the military and American firms received monopolies, subsidies, and preferential treatment. Tired of the continuation of this unfair colonial socio-economic system, many Filipino leaders decided to lobby and fight for their political, social, economic rights and freedom while Filipino spiritual leaders were emboldened to organize their own indigenous and independent Christian Churches (see Agoncillo 1990).

The most serious breakaway group from the Catholic Church was the Philippine Independent Church (popularly known as the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* or the Aglipayan Church). Although founded largely as a response to the total dominance of Spanish friars in the Catholic Church hierarchy, the PIC did not anticipate that any serious organizational changes would happen with the arrival of American Catholic clergy. Hence, one month after US President Theodore Roosevelt declared the end of the Philippine-American war in July 1902, in the meeting of the General Council of the *Union Obrera Democratica* (UOD), its head, Isabelo de los Reyes, Sr., announced the establishment of the Philippine Independent Church with Reverend Gregorio Aglipay as Obispo Maximo (Supreme Bishop). De Los Reyes and Aglipay convinced many Filipinos priests to join their cause-oriented religious

sect and sequestered Roman Catholic Churches "in the name of Filipinos." A year after the PIC's founding, it was believed to have amassed one and a half million members, which was roughly one fourth or 25 percent of the population of the Philippines then. Rejected by the Vatican, the PIC also did not see fit to align with the Protestant churches despite numerous talks with Methodist, Presbyterian, and American Bible Society leaders and missionaries. The American-controlled Catholic Church in the Philippines took more than four decades to appoint Monsignor Gabriel Reyes, a Filipino, as the Roman Catholic archbishop of Cebu in 1934. But by then the damage had already been done. Many Filipinos had turned away from the Catholic and Protestant Churches in the Philippines, and by 1939, the PIC had grown to a membership of more than one million members.<sup>7</sup>

An indigenous Filipino Christian Church that emerged during the American occupation was the Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC). The church was begun by Brother Felix Y. Manalo who was born and baptized a Catholic. As a teenager, Manalo left the Catholic Church and was fascinated by the Bible interpretations preached by the various American Protestant Christian denominations who arrived in the Philippines at the turn of the century. In order to learn more about their view of the gospel, Manalo joined the Methodist Episcopal Church and studied at the Presbyterian Ellinwood Bible Training School in Malate, Manila. He later ventured to the American-inspired Christian Mission and the Seventh Day Adventist Church. In exposing himself to the various Bible teachings Manalo became dissatisfied with what he saw as doctrinal contradictions and inconsistencies in the teachings and interpretations of these American-inspired Protestant faiths. In 1913, after praying, fasting, meditating, and seeking the guidance of God, he is said to have received divine instruction to begin the work of forming a new and independent Church of Christ. Based on a Filipino perspective of God's word, Manalo developed an integrated set of teachings and church organization taking off from the various American Christian faiths he had attended. In 1919, he also went to the United States to study and reflect on his new church. Manalo is seen by INC members as God's chosen messenger, having received spiritual enlightenment in order to reestablish the Church of Christ beginning in "the East" (Tuggy 1978; Reed 1990).

Other attempts by Filipino Protestant church leaders to "challenge" the administrative powers of their American counterparts contributed to the creation of: the United Evangelical Church in 1929, the Philippine Methodist Church in 1933, and the Evangelical Church in 1943. These loose alliances of Filipino-led independent Protestant Churches were the precursors of an umbrella organization called the United Church of Christ of the Philippines in 1948—two years after the granting of independence by the United States.

Other Filipino indigenous Christian sects and Masonic organizations that started during the revolution against Spain but continued to blossom during the American occupation were: Ruben Ecleo and his Benevolent Missionaries Association, Apolinario de la Cruz and his Cofradia de San Jose, Felipe Salvador and his Santa Iglesia Guardia de Honor de Maria, and the Rizalistas (including the Samahang Rizal,

Iglesiang Pilipinas, Watawat ng Lahi, Iglesia Sagrada Filipina ng Sinco Vulcanes) (see Mercado 1982). Muslims and other tribal groups in Mindanao and other ethnic minorities in Northern Luzon also resisted both Spanish and American evangelization in order to continue their own indigenous faiths (see Agoncillo 1990)

### **III. Filipinization of San Francisco's Churches**

Unknown to President McKinley, a parallel "second coming of Christianity" was already underway even before the Philippines became a US colony in 1898. Unlike the Americans who (needed to build battleships and start a bloody war) used violence to civilize and Christianize the inhabitants of the Philippine islands, Filipinos reached the shores of the United States and began influencing American religion through peaceful means. They accomplished this by crossing the Pacific Ocean as crew members of the famous Spanish commercial galleons that went back and forth from Manila to the North American continent bringing precious commodities to Spanish settlements in what are now California and Mexico, all the way to Louisiana. Because of the harsh treatment and low pay they received in service of the Spanish crown, many of the Filipino seamen jumped ship and settled in pueblos of Acapulco and the bayous of Louisiana. Mostly Catholics, these men blended with Mexican and American Christian church congregations wherever they went. In the Louisiana marshes, they set up Filipino settlements on stilts and introduced shrimp processing techniques. They also brought with them to these new lands their religious faith, devotions, and prayers as part of their Filipino heritage.

While many Americans were busy administering, developing, and Christianizing their one and only prized colony in the Far East, the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s saw successive waves of Filipinos leave the Philippines for the United States. While most of them were hired to work in the farm areas as agricultural workers many also stayed in the cities and worked as domestic helpers, as well as hotel and restaurant cooks, dishwashers, bellhops, elevator boys, and busboys in Hawaii, California, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and New York. There were also a large group of "pensionados" or US government scholars who came to study at American universities. After World War II, many Filipinos who served in the US military also decided to try out greener pastures away from their native land. Immigration increased further with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965, which encouraged a new wave of highly skilled professionals, i.e. doctors, nurses, engineers, and accountants to move to the U.S. Their families were allowed to join them soon afterwards (See Cordova 1983; Takaki 1987; Bonus 2000).

Through several decades, San Francisco was the popular gateway city for most of these Filipino immigrants. They brought with them rich and distinctive cultures that eventually blended with the diverse cultural mix that characterized the Bay Area. Filipino food, dances, music, art, languages, and literature were slowly integrated into the local scenery. But, probably, the biggest and most obvious cultural contributions of generations of Filipino immigrants to San Francisco have been the active roles they play in the city's churches—roles

that range from pastors to brethren. Given the mass exodus from their motherland, maybe the “second coming of Christianity” was really destined to be from the East to the West, or from the Philippines to the United States.

After all, before 1965 many San Francisco Catholic and Protestant churches had been experiencing serious declines in active memberships. Low attendance rates led to low financial contributions. With rising maintenance bills, many of these churches had to rent out space to other interested religious congregations. Some were simply forced to close and sell their property. Heavy commercialization in the downtown neighborhoods reduced residential homes in the areas around churches. Moreover, earthquakes and fires also contributed to closures and migrations away from cities and into suburban areas. Interestingly, many religious centers affected by these natural and man-made tragedies have been “saved” by new immigrants groups, including, not surprisingly, Filipino Christians. Nowhere is the Filipino Christianization in the United States felt more than in the California—home to close to a million Filipino immigrants of Catholic and Protestant backgrounds.

### **A. Re-constructing San Francisco’s Catholic Institutions**

Coming from the only predominantly Catholic country in Asia, most new Filipino immigrants are likely to have been socialized in the Roman Catholic faith and traditions. Hence, the growing number of Filipino immigrants to the United States beginning in the 1910s also increased church attendance rates especially among Catholic Churches in the major gateway cities of San Francisco, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Seattle, New York, and Chicago. Filipino immigrants have become instruments of evangelization (Reed 1990; Almario 1993: 119-125). According to US official records, between 1920-1929, 31,092 Filipinos entered California and more than 80 percent of them went through the port of San Francisco (California Department of Industrial Relations 1930). The biggest beneficiaries of the Filipino inflow were San Francisco Catholic Churches in the area of town then known as “Happy Valley”. Some of these historic churches were: Saint Patrick (founded in 1851), Saint Joseph (founded in 1861), and Saint Rose (founded in 1878). Another favorite among Manilatown and Chinatown Filipino residents was Old Saint Mary’s Cathedral (founded in 1854).

During this period, close to 90 percent of Filipino immigrants were single males, between the 18 to 34 years old. Family building was difficult since there were few women from the Philippines. The 1930 census estimated that there were only 1,640 women of Filipino descent in the whole United State—309 single, 1,258 married, 53 widowed, and 16 divorced. To complicate matters, Filipino men were “discouraged” from marrying Caucasian women by anti-miscegenation laws. Instead many Filipino men married women who were Mexican, African American, or members of other non-white ethnic groups. Anti-miscegenation laws did not apply to Caucasian men who wanted to marry Filipino women. One of the first recorded baptisms in San Francisco was held on November 8, 1914, when Isaac Braan originally from Raleigh,

North Carolina and his Filipina wife, Gregoria Pena brought their infant daughter, Erminda Celeste, to Saint Patrick’s church. The Braans would later bring to the same church their two other children, born in 1916 and 1917, to receive the same religious sacrament. Church records also indicate that a few other Filipino children’s baptisms also followed during the years to come.<sup>8</sup>

To combat the restlessness of the largely male Filipino immigrant group and encourage them to channel their socio-emotional energies towards morally appropriate activities, the leaders of the Diocese of Seattle and San Francisco sponsored the creation of Catholic Filipino Clubs (Burns 2001). In 1922, the Catholic Filipino Clubs in Seattle and San Francisco were born. Around 600 workers from Seattle registered and availed of the services of their Club, while in San Francisco, Archbishop Edward J. Hanna and the Community Chest became active supporters of the popular Catholic Filipino Club. The Club became the hub of social activities for the estimated 5,000 Filipino residents of the city. Aside from the Catholic Filipino Club, there were two other Filipino Catholic organizations—the Catholic Filipino Glee Club and Catholic Filipino Tennis Club. Other Filipino groups availed of club space, posted activities, and recruited members from those who went there.<sup>9</sup>

During the mid-1920s, the Caballeros de Dimas Alang, a Masonic-style club cum religious brotherhood, was also established in San Francisco by Pedro Loreto. Four years later, another fraternity called the Legionarios del Trabajo was formed in Stockton and San Francisco. Other famous fraternal groupings were the Gran Oriente Filipino and the Knights of Rizal. Many Filipino Catholics joined these quasi-Masonic Filipino organizations since they felt discriminated against in the “Caucasian-dominated” Catholic churches. Besides, some of the new immigrants had brought with them to America their memories of negative experiences and corresponding revolutionary thoughts about the Catholic Church.

As alluded to earlier, the end of World War II and the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act further increased immigration to the United States and thus raised attendance at Catholic churches in the vast Archdiocese of San Francisco (which encompasses the counties of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Marin). By the 1960 census, there were 12,327 Filipinos in the city of San Francisco alone. This figure has more than tripled by the 1990 census. According to official 2000 estimates, there are more than 90,000 registered Catholic parishioners in the Archdiocese out of an estimated population of more than 150,000 Filipinos. Statistically, one out of every four Catholics in the area is of Filipino descent.<sup>10</sup>

One example of a church that has been influenced by this growth in Filipino immigration is Saint Patrick’s Catholic Church, once a favorite place of worship for Irish-Americans. Its dynamic Filipino pastor, Monsignor Fred Bitanga, has proudly proclaimed: “that Filipino parishioners practically saved the historic church from serious demise.” Saint Patrick’s is presently staffed by Filipino priests, Filipino nuns, Filipino deacons, and Filipino lay workers. Daily noon services are popular among Filipino workers in the bustling downtown area while Sunday services draw loyal parishio

ners not just from the city but from all over the Bay Area.

New Filipino immigrants to San Francisco usually attend services at Saint Patrick's at first and then move on to other Catholic Churches once they feel comfortable with American life and can start affording homes outside the city. Some continue to go to Saint Patrick's even after moving out of the area especially to attend the two o'clock Tagalog Mass every first Sunday of the month. The noon daily mass is also a favorite among Filipino immigrants who live outside the city but work in San Francisco.

The interior decor of Saint Patrick's is typical of many Irish churches in the U.S., with its stained glass windows of Saint Matthew Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John, combination of Gothic revival and Celtic motifs, and panels of Irish green Botticino marble. However, it has been slightly Filipinized with statues and images of saints and the Virgin Mary. Some of them are indigenous Filipino folk figures like the Santo Nino (or Christ Child) and San Lorenzo Ruiz (the first Filipino saint). Visiting statues of the Virgin Mary from the Philippines are also accorded a special place in the church. For instance, the Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary from Manila was a recent 'visitor.' Filipino-American parishioners, like in the Philippines, lined up to touch, kiss, and wipe their handkerchief on the Virgin Mary.

Also, the Filipino presence led either to the formation of new parish organizations or to the revitalization of existing ones. For example, the Saint Patrick's chapter of the Holy Name Society, an international Catholic confraternity, has its roots in the chapter established at the parish of Guadalupe in Makati, a city in Metropolitan Manila. Its president and several of its members, after their immigration to San Francisco, then established the organization at Saint Patrick's and now form an integral part of the parish's spiritual life.

Many other Catholic churches have filled up with devoted Filipino parishioners, especially south of San Francisco and across the bay in the neighboring Diocese of Oakland. Both Saint Andrew's Church and the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Daly City, and Saint Augustine Church in South San Francisco all have Filipino priests preaching to memberships that are more than 80 percent Filipino. Tagalog masses are held at Saint Patrick's Church and Saint Boniface Church in San Francisco as well as Holy Angels Church in Colma. Filipino-American choirs, devotions to the Santo Nino, San Lorenzo Ruiz, and Mother Mary are very common. Seven parishes celebrate the Simbang Gabi while Flores de Mayo and the Easter Salubong are slowly being integrated into regular church activities. Popular Filipino Catholic groups such as the El Shaddai, Jesus is Lord Movement, Bukod Loob sa Dios, Couples for Christ, and Divine Mercy, have also gone forth and multiplied rapidly among Filipino brothers and sisters. The El Shaddai group, headed by the charismatic Brother Mike Velarde, which claims millions of active members in the Philippines, meets regularly at Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Assumption and other Catholic churches in the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

Reverend Fathers Jose Bantigue (Mission Dolores Basilica), Antonio Rey (Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church), Max Villanueva (Holy Angels Church), and Fred Al Bitanga

(Saint Joseph and Saint Patrick Churches) are some of the first Filipino Catholic priests in the Archdiocese. Father Bantigue began pastoral work in San Francisco as early the 1950s. Since then, 14 Philippine-based religious congregations of men including diocesan priests have sent members to serve in San Francisco parishes and dioceses all over the US. The demand for Filipino priests continues to increase as fewer and fewer Americans enter priesthood and more Filipinos immigrate to the United States. American theological seminaries have also started recruiting students from the Philippines to replenish the diminishing ministerial pool. Currently, Filipinos already make up a significant part of the leadership of San Francisco Bay Area Catholic churches. Officially, there are now 39 priests, 12 full-time deacons, 5 sisters, and 30 lay workers of Filipino descent in the 52 parishes of San Francisco.<sup>11</sup> The Council of Priests in the Archdiocese is chaired by Reverend Father Eugene D. Tungol—a Filipino pastor.<sup>12</sup>

Surprisingly, some of the earliest Filipino Catholic missionary congregations to work in San Francisco and other parts of the United States were religious organizations of Filipino women. In December 1955, the Benedictine Sisters of Ilocos Sur came to help Filipino families in the Salinas area. The Sisters opened a religious class for pre-schoolers. They were also instrumental in the creation of the Legion of Mary and Our Lady of Antipolo Society, popular devotions to the Virgin Mary practiced in the Philippines. In 1959, the Manila-based Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) started their overseas mission in the Sacramento area, followed by Honolulu in 1972 and then San Francisco in 1982. Today they assist with the spiritual needs of parishioners in Saint Patrick's Church and Our Lady of Mercy Church. Starting with an overseas mission in Hawaii in 1964, the Dominican Sisters of the Most Holy Rosary from Molo, Iloilo Province in the Philippines then moved to the mainland, starting with a San Francisco presence in 1982. The Dominican Sisters have made an impact by helping run Catholic schools and by assisting in devotions and services at Saint Charles Borromeo Church and Holy Angels Church. By the late 1990s, 32 Philippine-based congregations had religious sisters working in the United States.<sup>13</sup>

Aside from Catholic churches, Catholic clubs, and Catholic religious organizations of men and women, another big beneficiary of the Filipino inflow to San Francisco were the Archdiocese's many Catholic schools. As early as September 1963, 38 of the 45 elementary schools in the city reported a total of 680 Filipino children in attendance. The schools with the largest numbers were: Sacred Heart Elementary (78), Saint Paul (42), Star of the Sea (41), Saint Peter (38), and Saint Monica (28).<sup>14</sup> By the 1980s and the 1990s, San Francisco's elementary and high schools experienced a surge in Filipino enrollment growths as immigrants from the 1960s and 1970s began sending their children to religious schools. New arrivals and their families also contributed to the increase. By 2000, Corpus Christi Elementary School had become more than 75 percent Filipino in terms of its student body. Aside from Corpus Christi, elementary schools at the Church of the Epiphany, Church of the Visitacion, Saint Elizabeth, Saint Emydius, Saint Finn Barr, Saint John the Evangelist, Saint



Kevin, Holy Angels, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help have student populations that are close to 50 percent Filipino. Some of the Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese currently have between 20-25 percent Filipino student populations, including Sacred Heart Cathedral Prep. Furthermore, Catholic tertiary institutions like the University of San Francisco have also experienced rapid growths in terms of Filipino student enrollment.<sup>15</sup>

### **B. Protestantism Returns to America**

McKinley's "prophesy of a second coming of Christianity" to the Philippines brought many American Protestant groups to "build churches and save the Filipinos." Little did the Americans know that the same Filipinos they would "save and baptize" would bring back Protestantism to America, precipitating another "second coming of Christianity" —this time to the United States. Although smaller in size and distribution compared to their Filipino Catholic counterparts their presence and growth it still worth examining. Filipino Protestant agricultural workers to the United States began attending services and Bible studies with various American Christian Protestant churches in Hawaii and California. As their numbers grew, they also began to establish their own Filipino-American Christian Protestant congregations. Just as in the Philippines, many Filipino-American Catholics have also converted and joined Protestant congregations.

Following the pioneering efforts of their American Methodist counterparts, when they blazed the trail in Manila as a response to President McKinley's 1899 call, Filipino Methodists immigrants started arriving in San Francisco early in the century. In 1920, with their growing numbers, they established the Filipino Wesley Methodist Church—only two decades after the beginning of the American occupation and "Christianization" of their homeland. These Filipino Protestant pilgrims gathered together regularly for fellowship and a sense of belonging to a new and strange land. Later in the year, Dr. J. Stanley was appointed pastor. The congregation went on to change its name to the Filipino Fellowship Church. By the 1930s, around 100 Filipino Protestant Christians in San Francisco were registered with the Filipino Christian Fellowship and the YMCA's Filipino Christian Endeavor.

Outside of San Francisco, Presbyterian Pastor Pedro F. Royola began evangelical work among Salinas-based Filipino farm workers in 1924. He formed the Filipino Community Church (which later became Saint Philip's Church). Trained in Manila, Reverend Royola was greatly influenced by none other than American Presbyterian Dr. James B. Rodgers. He received his formal education from the American-established Ellinwood Malate Church, the Silliman Institute, and the Union Theological Seminary. Prior to moving to California he was successfully ministering to Filipino plantation workers in Hawaii (Solis 2000).

In the Pacific islands between the Philippines and California, Hilario Camino Moncado, one of the early Filipino labor migrants working hard at the sugar plantations of Hawaii, founded the Filipino Federation of America in 1925. The charismatic Moncado eventually transformed this labor

organization of US-based Filipino workers into the Equifrilibricum World Religion or popularly known as the Moncadistas. The Filipino labor leader claimed to be the reincarnated Jesus Christ. Moncado was looked up to by his fellow workers and religious followers as the person who would deliver them from the economic exploitation, unfair treatment, and racial discrimination that they were experiencing in American society. Unlike other social organizations during those times, which were notorious for their gambling, dancing, and drinking, Moncado's group claimed to promote a clean and upright lifestyle. Equifrilibricum also gained a foothold among the Filipino workers in San Francisco (Mercado 1982).

Joining forces with tired, oppressed Mexican and other Asian migrants workers, Filipinos started many labor mobilization activities. In 1928, protesting Filipino workers were driven out of the agricultural fields of Yakima Valley, Washington and Hood River and Banks, Oregon. This was not the first time they had instigated strikes. Fighting for the rights of thousands of migrant workers, Filipinos began to earn the reputation of being "radicals." However, during that same year, down the long Pacific coast, another group of Filipino agricultural laborers working in Southern California were also determined to organize. But this time it was for a less confrontational objective—the establishment of the first Filipino American Christian Fellowship Church of Los Angeles. Peaceful religious worship services did not placate the restless Filipino farm workers especially in rural California. They organized socials and invited white women, to the chagrin of many white rural men. Filipino migrant workers were also accused of stealing low paying job from white Americas. Tensions ran high and in January 1930, violent anti-Filipino riots erupted at Watsonville in Monterey County. Six years later, larger American labor unions took notice of their plight.

Because of successive waves of immigration starting from the 1920s, Filipino Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Adventists, Episcopalians, Mormons, and Witnesses have successfully established flourishing congregations all over the San Francisco Bay Area. Many of these Filipino religious congregations have taken over houses of prayer and worship that used to be all European-American (Caucasian). Peter Burnett, California's first governor, would probably never have expected that Saint James Presbyterian Church in Visitacion Valley, where his family attended services and taught Sunday school, would one day be transformed into a church pastored and participated in by brown skinned Filipinos from across the Pacific Ocean. Similar changes have taken place at Saint Francis and Grace United Methodist Church in the Sunset District, which has become predominantly Filipino.

Members of the all-Filipino Faith Bible Church of San Francisco purchased the former Salvation Army Church on Broad Street, while the San Francisco Filipino-American Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Pacifica and Holy Cross and Our Lady of Peace Episcopal Church in Sunnyvale both converted former Lutheran Churches. In 1968, the largest non-Catholic denomination in the Philippines, the Iglesia ni

Cristo, began its overseas mission when it formally established locales in Honolulu and San Francisco. In less than 40 years, it has expanded to 24 American states and 70 countries in the world. Beginning with two Bay Area congregations in the early 1970s, the Filipino-American Jehovah's Witnesses have grown to 12 congregations. Members have to know Tagalog to attend their Filipino services. Meanwhile, the Filipino ward of the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints in Daly City, which also began in the 1970s, has grown to more than 350 members.

From the date of their establishment, it took the American Protestant Churches more than a hundred years to cross the Pacific Ocean and establish themselves in the Philippines. Comparatively, the Iglesia Ni Cristo (INC) only needed approximately half this time to set-up formal missions in the United States and then proclaim the Bible to the rest of the world. As early as 1967, Iglesia ni Cristo migrants to Hawaii began gathering other brethren in Oahu, Hawaii. In 1968, the Iglesia ni Cristo established its first overseas congregation in Honolulu, Hawaii. After a month, Brother Erano Manalo proceeded to San Francisco, California and officially proclaimed the establishment of an INC congregation in the continental United States (Reed 1990). Some of the largest INC congregations in the United States are found in the Bay Area. Offering both Tagalog and English services, the INC has more than 1,500 members in the San Francisco and Daly City locales alone.

The first Filipino Jehovah's Witness congregations were established in Stockton (1974) and Salinas (1975). Most of the members were early Filipino farm workers and their families. In the 1980s and 1990s, the number of Filipino Witnesses increased rapidly. Hence, there are now 12 Filipino-American congregations in the San Francisco Bay area, 12 in the Los Angeles area, and 4 in the Washington-Oregon area. Each of these Filipino-American congregations has around 100 active members. All 28 Filipino-American congregations comprise a closely-knit group that meets regularly throughout the year. The San Francisco area congregations are found in Alameda, Daly City, El Cerritos, Hayward, Milpitas, Salinas, San Francisco, San Jose, Stockton, Sunnyvale, Vallejo, and West Sacramento.<sup>16</sup>

Organized in 1967, the San Francisco Filipino-American Seventh-Day Adventist Church is part of the sisterhood of churches of the Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It is committed to proclaiming the Gospel to its community, training, and equipping its members for Christian service and preparing believers for the second coming of Jesus. While the Church endeavors to minister to people of different cultures, it exists primarily to reach individuals of Filipino backgrounds, offering two Tagalog Bible classes, one Kapampangan Bible class, and one English Bible class every Saturday.<sup>17</sup>

The first service of the Faith Bible Church of San Francisco (FBC) was in April 1971 at the 21st Avenue Baptist Church. The Filipino group stayed there until 1973 when the church was formally organized in the home of Pastor Leo Calica. In 1975, the group moved to Saint James Presbyterian Church with Pastor Calica as the full-time pastor. In both

places, they were sharing the facilities with other congregations. But two years later, the FBC group found a permanent home when they purchased the Salvation Army chapel on Broad Street. In 1989, a Tagalog service was started in FBC San Francisco. With Pastor Calica's able leadership, FBC grew in membership and in activities. It is now proudly supporting missionaries all over the world. Other Faith Bible Churches have sprung from this "mother" congregation and taken root in Oakland, Vallejo, and Pittsburg. Following his footsteps, Pastor Calica's son is now the Pastor of Faith Bible Church in Vallejo, a city north of San Francisco.<sup>18</sup>

Reverend Arturo Capuli is the third Filipino pastor of the Saint Francis and Grace United Methodist Church (San Francisco). His two predecessors, Reverend Leonard Autajay and Reverend Juan Ancheta, were originally trained as Baptist Ministers. All three started their training in the Philippines and then did advanced theological studies in the United States. The present congregation was a merger between the Filipino Wesley Methodist Church, and Parkside Methodist Church, a predominantly Caucasian congregation, whose membership was rapidly declining. Over the years, the Caucasian congregation diminished rapidly and it became an almost all-Filipino group. Saint Francis and Grace United Methodist Church is one of three UMC churches that has an active Filipino ministry. The other two UMC churches are in Geneva Avenue, San Francisco and Southgate, Daly City. There are a total of 22 UMC churches in the San Francisco Bay Area. All of them have large Filipino memberships.<sup>19</sup>

### **C. Replenishing San Francisco Socio-cultural Energy**

Through their churches, Filipino immigrants have contributed tremendously to the building of San Francisco civil society and its socio-cultural capital. Aside from the economic, financial, and technical contributions to America, Filipinos bring with them their social relations, kinship ties, networks, emotional commitment, traditions, beliefs, customs, practices that promote and produce community self-help, the spirit of trust, and self-reliant attitudes and behavior. These are manifested as *bayanihan* (community self-help attitude), *bisita* (kin-visits), *panata* (vow), *pagkamagalang* (respectfulness), *bahala na* (intense self determination), *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude), *pakikisama* (getting along with others), among many other Filipino traits, practices, and behaviors.

To foster a strong sense of community and pride, many San Francisco churches have made accommodations to popular Philippine languages and dialects. In both Catholic churches and many other Filipino Christian religious congregations, liturgies, homilies, novenas, Bible studies, funerals, marriages, confessions, baptisms, counseling, and prayers sessions are already being conducted in Tagalog, Ilocano, Cebuano, Kapampangan, Bicolano, Ilonggo, and other Philippine languages and dialects. Some Tagalog hymns have even found their way into the English services. Reverend Jeremiah Resus commented on the blending of spirituality and the immigrant experience at Saint James Presbyterian Church:

"It is a place to learn and experience God, and for spiritual salvation. It is a place that changes perceptions of reality, and supplies perspective to face challenges in life. St. James tries to provide spiritual upliftment and a sense of the holy for each individual. As a community, St. James provides a sense of identity for immigrants... Membership in the church allows the process of assimilation, movement into American life, a sense of belonging. It also provides a springboard to a better life through marriage and jobs that the church offers to its members."

Aside from religious rituals, Filipino immigrants use their churches as much-needed places for community gatherings, group meetings, dances, fiestas, graduations, parades, processions, bingo nights, birthday parties, anniversaries, cultural presentations, etc. Many senior citizens and retirees seek companionship and camaraderie from their churches and congregations. For instance, members of the San Francisco Filipino-American Seventh-Day Adventist Church regularly visits the elderly and sick who are in the hospitals, care facilities, or home alone. The need for senior citizen care has grown over the years with the influx of Filipino war veterans, many of who are in their 70s and 80s and have no family support system in the US. According to Monsignor Bitanga, Saint Patrick Catholic Church also acts as a vital referral service for bilingual education projects, Westbay Pilipino Multi-Services, the Filipino Education Center, Catholic Charities, low cost housing for seniors, the Veterans Equity Center, among others. English classes and citizenship assistance are provided in some of the Filipino-American churches.

In addition to helping their own parishioners or members, Filipino-American churches reach out to non-Filipinos, non-members, and the San Francisco Bay Area community at-large. Their volunteer efforts have saved Bay Area cities thousands of dollars in public monies. Some common civic activities are blood drives, tree plantings, cleanups of public places, and food distribution to homeless and other needy people. Some churches also provide space for community organizations to hold meetings and other gatherings, thus serving as an important neighborhood resource. Politicians have taken notice and have officially hailed many of these invaluable contributions. For instance, on June 28, 2001, Mayor Carol L. Klatt declared July 22 to 28, 2001 as the Iglesia Ni Cristo Week in Daly City. The Daly City Council has awarded the Iglesia Ni Cristo with a number of community citations including the "Most Outstanding Volunteer Group Award". Mayor Klatt summarized the important of their civic involvement in stating that:

Throughout Daly City, volunteers from the Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church of Christ) have made a difference. The congregation's civic activities and volunteer effort occur year-round. The group has participated in numerous community projects over the years, logging countless hours. Time and again, they have come through, regardless of the odds and obstacles. Because of them, the standard of excellence in the area of community service for organizations in Daly City has been raised.<sup>20</sup>

Filipino American congregations contribute to San Francisco society by helping many new Filipino immigrants in their adjustment to America. According to Reverend Capuli, "The grace of God makes people productive members of society

(i.e., taxpayers, professionals with valuable services to offer) and individuals with strong moral character and which value family." Some church members are already providing assistance to newcomers by volunteering to pick them up when they arrive at the airport. House basements become temporary housing until fellow members find their own places to stay. New members are even carpooled to church services while they are still familiarizing themselves with roads and public transportation routes. At the church, bulletin boards are filled with important leads from job opportunities to baby-sitting offers. Church members also hire fellow members to work for their companies. Training sessions to upgrade skills are even offered through the church for free. Some Filipino American churches, like the Saint Francis and Grace United Methodist Church and the Saint James Presbyterian Church also rent out space for pre-school education in their neighborhoods. They also allow local non-profit organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous, or candidates for local office to use their space free of charge. Saint Francis and Grace United Methodist Church provides valuable meeting space for San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown during his first campaign for public office. The congregation also allows community groups to use their space, like Alcoholics Anonymous, other churches who do not have buildings, events surrounding local elections, and other community gatherings for the Sunset district.

With the support of their San Francisco church congregations, Filipino-American mission work has been able to expand in the United States, the Philippines, and the rest of the world. Local social service organizations visit the Filipino-American churches to spread information and educate members on welfare, health, and other programs. Interestingly, many American Christian missionaries in the Philippines are being supported financially by Filipino-American Churches. Many projects and programs of their "home" churches in the Philippines and other parts of the world have received much-needed financial and spiritual support from Filipino-American churches. Pastors in the Philippines attest to the valuable contributions of Filipinos in America to the restoration and beautification of old historic churches as well as and building of new chapels. After all, their home churches are probably the places where Filipinos who have migrated to America prayed for God to facilitate their departure from the Philippines. When natural calamities strike, such as earthquakes, fires, and typhoons in the United States, the Philippines, or elsewhere in the globe, Filipino American churches have been known to provide relief goods in cash or in kind. Some have even send members to help in disaster management and relief. For instance, Saint Francis and Grace United Methodist Church contributes to the Philippines by sending scholarships to seminary and college, clinics in Palawan, gave aid to victims of Mount Pinatubo disaster.

#### **IV. Summary and Conclusion**

The Americanization of Christianity in Manila helped build the Philippine social infrastructure with the development of a formal mass-based, English-language educational system. This move not only increased the educational levels

of Filipinos, but also facilitated the reading and understanding of the Christian Bible, which the Spanish friars banned for more than 300 years. The cost however was literally baptism by fire with the eruption of the Philippine-American War. While Catholic churches sought to refurbish their tainted image among the Filipinos through newly installed American clergy, American Protestant churches and their missionaries came and spread a different brand of Christianity throughout the country. Unconvinced of any changes in the political, economic, and most especially religious leadership in the Philippines, a group of nationalist leaders were inspired to deviate from the Western-dominated church hierarchy and establish the Philippine Independent Church. The shortcomings in the teachings of both Protestant and Catholic churches from the west inspired Felix Manalo to establish his own Church of Christ (*Iglesia ni Cristo*) from the east. Filipino Protestant church leaders also challenged the centralized authority of their American counterparts contributing to the creation of Filipino-led independent Protestant Churches, which later came under the umbrella organization called the United Church of Christ of the Philippines.

In subtle but definitive ways, the “second coming of Christianity” to the colonized also precipitated a “second coming of Christianity” back to the colonizer through successive waves of Filipino immigration to the United States beginning in the early 1900s. Interestingly, in contrast to McKinley’s benevolent assimilation proclamation, which did not have any scriptural basis, there are many Filipinos who prefer to believe that the second coming of Christianity to America, as manifested in the rise of Filipino-American churches, is foretold in the Bible—“From the far east will I bring your offspring, from the far west will I gather you.” (Isaiah 43:5, Moffatt). Filipino Christian congregations have blossomed in San Francisco and many other gateway cities in America since the 1920s. They have taken over places of worship which were previously occupied by predominantly European-American congregations, in many cases, salvaging them. Aside from the Filipinization of churches through their attendees, many Filipino church leaders, ministers, administrators, and religious workers are also becoming more visible in American communities. And in addition to churches, immigration has increased the number of Filipino students at San Francisco Catholic educational institutions from the elementary to the tertiary levels. Through their churches, in other words, Filipino immigrants have been making significant contributions not only to the cultural fabric of San Francisco but the larger American society as well.

Nevertheless, the current Filipino immigration to the United States is only one aspect of the global Filipino diaspora. With more than seven million Filipinos overseas in more than 70 countries, Filipino culture and social energy are now being mainstreamed into a borderless global community. Rapid advances and continuing innovations in technology, transportation, communications, internet, and education are all contributing to the perpetual crossing of physical and spatial boundaries. Based on their migratory pattern, Filipinos will continue to flock and to multiply, bringing with them their strong faith and traditions—to the “promised land”,

wherever this may be. As this study has shown, their churches will always be used as a safe space for engaging in Filipino culture and ethnicity while at the same time contributing valuable social energy to American society. Furthermore, the churches and religious spaces that they Filipinize have become major instruments that help facilitate their acculturation, assimilation, and incorporation into their new homeland. Learning to be good citizens not only for America but also the larger global society.

#### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Bilateral relations are formal government-to-government ties while transnational relations are linkages and networks between and among people, civil society organizations, businesses that transcend or go beyond these formal diplomatic relations between states.
- <sup>2</sup> This was part of the privilege speech to the US Senate by Senator Albert Beveridge, 9 January 1900, regarding America’s trade position regarding the Philippines.
- <sup>3</sup> The first Protestant missionaries to the Philippines came from Spain during their occupation of the country, including Dominican priest-turned Protestant missionary Manrique Alonso Lallave (See Kwantes 1998; Apilado 1999).
- <sup>4</sup> There was no Mormon missionary activity in the Philippines until the end of World War II, when Maxine Grimm, wife of a U.S. Army colonel, serving the American Red Cross in the Philippines, introduced the gospel to Aniceta Pabilona Fajardo, the first Filipino to join the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints in the islands. Sister Fajardo was baptized in 1945.
- <sup>5</sup> White man’s burden is the white race/people’s belief that they have been destined to spread good government, economic prosperity, and Christian morality to the “uncivilized” countries of the world.
- <sup>6</sup> Doctrinally, Seventh-day Adventists are heirs of the interfaith Millerite movement of the 1840s. Although the name “Seventh-day Adventist” was chosen in 1860, the denomination was not officially organized until May 21, 1863, when the movement included some 125 churches and 3,500 members.
- <sup>7</sup> Serious schisms would later reduce PIC membership significantly. In 1947, relations with the Episcopal Church of the United States of America (ECUSA) were formally laid down in two documents: Declaration of Faith and Articles of Religion and The Constitution and Canons.
- <sup>8</sup> Taken from Saint Patrick’s Church Baptismal Registry.
- <sup>9</sup> Edward B. Lenane, “Survey Catholic Filipino Club, 1421 Sutter Street, San Francisco, California,” March 25, 1935.
- <sup>10</sup> Based on interviews with Noemi Castillo, Director, Office of Ethnic Ministries, Archdiocese of San Francisco, May-June, 2001.
- <sup>11</sup> According to other priests interviewed, there are others who have been serving in unofficial capacities while: visiting as tourists (B1/B2 visa), studying at Bay Area universities (F-1), or participating in exchange programs (J-1).
- <sup>12</sup> Archdiocese of San Francisco Official Directory, various years; Catholic Directory of the Philippines, various years.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid. Supplemented with interviews from Sister Avelina Macalam and Sister Gloria Burganoy, RVM, Religious of the Virgin Mary, May-June 2001.
- <sup>14</sup> September 30, 1963 Memo from Monsignor Foudy to Most Reverend Joseph T. McGucken, S.T.D. regarding “Minority Group Students in Catholic Elementary Schools, City of San Francisco.
- <sup>15</sup> Based on interviews with Noemi Castillo, Director, Office of Ethnic Ministries, Archdiocese of San Francisco, May-June, 2001.
- <sup>16</sup> From interviews with Brother Ismael Laguardia, San Francisco Filipino Jehovah’s Witness, March 2001.

- <sup>17</sup> From interviews with Reverend Gerry Eborá, Pastor, San Francisco Seventh-Day Adventist Church, March 2001.
- <sup>18</sup> From interviews with Reverend Leo Calica, Pastor, Faith Bible Church of San Francisco, March 2001.
- <sup>19</sup> From interviews with Reverend Arturo Capuli, Pastor, Grace United Methodist Church, San Francisco, March 2001.
- <sup>20</sup> Mayor's Message, June 28, 2001.

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