

Walking Humbly with the Moros Towards the Kingdom: A Reflection on the Catholic Church's Mission in Muslim Mindanao*

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In this reflection, I address the question of the Catholic Church's mission in Muslim Mindanao as it responds to the long-standing aspiration of the Moros for self-determination. First, I give an overview of the dialogue between Filipino Christians and Moros, contextualizing this within Philippine history, the changes brought about by Vatican II, and the contemporary challenge of overcoming prejudices. And second, I ask what kind of voice the church must speak if it is to be a credible gospel witness in Bangsamoro. It seems to me that the church needs to be a voice of compassion, justice, and peace in a context that has seen so much violence. In addition, I will suggest that there are two Filipino values, namely *pakikipagkapwatao* and *pakikiramay*, which are already operative in those who engage in dialogue and peacebuilding efforts, but which need to be foregrounded as cultural resources in responding to the conflict. As *ecclesia semper reformanda est*, conversion will always be an indispensable element of its journey toward the realization of the Kingdom in Muslim Mindanao.

KEYWORDS: interreligious dialogue, Bangsamoro, Catholic Church, mission, peacebuilding, Mindanao, colonization, reconciliation

I was born and raised in a culture which was (and still is) proud of its Catholic heritage. When I was in primary school, textbooks often referred to my country, the Philippines, as “the only Christian/Catholic country” in the whole of Asia. Growing up, I myself accepted

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this claim with pride and unfortunately the hubris that went with it. Coincidentally, that period in my life was roughly the height of the armed conflict between the Muslims in Mindanao, the Moros¹, and the Philippine armed forces when thousands of combatants and civilians on both sides of the conflict were killed and millions worth of property were destroyed. Not surprisingly, this conflict reinforced the deep-rooted prejudices of many Filipino Christians against the Moros, an intolerance that has been manifested publicly in the negative representations of the Moros in the popular media.²

Ironically, although the root causes of the conflict date back much earlier, many of the festering wounds between Moros and Filipino Christians occurred within the decade after Vatican II, the first council of the Catholic Church which has a positive valuation of other religions and which called on the church to engage the adherents of other religious traditions in dialogue. It has been nearly fifty years since the opening of Vatican II and although many of its teachings have been received, contemporary issues underscore the task of reception as an ongoing undertaking of the local churches.

In this reflection, I will address the question of the Catholic Church's role in Muslim Mindanao as it engages in interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding efforts, together with the various stakeholders of the conflict-ridden areas,³ as means of responding to the long-standing conflict between the Philippine government and the armed Moro fronts. This essay will be two-fold. First, I will give an overview of the dialogue between Filipino Christians and Moros, contextualizing this within the Moro nationalist discourse, the changes brought about by Vatican II, and the contemporary challenge of overcoming prejudices. And second, I ask what kind of voice the church must speak if it is to be a credible gospel witness in Muslim Mindanao. It seems to me that the church needs to be a voice of compassion, justice, and peace in a context that has seen so much violence. In addition, I will suggest that the Filipino value of *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, which appears to be already operative in those who engage in dialogue and peacebuilding efforts, need to be foregrounded as a cultural resource in responding to the conflict. As *ecclesia semper reformanda est*, conversion will always be an indispensable element of its journey toward the realization of the Kingdom in Muslim Mindanao.

MORO NATIONALISM AND THE CHURCH'S MISSION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO

Moro Nationalism and History

The Moro nationalist discourse⁴ is anchored on a reading of history that regards the contemporary Moro armed struggle as a continuation of the resistance of the Muslims in southern Philippines against Spain.⁵ For instance, Salah Jubair, the pseudonym of Mohagher Iqbal who is the chief negotiator of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) with the Philippine government (GPH), frames his discussion of the peace process with the claim that the root of the problem in Bangsamoro is the annexation of Mindanao and Sulu to the Philippine state, "second only to colonialism itself that started during the Spanish times and was continued by the Americans."⁶ In this section, I would highlight three important elements of this discourse that have impacted Christian-Muslim relations⁷ and then, present a critique of the Moro nationalist discourse which while providing explanatory value to the armed conflict fails to address the complexity of the historical processes.

First, while the exact date of the arrival of Islam in the Philippines is an unsettled issue, it is an incontrovertible fact that Islam predated the coming of Christianity into the Philippines.⁸ The Sulu archipelago, where Islam first came into the country, was part of a trading route that ranged from the Arabian Peninsula to China and up to Southeast Asia.⁹ Muslim traders established trading colonies along these routes and it was they who made possible the expansion of Islam in the Malaysian peninsula and eventually in the Philippines.¹⁰ Prior to the arrival of the Spaniards in the country, the locals of Sulu and Maguindanao already had their own centralized system of government modeled after Muslim states.¹¹ There was even a thriving Muslim community in Manila at that time.¹² Jubair even speculates that "had not the Spaniards come at that time there would have been at least three or four kingdoms, one in Manila, two in Mindanao and one in Sulu, and all or most of the inhabitants, like in nearby Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei, would have become all Muslims."¹³ Moro nationalists take pride in the fact that Islam came prior to Christianity and apparently grew deep roots among the inhabitants of Mindanao and Sulu, a fact which proved to be an insurmountable obstacle for Spanish Christian missionaries.

Second, Christianity in the Philippines came as part of Spain's colonization of the New World in the 16th century, a conquest

that was justified by papal bulls, primary among which was *Inter caetera* of Pope Alexander VI in 1493,¹⁴ and as part of its attempt to control the spice trade in Malaku. When Spain decided to make a permanent settlement in the Philippines, the expedition of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi in 1565 was accompanied by Augustinian friars. Later on, other religious congregations arrived and carried on the work of evangelization: the Franciscans in 1578, the Jesuits in 1581, the Dominicans in 1587, and the Recoletos in 1606.¹⁵ Inspired by the crusading spirit that saw Spain drive away Muslims from the Iberian peninsula and consistent with the understanding of *missio ad gentes* as conversion at that time, lowland Luzon and many areas in the Visayas were Christianized by 1650.¹⁶

The mission to convert was inseparable from the goal of political pacification. Missionary friars became parish priests, learning local languages and living among their converts in order to “translate” Christianity into local cultures and stamp out worship of local spirits. Under their leadership, everyday life was framed and regulated by church teachings and guidelines. The friar was everywhere—mobilizing people for state and church work, cajoling their support through sermons, and punishing their sins they revealed in confession. For the friar, religion was a tool of both liberation and subordination. Imbued with a deep sense of righteousness and moral ascendancy, the friar hoped the conversion of “heathens” would bring about their salvation. At the same time, the threat of eternal damnation helped ensure loyalty to the church and colonial state.¹⁷

With the rise of Spain’s power in most of the Philippines through military and spiritual conquest,

Earlier divisions of language and local polity now became religio-political, with the rival states oriented to different universal centers, legal systems, and moral codes. Language and naming were especially sensitive to the localization process,.... the names of ordinary individuals became markers of identity tied to a larger Catholic or Muslim world: Baptized Christians took Hispanic Christian names, while converts to Islam adopted Arabic Muslim names.¹⁸

In contrast to their success in Hispanizing and Christianizing most of Luzon and the Visayas, the conquistadores were generally unsuccessful in gaining a foothold on the predominantly Muslim-areas in Southern Philippines¹⁹ and the missionaries themselves failed in their attempts to convert the people to Catholicism. According to Majul, Islamic consciousness grew in the face of Spanish attempts to subjugate them. For the *‘ulama*, Spain came to uproot Islam from *dar ul-*

Islam. "They therefore preached resistance as a religious and patriotic duty, with Paradise as a recompense."²⁰ It is not surprising then that the Moros fiercely resisted the Spaniards and their Christianized *indio* allies. The fact that Mindanao and Sulu were not colonized by the Spaniards like Luzon and the Visayas has had a significant impact on the contemporary Moro discourse and identity as an unconquered nation. For instance, Salah Jubair argues about the term "Moro":

It was a tag that was chosen for him by the enemy, not by himself. But unlike Filipino which signifies allegiance, nay subservience, to Spain, his name was the result of animosity and warfare—and resistance to foreign pressure. If Filipino was the child of colonialism, Moro was the offspring of anti-colonialism.²¹

Such a contention while stated polemically appears to betray a sense of superiority over Spain's Christianized Filipino allies,²² whom the Muslim *datus* never regarded as equals but "as inferiors worthy only of being slaves."²³

When Spain ceded the country to the Americans in 1898 under the Treaty of Paris, it included Mindanao and Sulu,²⁴ an inclusion that Moro nationalists question since Spain had no sovereignty over those islands. The US conceived of its mandate in Moroland not only "to develop, to civilize, to educate to train in the science of self-government"²⁵ but also to prepare the Moros for integration into the predominantly Christian soon-to-be Philippine state.²⁶ Nevertheless, the American colonial policies that followed their initial statement of intention reveal their imperialistic and economic motivations.²⁷

Since they saw themselves as different from the rest of the Philippines, many Moro leaders made representations to the new colonial government that they should be treated differently from Filipinos.²⁸ For instance, in a meeting in Zamboanga with US Secretary of War Jacob M. Dickenson in 1910, Hadji Ujaton stated:

We [the Moros] are a different race; we have a different religion; we are Mohammedans. And if we should be given over to Filipinos, how much more would they treat us badly, when they treated even the Spanish badly who were their own mothers and their own fathers in generation? How did they treat them?.... We far prefer to be in the hands of the Americans, who are father and mother to us now, than to be turned over to another people.²⁹

However, in spite of such objections, the American pacification efforts of predominantly Muslim areas had as one of its aims the "Filipinization" of the Moros.³⁰

With the Americans came, as part of the American imperial

legacy, the Protestant traditions. Hence, with the two Western colonial powers came Christianity, a faith that became a fabric of local Philippine cultures but which was instrumentalized to promote state interests. Like many of the churches during that period, the churches in the Philippines, both Catholic and Protestant, failed in questioning cultural biases, including the religious prejudices of many of its members.³¹ It is noteworthy that at this period in the history of the Philippines, the predominant paradigm in the Catholic Church in relation to other religious traditions was, "Outside the Church, there is no salvation."³²

A third important factor, which is related to the second one above and that has impacted contemporary Muslim-Christian relationship is the fact that many of the social ills that many Moros experience are rooted in the actions and policies of both the Spanish and American governments. Spain initiated the Regalian doctrine of land ownership. This had the effect of disempowering the Moro traditional leaders with regard to land distribution and effectively led to the loss of many of the ancestral areas of the Moros. The Americans continued this policy and initiated a resettlement program in Mindanao.³³ After independence from the Americans, the Philippine government in Manila continued this resettlement policy in Mindanao in which Christian Filipinos in the Luzon and Visayas were enticed with free land to migrate to Mindanao, particularly in places which the Moros consider as part of their ancestral domain.³⁴ While this policy provided land for the Christian settlers, it resulted not only to land loss by the Moros but also to their minoritization.³⁵

The Moros' loss of political independence, the loss of their land and their eventual minoritization in their ancestral domain marginalized the Moros politically and contributed to the perhaps unintended consequence of stunting the economic development of the vast majority of Moro communities. Noteworthy is the fact that the provinces that belong to the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao are the poorest in the country.³⁶ In this context, it is not surprising that Moros would assert their right to self-determination through armed means.³⁷

It must be pointed out, however, that the Moro nationalists' reading of history, particularly of the armed Moro fronts, is not without its problem. It has to do with what Thomas K. McKenna refers to as the "myth of Morohood"³⁸ or what Patricio N. Abinales calls "the myth of the eternal Moro resistance,"³⁹ on which is anchored the Moro uprising and is used as a bargaining chip in their peace talks with

the government. While the Moro nationalist ideology contends that “the Spanish ascription ‘Moro’ reflected an actual social entity—a self-conscious collectivity of Philippine Muslims engaged in a unified, Islamic-inspired, anticolonial resistance,”⁴⁰ McKenna argues convincingly that this narrative fails to do justice to “the complexities and contradictions of that period” and even entails the “subjugation of an unruly history” to support its stance.⁴¹ For McKenna, “Spanish aggression against the Muslim polities of the archipelago did not, to any significant degree, stimulate the development of an overarching ethnoreligious identity self-consciously shared by members of various Muslim ethnolinguistic groups”⁴²—contrary to the claims of Moro nationalists, like Jubair above, that Moro nationalism began during the Spanish colonial period, antedating the development of Filipino nationalism. In fact, for McKenna the roots of Moro nationalism are found in and were nurtured during the American colonial period,⁴³ particularly through the influence of Najeeb Saleeby.⁴⁴

Furthermore, McKenna’s observation regarding the Moro insurgents of the Bangsamoro Rebellion in the 1970s makes one wonder how the Moro identity as understood by the rebel leadership is appropriated by the Muslim masses: “... it was striking to note how rarely any of the insurgents, in expressing their motivations for taking up arms or fighting on against great odds, made spontaneous mention of either the Moro nation (Bangsamoro) or Islamic renewal, the two central components of Muslim nationalist ideology.”⁴⁵ This is quite telling for the insurgents and Moro nationalists who base their claims on this ideology.

In his study of state formation during the American colonial period, Abinales raises similarly hard questions about the politics of identity.⁴⁶ He questions the nationalist framework which regards the armed Moro rebellion as an organic part of Filipino nationalism.⁴⁷ For instance, with regard to the Muslim responses to American colonialism, he raises two issues about the categorization of responses either as collaboration or revolution. First, he questions the rigidity of this dichotomy since these responses overlapped in a situation in which the Muslims found themselves in a situation of social and political uncertainty brought about by American power. Abinales argues that it is better to interpret them in terms of the Muslims’ experiences in Southeast Asia—among the *datus* as actions of “men of prowess” (*orang besar*) who positioned themselves to gain more local power as they related with the Americans and the *datus* become colonial *politicos*.⁴⁸ Second, he questions the assumption that

the Muslim responses were not any different from the Filipino elite's responses. For Abinales, Muslim revolts were efforts "to stave off colonialism" and "[n]one indicated any forward-looking, anticolonial, or nationalist perspective."⁴⁹ He considers the contemporary Moro rebellions "as modern mobilizations against the intrusive reach of the nation-state than as a latest edition of an epic Moro struggle against various colonialisms."⁵⁰ In a similar vein, Medina asserts:

The *Bangsamoro* identities have been formed not through spontaneous processes of self-definition but primarily according to the exigencies of power—the demands for political autonomy and independence as a consequence of the state's domineering role. Their identities and communal interests are malleable and pliant as they interact with the state's power. It responds to the political, economic or social needs of group members at any moment, depending on the contingencies of national politics.⁵¹

Nevertheless, while the genesis of the Moro identity is contested, the Moro nationalist narrative appears to inform the current peace talks between the MILF and the GPH. For instance, in the joint draft of the MILF and the GPH in the recently concluded 32nd Exploratory Talks in Kuala Lumpur where both sides reached a "framework agreement" in 6 October 2012, it is stated:

Those who *at the time of conquest and colonization* were considered *natives or original inhabitants of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago and its adjacent islands* including Palawan and their descendants, whether of mixed or of full blood shall have *the right to identify themselves as Bangsamoro* by ascription or self-ascription.⁵²

What is uncontested, however, is that many of the Muslim groups in southern Philippines, whether they refer to themselves as Moro or not, aspire for peace, justice, and development, desires which are fundamental and legitimate.

A Watershed in the Church's Relationship with Other Religions

It is with this backdrop that we can better appreciate the changes brought about by Vatican II on the Catholic Church and their effects on Muslim-Christian relations. After holding on to an exclusivist theology of religions for a long time, Vatican II brought about a sea of change in the Catholic Church. For the first time, official magisterial documents have a positive appreciation of the religions and called on the Church to engage them in dialogue. For instance, *Nostra aetate* acknowledges that the "ray of Truth" may be found in them

and affirms that the church rejects nothing that is true and holy in them.⁵³ *Gaudium et spes* goes on to stress that “the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery.”⁵⁴ Given these assertions, the church is then called upon to discern the Spirit’s presence in others and to affirm the elements of the doctrines, rituals and life of peoples of other religions that seem to manifest the fruits of the Spirit’s presence.⁵⁵

In their reception of Vatican II in their own multi-religious contexts, the Asian bishops appear to further develop Vatican II’s position. The bishops firmly believe that other religious traditions participate in God’s plan of salvation.⁵⁶ This realization on their part is born out of the church’s encounter with peoples of other religions who, in diverse ways, appear to manifest the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives and religious practices.⁵⁷ It is not surprising that the bishops “accept them [other religions] as significant and positive elements in the economy of God’s design of salvation.”⁵⁸ In them, the bishops

recognize and respect profound spiritual and ethical meanings and values. Over many centuries they [other religions] have been the treasury of the religious experience of our ancestors, from which our contemporaries do not cease to draw light and strength. They have been (and continue to be) the authentic expression of the noblest longings of their hearts, and the home of their contemplation and prayer. They have helped to give shape to the histories and cultures of our nations.⁵⁹

Moreover, for these pastors,

God’s saving will is at work, in many different ways, in all religions... God’s saving grace is not limited to members of the Church, but is offered to every person. His grace may lead some to accept baptism and enter the Church, but it cannot be presumed that this must always be the case. His ways are mysterious and unfathomable, and no one can dictate the direction of His grace.⁶⁰

It is because of God’s grace in others and the church’s sharing in this realm of grace that one can view other religions as “sublime realities of enjoyment, having value in themselves” and not as something to be used to serve the Christian truth.⁶¹

Dialogue in the Philippines

Even before the reforms ushered in by Vatican II about the Catholic Church’s relationship with other religious traditions, many Moros and Filipino Christians were already engaged in dialogue although

it was not referred to as such. In their day-to-day life, Christians have had to deal and relate with their Muslim neighbors and vice-versa. While the discourse of dialogue was not yet in vogue, many people at the grassroots level practiced its meaning in their friendships with one another, a “dialogue of life” as later church documents would label these efforts. Those engagements served to make possible the more formal dialogues that have taken place between the believers of these two religious traditions.

The formal dialogues that have occurred between the Moros and Filipino Christians since the 1960s are focused mainly on social issues of common concern.⁶² In his review of Muslim-Christian dialogue in the Philippines, Julkipli Wadi, a professor at the University of the Philippines’ Institute of Islamic Studies, observes among other things, that it is triggered mainly by problems in predominantly Muslim areas and that the agenda for dialogue are not theological issues but the social, political and economic problems that both Muslims and Christians experience. The focus is not on religious differences but on human values.⁶³ However, Wadi claims:

In the Philippines, the lukewarm reception, if not suspicion, by some Muslims about inter-religious dialogue is dictated by the fact that it is merely used to profile personalities and to explore Muslim issues but not to resolve their age-old aspirations for political liberation and seek solutions to specific problems like peace and order, poverty or unemployment. It is observed that resolutions and statements of concern passed during dialogue conferences and peace advocacy seminars are mere recommendatory, with no guarantee of being heard, let alone implemented, by the government. Hence, some Muslims view inter-religious dialogue just as a venue to ventilate emotions, fears and problems, which does not help them address their more immediate problems like poverty, discrimination and oppression.⁶⁴

Hence, it seems that while collaboration on social concerns have taken place between the two groups, the efforts between the dialogue partners have not made any significant political and economic impact in bringing about a just and peaceful settlement to the Moro aspiration for self-determination. A probable reason for this is the non- or partial reception of the teachings of Vatican II on other religions by many Filipino Christians.

The (Non-)Reception of Vatican II on Other Religious Traditions

The reception of church teachings is a complex and contested process. On one hand, teachings may serve to question and challenge cultural conditionings and biases, and purify them of what is contrary to the

gospel. On the other hand, they may also serve to affirm the goodness that is found in one's culture. After all, it is in and through one's culture that one interprets, understands, and lives the gospel. Just as one's culture may facilitate the reception of church teachings, it also happens that cultural presumptions and unquestioned seemingly self-evident truths may prove to be stumbling blocks in the reception of the same teachings. The latter case seems to be evident with respect to the church teachings on other religious traditions. While the teachings of both Vatican II and the Asian bishops on interreligious dialogue eventually became part of the teachings of the local church in the Philippines, enshrined in both the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines and the *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, much remains to be done in changing the prejudices and animosity felt by many Filipino Christians toward the Moros,⁶⁵ a fact that militates against their reception.

For instance, in a 2005 national survey that was intended to measure the bias against Muslims, it emerged that many Filipinos are biased against Muslims:

It...appears that a considerable percentage of Filipinos (33% to 39% based on Indices 4 and 5) are biased against Muslims notwithstanding the fact that only about 14% of them have had direct dealings with Muslims. The bias appears to be adequately captured by the questions on stereotypes and serves to explain hiring and leasing decisions of Filipinos, as well as perceptions of Muslims as terrorists and the adoption of a hard stance with respect to approaches in pursuing peace in Sulu.⁶⁶

Given this attitude, it is not surprising that peace advocates in Mindanao find it hard to establish and build constituencies of peace that are supportive of the peace process between the GPH and the armed Moro fronts. This bias against the Moros appears to be a backdrop of the opposition of many Christian politicians against the initialed Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) between the GPH and MILF in August 2008. While the protesters ostensibly argued that there was lack of consultation of the various stakeholders and a lack of transparency in the negotiations, I think that the underlying reason for their objection to the MOA-AD was not only the fear of many politicians of losing political power and influence in a few areas of their bailiwicks but also the fear of being governed by Moros and their imagined dire consequences.⁶⁷

Even living near Moros is unthinkable for some. For example, the Barangay Council of Libungan, Cotabato, an area that is traditionally part of Moro land, rejected the proposed construction of a mosque in

their barangay. While the barangay's resolution ironically states in part that the barangay is a Christian community that is "in harmony with other people and tribes and their ways of living," it asserts that "the construction of mosque for the practice of religion in the barangay is not a necessity considering the very limited number of Muslim families, the proposed site is surrounded by Christians raising backyard livestock projects [euphemism for piggeries?] that will augment family income."⁶⁸

In the aftermath of the 18 October 2011 Al-Barka incident in Basilan in which 19 soldiers were ambushed and killed by the MILF, ABS-CBN's *TV Patrol*, one of the most popular prime time news programs in the Philippines, in an apparent knee-jerk reaction, made a poll two days after the ambush in which it asked a leading and telling question which reveals more, I think, of the bias of the program, "Do you agree that the peace talks with the MILF should be stopped and that the government should launch an all-out war against the MILF?" Not unpredictably, a whopping 97% of *TV Patrol*'s respondents said "Yes." A week after the same incident, Ramon Tulfo, a prominent Manila-based journalist but who hails from Mindanao, made the following commentary which appeared in the country's most widely distributed national broadsheet, *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (PDI):

Whatever he says to justify not going to war with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, President Noy [Aquino] is perceived as a weakling. He can never appease the Moros who, when you give them your hand, will ask for your entire arm. Moros smell fear: Don't be surprised if they continue to pillage and kill. The only time they will stop their mayhem and plunder is when the government launches a punitive expedition like what President Erap did when he was in power. The Moros, especially the Tausugs, love to fight, and how! The only way to earn their respect is to fight back instead of cowering in fear.⁶⁹

Tulfo's portrayal of the Moros, unflattering to say the least, captures many of the stereotypes that many Filipino Christians have of Moros. It is writing such as this that perpetuates the negative images of the Moros in many a Christian's popular imagination.

Eight months after, another *PDI* commentator, Ramon Farolan, a retired military officer, makes a point similar to Tulfo's:

The lesson from the past is that peace talks do not solve our problems. In fact, they embolden the enemy, giving it time to consolidate its forces and increase its weaponry. In 1996, we made peace with Nur Misuari and his MNLF, only to see them go on a rampage a few years later. We can sign another peace treaty with the MILF. It will not guarantee peace.

I have said this in the past—the only guarantee of peace in Mindanao, the only way to defend our territorial integrity is to have a strong and disciplined Armed Forces, certainly one that will not allow the brutal murder of its soldiers to go unpunished; one that can protect the people from terrorists, local or foreign, so as to enable them to live in peace and security.⁷⁰

Given the reactions of the respondents in the survey, Tulfo, and Farolan, all of which are symptomatic of the unquestioned prejudice of many Filipino Christians against Moros, it is all the more imperative that the church exerts the effort to address this issue. Moros have been pilloried in the public arena for a long time and the church cannot simply wash its hands for its complicity in this matter.⁷¹ While the church engages the Moros in dialogue, it must also be an instrument of eradicating the biases of its own members and develop in them an open attitude toward the Moros if it hopes to garner their support for a just and peaceful resolution of the armed conflict in Mindanao. In this regard, intrareligious dialogue that enables the airing of and addresses prejudices, and promotes the healing of memories appears to be necessary. Church leaders must necessarily take the initiative in this regard even if it means becoming unpopular in their own communities⁷² and if it hopes that its teachings be received by the Christian community. While the voice of the Catholic Church has been heard in other areas of the public sphere, this is one area unfortunately where the church apparently speaks only in whispers.

LIVING THE KINGDOM IN A TIME OF CONFLICT

To Speak or Not to Speak

There are many social ills facing contemporary Philippine society, many of which are seemingly intractable like the poverty of so many Filipinos. In this discussion, I will focus on only two issues, the proposed Reproductive Health Bill (RH Bill) in Congress and peacebuilding in Mindanao. I will use the church's response to the former as a foil for the church's (seeming lack of) response to the latter. A polarizing question confronting the Filipino nation is the pending RH bill in which the Philippine bishops have been so vociferous in their opposition.⁷³ As early as 2003, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) issued a pastoral letter in which the bishops called for the rejection of an earlier version of the bill since it "has many errors that contravene the teaching of the Church."⁷⁴ After that,

the CBCP issued one letter after another that touched on the issue of reproductive health and the related bills in Congress.⁷⁵ The latest CBCP pastoral letter on this issue, "Choosing Life, Rejecting the RH Bill," called for the present RH bill's (HB 5043) outright rejection. In an effort to galvanize broad public support, the CBCP argues, "Far from being simply a Catholic issue, the RH bill is a major attack on authentic human values and on Filipino cultural values regarding human life that all of us have cherished since time immemorial."⁷⁶ Some bishops warned politicians that they would campaign against them in the elections if they support the RH bill, a tactic which appears inconsistent with Catholic social teaching and a distortion of the role of the church in politics.⁷⁷ A few went so far as to threaten the Catholic supporters of the bill that they would be refused communion in the Eucharist. In the acrimonious debates surrounding this issue, the bill's supporters are labeled "anti-life" while those who oppose it are "pro-life"—characterizations which oversimplify the issues involved. For all intents and purposes and notwithstanding the church's attempts to portray the debate as an issue for all peoples of faiths and for all Filipinos, the Catholic Church's opposition to the RH bill boils down to its teachings on sexual morality. Now that the trial of the chief justice of the Philippine Supreme Court is over, debates about the RH bill have resumed in the public arena.⁷⁸

In comparison to the Catholic Church's position on the RH bill is the apparent lack of support, as manifested in its relative "silence" on the issue, from the bishops for the ongoing peace process between the GPH and the MILF.⁷⁹ At the local level, it must be pointed out that efforts have been made by the churches in Mindanao to promote and engage in interreligious dialogue. For instance, the different local churches in Southern Philippines have established the ministry of interreligious dialogue. Various grassroots efforts to promote interreligious harmony and peace efforts have also been ongoing.⁸⁰ At the national level, the CBCP was conspicuously silent on the Bangsamoro issue when the armed conflict was at its height in the 1970s. In the 1980s, the Philippine bishops first issued general statements on peace although they were in response to a context under Marcos' Martial Law and the aftermath of Marcos' ouster from office and did not directly deal with the Moro question.⁸¹ The first statement of the CBCP that referred to the Moro issue was its letter, "Seek Peace, Pursue It," in 1990, although this issue was only one among others that were mentioned in it. In that letter, the bishops argued for the inseparability of peace and justice, and the need for

reconciliation. Among the agenda the bishops proposed for the Decade of Peace (1990-2000) was the peaceful resolution of questions of self-determination by various groups, which included the armed Moro fronts, "within the context of national sovereignty."⁸² The CBCP also issued statements on peacebuilding in support of the National Unification Commission established by the president of GPH then.⁸³ The first CBCP pastoral letter that directly and solely dealt with the Moro issue was "An Urgent Appeal for Peace in Mindanao" in 2000. This was issued in the aftermath of President Joseph Estrada's all-out war against the MILF which resulted to the displacement of more than a million people. In this letter, the CBCP called on the government and the MILF to end their hostilities and go back to the negotiating table.⁸⁴ Aware of prevailing sentiments, the bishops observed "that our words for peace run against the prevailing opinion, including that of our own flock. We might even be misinterpreted as against the government." Nevertheless, the CBCP asserts that its position on the issue is not political but evangelical. It commits itself to a plan of action:

We observe the trauma, the bitterness, prejudices and biases, resentment and even hatred that are building up among our people because of the war. We, therefore, pledge that the pastoral programs of the Church shall assist in healing the psychological wounds and hurts of people, in reconciling conflicting groups, and in building a culture of peace in our country, especially in Mindanao.⁸⁵

The CBCP issued a similarly named pastoral statement, "Urgent Appeal for Peace," three years later, when due to a series of bombings in Davao, the peace talks were halted and the government waged war against the MILF. In its statement, the bishops challenged the church to be peacemakers and ambassadors of reconciliation. The bishops also reiterated their call to both parties to end their fighting and find a just and lasting solution to the enduring conflict.⁸⁶ Unfortunately, the bishops did not have a collective statement in light of the MOA-AD fiasco when armed battles broke out once again in 2008 and 2009. The most recent statement from the Catholic hierarchy regarding the peace process was "Toward Building a Just and Lasting Peace in Mindanao" which was issued after the signing of the "framework agreement." In it, the Mindanao Catholic bishops expressed "vigilant optimism" about it, called for continuous consultations with all the stakeholders, and stressed the need for six values "that constitute a 'people's platform for Peace in Mindanao': sincerity, security, sensitivity, solidarity, spirituality and sustainability."⁸⁷

If the frequency of a particular theme in its pastoral letters is the basis of an issue's importance for the bishops, then it appears that the issues related to reproductive health (read: sexual issues) are more important for them than the Moro issue. While there is a concerted effort on the part of church leaders to block the pending RH bill in Congress, e.g. prayers for the defeat of the bill in sacramental celebrations, the mass mobilization of people, and tarpaulin advertisements in parishes rejecting the bill, there appears to be a lack of it with respect to the latter. Perhaps, given this context, it is not surprising that Mohagher Iqbal, chairman of the MILF peace panel, claimed that there are "spoilers" to the ongoing peace negotiations between the GPH and the MILF. For Iqbal, they

are the decision-makers; they are those whose vested interests are radically affected or altered if there is a change in the status quo, because many of them owned vast tracts of lands in Mindanao; and they are also engaged in mining, plantation economy, logging, banking, trade and industry.⁸⁸

He further claimed:

Of course, there are other groups, not in the level of spoilers, who have reasons to fear for radical alteration in the status quo. I think it is not wrong to say if I include the Catholic Church and to a little extent the Protestant Church in this categorization, although the latter has shown greater flexibility or accommodation as far as solving the conflict in Mindanao is concerned, while the former has not yet to come out with a definitive stance on the Moro Question, except by individual Church leaders like Archbishop Orlando Quevedo.⁸⁹

Probably in response to his challenge for the church to get involved in the peace process, a month after Iqbal's statement, Antonio Ledesma, the archbishop of Cagayan de Oro, a predominantly Christian city in northern Mindanao, called on all dioceses and Catholic universities in Mindanao to help in furthering the peace process.⁹⁰ Whether true or not, partially or totally, many Moros perceive the church as indifferent, at best, and hostile, at worst, not only to the ongoing peace talks between the MILF and the GPH but also to their valid concerns.

The Face of the Church and How to Speak

What emerge from the above comparison are two different faces of the church. On one hand, we have a church that has been so vocal in its opposition to the RH bill, a church that is so sure of the righteousness

of its cause that it threatens those who oppose its stand. It is a church that has tried to flex its political muscle and use it as a weapon to get what it wants. While this church complains that the government is not really interested in dialogue (read: the proponents and the supporters of the bill in Congress will not change their mind), the irony of it is that the church leadership will also not change its stand regarding the bill.

On the other hand, we find a church, that is biased against the Moros and is also seemingly apathetic to their valid concerns. It is a church that has responded inadequately to the Moro issue and has failed to address their justifiable concerns. It is also a church that is complicit to the colonial and postcolonial policies that have resulted to the deminoritization and marginalization of the Moros in their own land.⁹¹

These two faces of the church are insufficient in the church's task of proclaiming the Kingdom and in responding to the context of Mindanao. In order for the church to be a more credible witness of the Kingdom, the Christian community needs to all the more embody the virtues of compassion, justice, and peace as it works together with the Moros for the attainment of what John Lederach calls "justpeace."⁹² This is not to say that Christian communities have not lived these virtues but to simply underscore their significance in Mindanao and the need of the church to be perceived as living these virtues. The Catholic Church has been so ensconced in the corridors of power that it has refused, consciously or unconsciously, to move out of its comfort zone to the margins of society.

First, just as Jesus had compassion for those who suffered in his time, including the Gentiles, the church is called to be compassionate to the Moros. The Kingdom demands a privileging of the margins where the Moros often are and where one encounters "the surprising God in unexpected locations."⁹³ In many and diverse ways, the church in Mindanao has been the face of compassion in many conflict areas. For instance, the vast majority of those who get displaced because of the armed conflict has been Moros. In many places, the Catholic parishes in the affected areas have served as safe havens for the "bakwit," the local term for internally displaced persons (IDP's).⁹⁴ More than showing compassion for the "bakwit," however, the church must ensure that they are not put into that miserable position in the first place.⁹⁵

Second, the church must also work for justice. For the present bishop of Cotabato, Orlando Quevedo, injustice is the root cause of

the Moro struggle and he highlights three aspects of this injustice— injustice to the Moro identity, injustice to Moro political sovereignty, and injustice to Moro integral development.⁹⁶ If we agree with Quevedo's contention that the Bangsamoro struggle is basically a question of justice, then the church as a justified community and as a community which considers the work for justice as an integral part of evangelization (*Justice in the World*) is challenged to rectify this situation as part of its becoming church. While the social action ministries of the local churches are concerned with and promote human rights, their work for integral evangelization has not touched on the Moro quest for justice. Perhaps, the local churches in Mindanao can collaborate with each other and with the Moros about this issue, particularly as they work and lobby for good governance on the part of both Christian and Muslim political leaders.

And third, as communities called and formed by the Prince of Peace (cf. Is 9:6) and to whom Jesus offers peace (cf. Jn 14:27; 20:26), the church is challenged to engage in the task of peacebuilding. Although Catholic social teaching still has to further develop in this regard,⁹⁷ there are enough resources in the Christian tradition that can serve as bases and inspiration for this undertaking. In times of armed conflict, it may include the task of working for the cessation of hostilities and acting as mediators. For example, when armed clashes broke out between the GPH and the MILF in 2009 which resulted to the displacement of thousands of families, Quevedo appealed to the warring parties to end the war:

From the depths of my soul I can only cry out to all warring parties, "Enough is enough!"...

For the sake of the evacuees and in the name of our one God of peace, end your war! Go back to the negotiating table. Let the thousands of evacuees return safely to their home. Collaborate with one another toward this objective. Together, rehabilitate their destroyed properties. Give them another chance for a truly human life.⁹⁸

At other times, the church needs to be seen as one that accompanies the communities in peacebuilding. The Christian communities need to see the Moros as fellow pilgrims in building the Kingdom as they, together with Christians, effect reconciliation within their communities and with each other. It is only when both the Moros and Christians have become reconciling communities that peace between the two religious communities may be realized.⁹⁹ Here, perhaps, just as the Philippine church emphasizes the importance of building basic ecclesial communities, it too can, like what the local church of Jolo in

southern Philippines has been doing, focus on the development of basic human communities—inclusive communities where both Moros and Christians refuse to live in their own “ghettos” but rather choose to build bridges of friendship with each other. It is a movement from negative peace—the cessation of armed hostilities, to positive peace—the building of the social fabric of the nation, a “relationship-building based on the inherent dignity of each person.”¹⁰⁰

In addition to embodying these virtues, I would add a core value which springs specifically from Filipino culture: *pakikipagkapwa-tao*.¹⁰¹ I think that this value has been operative and fundamental in the Christian community's efforts to relate to Moros in positive terms. It seems to me that it needs to be integrated into the discourse of what it means to become a Filipino church in the concrete context of Philippine culture and history since they are expressive of a Filipino's psyche. *Pakikipagkapwa-tao* means to engage the other as a person and to treat her or him as such. She or he is another person just like oneself. It is recognition of a shared identity—that the self and the other are both persons, “an inner self shared with others.”¹⁰² As such, one treats the other, the *kapwa-tao*, as an equal. The sense of the other as a *kapwa-tao* (another person) is particularly important in conflict situations in Mindanao where one sees the other as simply *ibang tao* (a person who is not one of us; an outsider) and even not as a person. The distinction between *ibang tao* and *hindi ibang tao* (one of us) has in many cases resulted to sectarianism, regionalism and parochialism. Perhaps, more problematic is the situation in which a person refuses to regard the other as a *kapwa-tao*, making it easier for her or him to ignore, abuse, and kill the other. When war broke out between the GPH and the MILF in 2009, many church-people in Sta. Teresita Parish in Datu Piang, Maguindanao were at the forefront of helping more than 28,000 “bakwits.” The church-people were actively involved in the bringing of the people into safe areas, the provision of medical needs, and the solicitation and distribution of relief goods for the people.¹⁰³ This is a concrete instance of *pakikipagkapwa-tao*—a bright light shining in the midst of the darkness and horrors of war. A “bakwit's” religious affiliation was a non-issue for those who helped but what mattered was that she or he was a *kapwa-tao*.

In this task of becoming a voice of compassion, justice and peace, in *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, and in the process become a credible voice in the public sphere, conversion as a listening to and collaboration with the Spirit is indispensable. In its interreligious engagement with the Moros, the church needs to let itself be disturbed by the Spirit—to

journey to the periphery and to discern and discover the Spirit's movement in it. Like the blind man, Bartimaeus (cf. Mk 10:46-52), the church needs the courage and the humility to ask Jesus, "Lord, I want to see." In so many instances, the church has not only been blind to the plight of the Moros but also turned a blind eye to them. Like Peter, who needed to learn the boundlessness of God's compassion and mercy (cf. Acts 10:34-35; 11:1-18), the church needs to recognize the Spirit that is poured out to all (cf. Acts 2:17-18) and reject nothing that is true and holy in others (cf. *Nostra aetate*, 2). This would mean, I think, a letting go of our false images of God and to discover the reality of Desmond Tutu's assertion, "God is not a Christian," particularly in relation with the Moros. It would also mean for the Christian communities a letting go of prejudices against the Moros. Since in conflict situations, the "enemy" is often demonized and dehumanized, it would mean seeing and recognizing the Moros as persons with dignity, as kapwatao and as kapwa-anak ng Diyos (a fellow child of God), and beloved of God. It would mean the "conversion of heart and mind from violence to nonviolence as a means of conflict transformation, from sectarianism to... the sense of belonging to a universal human family, which counters nationalism and narrow globalization"¹⁰⁴ and one may even add, a sense of belonging that counters religious triumphalism and fundamentalism. In this way, one may hope that interreligious dialogue will truly be a dialogue of salvation.

CONCLUSION

Several days after I wrote the substance of this paper, I went to Cotabato City, the seat of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. The last time I was there was fifteen years ago. It was the place where I began my journey of overcoming my own prejudices against the Moros. My conversations with friends over there made me appreciate the complexity and difficulty of the church's mission in Bangsamoro. They put many of the things I claim here in perspective. Indeed, the church cannot but walk humbly with the Moros as they collaborate with one another to build a more peaceful and just society for all.

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches (Mt 13:31-32 NRSV).

It appears that this parable best describes the efforts of the church in Muslim Mindanao to sow the seeds of the Kingdom. While it sows the seeds of compassion, peace, justice, and *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, it can only hope that they will be “the greatest of shrubs” where all the peoples of Muslim Mindanao, burdened and weary because of the conflict, will find rest for their souls (cf. Mt 11:28-30 NRSV) “in its branches.” When that time comes, then the people will no longer walk in darkness, the yoke of their burden and the rod of the oppressor broken, for there shall be endless peace (cf. Is 9:2-4.6-7). But until then, one continues on the journey towards the Kingdom one step at a time and hopes that whatever the travails are of the present, they too shall pass.

END NOTES

¹ My use of the term “Moro” to refer to the Muslims in Mindanao and Sulu is more for the sake of convenience. Nevertheless, I am aware of the contested and negotiated nature of this identity marker as a social construct, cf. James F. Eder, “Ethnic Differences, Islamic Consciousness, and Muslim Social Integration in the Philippines,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30 (2010): 317-32; Patricia Horvatic, “The Martyr and the Mayor: On the Politics of Identity in Southern Philippines,” in *Cultural Citizenship in Island Southeast Asia: Nation and Belonging in the Hinterlands*, ed. Renato Rosaldo (Berkeley: University of California, 2003), 16-43; and Lanfranco Blanchett-Revilli, “Moro, Muslim, or Filipino: Cultural Citizenship as Practice and Process,” in *Cultural Citizenship in Island Southeast Asia*, 44-75. More will be said about this identity below.

² Cf. Vivienne SM. Angeles, “Moros in the Media and Beyond: Representations of Philippine Muslims,” *Contemporary Islam* 4 (2010): 29-53. In order to build good will with the media, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) made a deliberate effort to engage them in dialogue and urged them to be fair in their reports regarding the Moros, particularly about the ongoing peace process between the government and them (cf. Ed Lingao, “The Media and Mindanao,” GMA News Online, 6 July 2012, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/264357/news/specialreports/amid-peace-negotiations-milf-to-stage-show-of-force-in-maguindanao> [accessed 16 July 2012]).

³ The importance of involving different actors in peace processes was highlighted in a recent peacebuilding conference, “Challenges to Catholic Peacebuilding” (29-30 May 2012), in Rome. As Scott Appleby puts it, “the Church is not the sole or often even the primary actor in this drama unfolding; put positively, **we have and must have partners...**” What the church does in its peacebuilding efforts is accompaniment, a “walking in solidarity with people caught in the dehumanizing dynamics of deadly conflict” (“Closing Statement: On the Need for Unlikely Partners,” http://cpn.nd.edu/assets/70299/appleby_closing_talk_final.pdf, accessed 20 June 2012).

⁴For examples of this discourse, cf. Cesar Adib Majul, "The Muslims in the Philippines: An Historical Perspective," in *The Muslim Filipinos*, eds. Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. McAmis (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1974), 1-12; and Samuel K. Tan, *Decolonization and Muslim Filipino Identity* (Quezon City: Department of History, U.P., 1989).

⁵ For example, Salah Jubair, *A Nation Under Endless Tyranny*, 2nd ed., <http://www.bangsamoro.org/> (accessed 18 September 2012); Nasser A. Marohomsalic, *Aristocrats of the Malay Race: A History of the Bangsa Moro in the Philippines* (N.A. Marohomsalic, 2001); and Bobby M. Tuazon, *The Moro Reader: History and Contemporary Struggles of the Bangsamoro People* (Quezon City: CenPEG Books, 2008). For a typical presentation of this discourse in a blog, cf. Datuan Solaiman Panolimba, "Armed Struggle of the Bangsamoro in the Philippines," 25 June 2009, <http://barangayrp.wordpress.com/2009/06/25/armed-struggle-of-the-bangsamoro-muslims-in-the-philippines/> (accessed 18 September 2012).

⁶ Salah Jubair, *The Long Road to Peace: Inside the GRP-MILF Peace Process* (Cotabato City: Institute of Bangsamoro Studies, 2007), 4.

⁷ In highlighting these three factors, I do not mean to be exhaustive of the different elements that are at play in Christian-Muslim relationships nor do I intend to give a comprehensive presentation of the history of this relationship. This complex issue warrants more than what is intended in this paper. For a good historical overview and more comprehensive discussion of Muslim-Christian relations in the Philippines, cf. William LaRousse, "Muslim-Christian Relations in the Philippines: An Historical Overview," *MST Review* 6 (2004): 114-71. See also his excellent study, *Walking Together Seeking Peace: The Local Church of Mindanao-Sulu Journeying in Dialogue with the Muslim Community (1965-2000)* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2001). For an insightful presentation on the roots of the conflict in Mindanao, cf. Astrid Tuminez, "The Past Is Always Present: The Moros of Mindanao and the Quest for Peace," South East Asia Research Centre of the City University of Hong Kong, Working Paper Series No. 99, May 2008, http://f1.grp.yahooofs.com/v1/YFT7T4Aly4Ecg4nnClaCikySAI9i3yR1sjHd55HgobEYjJCy409-5fa-4RWXm5TY_iPX55qnQk6P5mGzJd4ZDAXIWZwkuzE/Tuminez_Mindanao%20Conflict.pdf, accessed 10 July 2012).

⁸ For an account of the history of Muslims in the Philippines, cf. Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1999). Majul notes that there was already a Muslim community in Sulu by the last quarter of the 13th century if not earlier (cf. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 56-69).

⁹ On the connection of "the Philippines" within maritime Asia before Spanish colonization, cf. Patricio N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Lanhan, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 35-39. The earliest Chinese account on Chinese trade with Sulu dates back 1349 (cf. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 411-17).

¹⁰ Cf. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 56-69. Majul makes the observation, related and in contrast to the eventual colonization and Christianization of Luzon and the Visayas, that the Muslim traders "did not found colonies for their mother countries or as invaders with imperialistic designs." It is because of this that "Islam came to be

regarded not only as something less foreign than Christianity but also as an ideology with pre-nationalistic overtones" (Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 50). In light of the Islamization of Southeast Asia in the 14th century, Abinales and Amoroso add the observation that a "Muslim ruler found that Islam helped him build and centralize political power, which rested on three bases: material reward, coercion, and spiritual power" (*State and Society*, 43). Not surprisingly, in order to further their interests, the rulers of Sulu converted to Islam, and so did their subjects although "localization" occurred among the people—"Islam being incorporated gradually into existing beliefs and practices, as it continues to be today" (Abinales and Amoroso, *State and Society*, 45).

¹¹ Cf. William Henry Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth Century Philippine Culture and Society* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994), 173-78; and on the sultanate system, cf. Tan, *Decolonization and Filipino Muslim*, 13-31. For the *tarsilas* of the sultanates of Mindanao, especially Maguindanao, cf. Najeeb M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion* (Manila: The Filipiniana Book Guild, 1976).

¹² Cf. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 78-84; Horacio de la Costa, *Readings in Philippine History: Selected Historical Texts Presented with a Commentary* (Manila: Bookman, 1965), 14-15, 19-20; John H. Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History* (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, 1979), 16.

¹³ Salah Jubair, *A Nation Under Endless Tyranny*.

¹⁴ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 2-4. On the "myths" about *Inter caetera*, cf. William Henry Scott, *Looking for the Prehispanic Filipino and Other Essays in Philippine History* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1992), 15-23.

¹⁵ Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 17-18.

¹⁶ John N. Schumacher, *Growth and Decline: Essays on Philippine Church History* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009), 23-29. From the first period of evangelization (1570-1650), there were three areas that serve as evidence of the maturing of the Filipino Christianity from 1650-1700. First, there were various efforts to deepen the faith of Filipino Christians by explaining more thoroughly the catechism that they memorized when they were baptized. Second, there were attempts on the part of the missionaries to reach those people who had not been reached or reached effectively in the second half of the 17th century. And third, lay people increasingly participated in the work of the missionaries. The full blossoming of the church came about from 1700-1768 with the emergence of religious life for women and men (Schumacher, *Growth and Decline*, 22-54). Nevertheless, the Christianized natives were not mere passive recipients of the Christian faith. As Karl Gaspar argues, "While the Spanish friars Christianized the natives, the converts Filipinized the faith of the missionaries. In the process some of the traditional beliefs, practices and rituals either disappeared or evolved into new elaborate ones" (*The Masses Are the Messiah: Contemplating the Filipino Soul* [Quezon City: Institute of Spirituality in Asia, 2010], 124).

¹⁷ Abinales and Amoroso, *State and Society*, 51. In an apparent contrast, Schumacher presents a reading of the missionary endeavors that is sympathetic to the church,

particularly as the missionaries raised their voices against the abuses committed by the conquistadores, typically took great effort to instruct the converts about the Christian faith, and responded to their needs (*Readings in Philippine Church History*, 22-55; Schumacher, *Growth and Decline*, 1-21). When Joerg Rieger claims that “[c]olonial Christianity failed to question colonialism, mostly because it operated under the tacit assumption that the colonial enterprise was the Christian enterprise” (Joerg Rieger, “Theology and Mission between Neocolonialism and Postcolonialism,” *Mission Studies* 21(2004): 210), this seems not to be the case of the church in the Philippines. For instance, the Synod of Manila, held intermittently from 1582-1586, rejected the so-called right of conquest of Spain, regarded Spanish sovereignty over the Philippines as valid “to the extent that this was necessary for the preaching of the Gospel” (Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 28), and affirmed the fundamental equality of Spaniards and Filipinos, and the right of Filipinos to own their own land and to rule themselves (Schumacher, *Growth and Decline*, 5-15). Domingo de Salazar, the first bishop of Manila who assumed his office in 1581, was more radical in his view than the Synod. He was of the position that “the king of Spain could have no political rights over the Philippines except by just war or by free choice of the Filipinos” and he even went back to Spain to argue his case before the king (Schumacher, *Growth and Decline*, 7).

¹⁸ Abinales and Amoroso, *State and Society*, 52.

¹⁹ For a discussion of the “Moro Wars” (the Spanish expeditions to Muslim lands, the slave raids by Muslims in the Visayas and Luzon, and the naval battles between the Spaniards and the Muslims), cf. Majul, 121-297, 337-75. Cf. also Thomas McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in Southern Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 76-80.

²⁰ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 407.

²¹ Salah Jubair, *A Nation Under Endless Tyranny*, 2nd ed. http://www.maranao.com/bangsamoro/0204-evolution_of_moro.htm (accessed 11 August 2012).

²² Perhaps, Jubair’s rhetoric expresses a prejudice born of the fact that the word for slave among Muslims is *bisaya*, the same word that refers to the inhabitants of the Visayan islands (cf. Patricio C. Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History in the Muslim-Mindanao Narrative* [Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2010], 40, footnote 9).

²³ Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History*, 40.

²⁴ On the annexation of the Philippines by the Americans, cf. Frank Hidman Golay, *Face of Empire: United States-Philippine Relations, 1898-1946* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 1997), 1-89.

²⁵ Quoted in Peter Gordon Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos 1899-1920* (Quezon City: Philippine Center for Advanced Studies, University of the Philippines, 1977), 15-16.

²⁶ Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 257-314.

²⁷ Cf. Golay, *Face of Empire*.

²⁸ Cf. e.g., Midori Kawashima, "Explanatory Notes on the Maranao Petitions: Letters of Haji Bogabong, 1935," *The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 21 (2003): 219-232. As will be seen below, Patricio Abinales interprets these representations from a different perspective.

²⁹ Quoted in Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland*, 251-52.

³⁰ Cf. Nathan Gilbert Quimpo, "Colonial Name, Colonial Mentality, and Ethnocentrism," *KASAMA* 18 (2004), Solidarity Philippines Australia Network, <http://cpcbairisbane.org/Kasama/2004/V18n1/ColonialName3.htm> (accessed 15 July 2012). See also Patricio C. Abinales, *Making Mindanao: Cotabato and Davao in the Formation of the Philippine Nation-State* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000).

³¹ It seems to me that the Catholic Church is more culpable in this regard by virtue of its long history and power in the Philippines.

³² For an authoritative study of this controverted axiom in the Roman Catholic tradition, cf. Francis A. Sullivan, *Salvation outside the Church: Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2002).

³³ Cf. McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 114-24.

³⁴ For instance, cf. Faina C. Abaya-Ulindang, "Huks in the Land of Promise: The Rise and Demise of Economic Development Corps," *Graduate Forum* 8 (2010): 107-206. Cf. McKenna, *Muslim Rebels and Rulers*, 114-19.

³⁵ Tuminez contends, rightly I think, that just as the land is the root of the Bangsamoro issue, it is also the potential means of resolving the problem, see Astrid S. Tuminez, "This Land Is Our Land: Moro Ancestral Domain and Its Implications for Peace and Development in Southern Philippines," *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* 27(2) (2007): 77-91. Cf. also Astrid S. Tuminez, "Rebellion, Terrorism, Peace: America's Unfinished Business with Muslims in the Philippines," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 15 (2008): 211-23. Gutierrez and Borrás argue that, as a response to the armed conflict in Muslim Mindanao, redistributive land reform be an integral part of the solution (Eric Gutierrez and Saturnino Borrás Jr., *The Moro Conflict: Landlessness and Misdirected State Policies* [Washington, DC: East-West Center Washington, 2004]).

³⁶ It is important to consider that colonial and postcolonial policies are only partly to be blamed for the poverty of many Moros. The issue is more complicated than what the space here allows. For instance, the poor governance exercised by many Moro political leaders is part of the problem and has even exacerbated an already less than ideal situation. Take a look for example at the former political leaders of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao who displayed wealth disproportionate to their positions as public officials while the ordinary Moro lives in abject poverty, cf. the reports by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, Carolyn O. Arguillas, "Shamefully Rich, Clan Has 35 Houses and Fleet of Wheels," <http://pcij.org/stories/featured-stories/shamefully-rich-clan-has-35-houses-fleet-of-wheels/> (accessed 10 July 2012); Soliman M. Santos, Jr., "The Maguindanao Massacre, the

Bangsamoro Problem and the Peace Process, <http://pcij.org/stories/the-maguindanao-massacre-the-bangsamoro-problem-and-the-peace-process/> (accessed 10 July 2012); and Ed Lingao, "Putting Maguindanao in Context," <http://pcij.org/stories/putting-maguindanao-in-context/> (accessed 10 July 2012). There appears to be no genuine effort on the part of leaders such as them to empower the people and effect genuine change. It even appears that they are using the people as milking cows for their own ends and treat them as serfs in their perceived "feudal" lands.

See also Peter Kreuzer, "Political Clans and Violence in the Southern Philippines," *Peace Research Institute Frankfurt Report No. 71* (2005), <http://hsfk.de/downloads/PRIF-71.pdf> (accessed 1 July 2011). In this paper, Kreuzer highlights the need to understand the role of feuding political clans either with one another and/or with the armed Moro fronts in order to better understand the complexity of the situation and respond accordingly to it: "Any strategy which aims at resolving the political conflict between the MILF guerrillas and the Philippine state, must be aware of the interdependencies between the various arenas of violence and players and must therefore develop an integrated 'recipe' for civilising the violence" (Kreuzer, "Political Clans and Violence," iii).

³⁷ For a fuller treatment of the historical roots and contemporary causes of the Moro armed struggle, see Macapado Abaton Muslim, *The Moro Armed Struggle in the Philippines: The Non-Violent Autonomy Alternative* (Marawi City: Office of the President and College of Public Affairs, Mindanao State University, 1994), 52-133. See also United Nations Development Programme, *Philippine Human Development Report 2005: Peace, Human Security, and Human Development in the Philippines* (n.p.: Human Development Network, United Nations Development Programme and New Zealand Agency for International Development, n.d.), 66, http://hdr.undp.org/docs/reports/national/PHI_Philippines/Philippines_2005_en.pdf (accessed 30 June 2008).

³⁸ Cf. McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 80-85.

³⁹ Cf. Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History*; Abinales, *Making Mindanao*.

⁴⁰ McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 81.

⁴¹ McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 84. McKenna's contention is supported by Hayase who argues that while Islam served as the new principle of unity in the development of the Maguindanao sultanate, it was the interests of the ruling class that mattered when historical circumstances changed (Shinzo Hayase, *Mindanao Ethnohistory Beyond Nations: Maguindanao, Sangir, and Bagobo Societies in East Maritime Southeast Asia* [Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 2007], 39-79).

⁴² McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 81.

⁴³ McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 86-112.

⁴⁴ McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 104-106. Saleeby, who published the first scholarly work on Muslim Filipinos in English and who was the first superintendent of schools of the Moro Province, proposed that the traditional Muslim elites be used to implement American colonial policy. Aware that the various Muslim ethnolinguistic groups were not united, Saleeby also argued for "the formation of a new transcendent

Philippine Muslim identity: through the development of Morohood" (McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 106), a unifying identity which would serve as a means of preparing them for eventual integration into a postcolonial Philippine nation.

⁴⁵ McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels*, 186.

⁴⁶ Abinales, *Making Mindanao*, 2-4.

⁴⁷ Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History*, 37-39.

⁴⁸ Cf. Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History*, 34-72; Abinales, *Making Mindanao*, 45-68.

⁴⁹ Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History*, 39.

⁵⁰ Abinales, *Orthodoxy and History*, 119.

⁵¹ Rizal G. Buendia, "The Politics of Ethnicity and Moro Secessionism in the Philippines," *Working Paper No. 146*, Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University, November 2007, 17, <http://wwwarc.murdoch.edu.au/publications/wp/wp146.pdf> (accessed 15 October 2012).

⁵² Joint GPH-MILF Draft, "Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro," 2, emphasis added, <http://opapp.gov.ph/sites/default/files/GPH-MILF%20Framework%20Agreement.pdf> (accessed 11 November 2012).

⁵³ Vatican II, *Nostra aetate*, 2.

⁵⁴ Vatican II, *Gaudium et spes*, 22.

⁵⁵ The late John Paul II goes on to develop this pneumatological dimension of the Catholic Church's theology of religions in his writings, particularly in *Dominum et vivificantem and Redemptoris missio*, cf. O'Collins, "John Paul II on Christ, the Holy Spirit and World Religions."

⁵⁶ Cf. Second Formation Institute for Inter-Religious Affairs, 3.1, in FAPA III, 126.

⁵⁷ Cf. BIRA IV/7, 12, in FAPA I, 310.

⁵⁸ FABC I, 12 in FAPA I, 14.

⁵⁹ FABC I, 14, in FAPA I, 14.

⁶⁰ Second Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs, 12, in FAPA I, 115.

⁶¹ Felix Wilfred, "Becoming Christian Inter-religiously," in *Being Christian*, ed. Silvia Scatena, et al, Concilium (London: SCM Press and Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 62.

⁶² Cf. Michael L. Fitzgerald, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in South-East Asia," *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976): 171-77; Peter G. Gowing, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in

the Philippines 1976-1981," *Islamochristiana* 7 (1981): 211-25; Sebastiana D'Ambra, "Christian-Muslim Relations in the Philippines," *Islamochristiana* 20 (1994): 179-206.

⁶³ Michael Amaladoss, "Dialogue at the Service of Life," *FABC Papers* 72B (1995): 11.

⁶⁴ Julkipli Wadi, "Braving Muslim-Christian Dialogue: A Muslim Perspective," *MST Review* 6 (2004): 32. Given the apparent incommensurability of the different religious traditions, dialogue seems to be more promising when there is a focus on commonly shared human values rather than on doctrinal issues.

⁶⁵ The present-day attitudes of Filipino Christians toward the Moros are admittedly not merely an issue of reception but also involves issues such as of history, culture, memory, and power, all of which influence negatively or positively the reception of church teachings.

⁶⁶ United Nations Development Programme, *Philippine Human Development Report 2005: Peace, Human Security, and Human Development in the Philippines* (n.p.: Human Development Network, United Nations Development Programme and New Zealand Agency for International Development, n.d.), 58, emphasis in the original http://hdr.undp.org/docs/reports/national/PHI_Philippines/Philippines_2005_en.pdf (accessed 30 June 2008).

⁶⁷ Rudy Rodil, a Mindanao historian and peace advocate, underscores the importance of dealing with emotions in addressing the armed conflict in Mindanao and in the peace process (Rudy Buhay Rodil, "Notes on the Conflict with Mindanawons," *Tambara* 27 (2010), <http://ejournals.ph/index.php?journal=TAMBARA&page=article&op=view&path%5B%5D=1878>).

⁶⁸ This is taken from an email posted in an e-group that serves as a forum for the discussion of Mindanao concerns and issues.

⁶⁹ Ramon Tulfo, "The President Is a Weakling," *On Target*, 25 October 2011, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/82391/the-president-is-a-weakling>, (accessed 30 October 2011).

⁷⁰ Ramon Farolan, "Remembering Al-Barka," *Reveille*, 18 June 2012, <http://opinion.inquirer.net/30907/remembering-al-barka> (accessed 18 June 2012).

⁷¹ It may be of interest to note that two of the top ten "spoilers" of the peace process for the MILF are Roman Catholic bishops, cf. "MILF Lists Top 10 'Spoilers' of Peace Talks," 31 August 2011, <http://www.gmanews.tv/story/231026/nation/milf-lists-top-10-spoilers-of-peace-talks> (accessed 30 Oct 2011). While I present here stories of the biases of many Filipino Christians against the Moros, of which there are many others, I am not saying that they occur without any reason at all. On the contrary, it is true that many of these Christians had negative personal experiences of the Moros, stories which were shared and became part of the social consciousness of many Christians communities. It is also true that on the side of the Moros, they have their own prejudices against Filipino Christians which also are a part of their community's consciousness.

⁷² In a study of the Mindanao Bishops-Ulama Conference, it was reported that

priests who participated in the Imam-Priests-Pastors Forum received “negative feedback from parishioners, and... [were] ‘insulted, criticized, isolated and accused of being pro-Muslim’” (Brenda Fitzpatrick, “The Philippines. The Mindanao Bishops-Ulama Conference,” in *Pursuing Just Peace: An Overview and Case Studies for Faith-Based Peacebuilding*, ed. Mark M. Rogers, Tom Bamat and Julie Ideh, 127 (Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, 2008), http://www.crsprogramquality.org/storage/pubs/peacebuilding/pursuing_just_peace.pdf (accessed 21 June 2012).

⁷³ Since the time of this writing, the RH bill was passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Republic of the Philippines after lengthy and bitter debates. It was signed into law by President Benigno Aquino Jr., on 21 December 2012, as Republic Act No. 10354, the “Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012”—much to the dismay of many leaders of the Catholic Church and their supporters.

⁷⁴ CBCP, “We Must Reject House Bill 4110,” 31 May 2003, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=476> (accessed 12 July 2012). Three years before this, the CBCP issued a letter in which it criticized four bills in Congress which it deemed problematic. The bills it criticized involved the issues of divorce, the legalization of abortion, lesbian and gay rights, and population program (“‘That They May Have Life and Have It Abundantly’: Pastoral Statement on the Defense of Life and Family,” 26 January 2000, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=449> [accessed 12 July 2012]).

⁷⁵ Cf. CBCP, “Hold On to Your Precious Gift,” 18 February 2005, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=505>; “Standing Up for the Gospel of Life,” 14 November 2008, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=558>; “Reiterating CBCP Position on Family,” 16 September 2009, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=574>; “On the Government’s Revitalized Promotion of Condoms,” 2 March 2010 <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=580>; and “Securing Our Moral Heritage: Towards a Moral Society,” 24 July 2010, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=588>; (accessed 12 July 2012). The bishops also partly touched on the issues involved in the bill in another letter, “Saving and Strengthening the Filipino Family: A CBCP Pastoral Statement on the 20th Anniversary of *Familiaris Consortio*,” 2 December 2001, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=465> (accessed 12 July 2012).

⁷⁶ CBCP, “Choosing Life, Rejecting the RH Bill (A Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines),” 30 January 2011, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=1151> (accessed 24 June 2012).

⁷⁷ Eric M. Genilo, “Crossing the Line: Church Use of Political Threats Against Pro-RH Bill Legislators,” *Hapag: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Theological Research* 7 (2010): 63-77.

⁷⁸ For instance, Patricia Evangelista in her PDI column questions the pronouncements of church leaders against the RH bill, particularly the church’s understanding of “contraceptive mentality” and “artificial” in relation to contraceptives (Patricia Evangelista, “Contraceptive Mentality,” *Method in Madness*, 24 June 2012, <http://opinion.inquirer.net/31291/contraceptive-morality>, accessed 24 June 2012). For her part, Mary Racelis calls on church leaders to learn to listen to women and seriously consider the consequences of their decisions on them (“A Listening Church?,” <http://opinion.inquirer.net/31851/a-listening-church>, accessed 12 July 2012).

⁷⁹ I am making the presupposition here that an integral part of the Catholic Church's mission in Mindanao is the task of peacebuilding. When confronted with a conflict situation that has cost the lives of thousands and the destruction of property worth millions, the church cannot but consider peacebuilding as an urgent task.

⁸⁰ For examples of these efforts "from below," cf. Karl M. Gaspar, Elpidio A. Lapad and Ailynne J. Maravillas, *Mapagpakamalinawon: A Reader for the Mindanawon Peace Advocate* (Davao: Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao, Inc. and Catholic Relief Services, 2002). Cf. also LaRousse, *Walking Together Seeking Peace*, 389-406.

⁸¹ Cf. CBCP, "Joint Pastoral Letter on the Church's Mission of Peace," <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=240>, 1982 (accessed 12 July 2012); CBCP, "A Covenant Towards Peace," 21 November 1986, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=285> (accessed 12 July 2012); and CBCP, "The Fruit of Justice Is Peace," 26 January 1987, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=292> (accessed 12 July 2012).

⁸² CBCP, "Seek Peace, Pursue It," 31 January 1990, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=314> (accessed 12 July 2012). It must be pointed out that while the Bangsamoro issue is a question of sovereignty for the government, it is a question of self-determination for the Moros.

⁸³ Cf. CBCP, "Pastoral Statement of the CBCP on Peace-Building," 25 January 1993, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=345> (accessed 12 July 2012); and "Peace in Our Times," 12 July 1993, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=347> (accessed 12 July 2012).

⁸⁴ CBCP, "An Urgent Appeal for Peace in Mindanao," 6 July 2000, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=459>; (accessed 12 July 2012).

⁸⁵ CBCP, "An Urgent Appeal for Peace in Mindanao." In a previous letter, "Building a Culture of Peace by Respecting Life and Human Rights," the bishops underscored the need to build a culture of life, a culture of human rights and a culture of peace. The bishops referred to efforts being done to foster peace in Mindanao and stressed the need for dialogue (<http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=444>, 26 January 2000 [accessed 12 July 2012]).

⁸⁶ CBCP, "An Urgent Appeal for Peace," 10 March 2003, <http://cbcponline.net/v2/?p=489> (accessed 12 July 2012).

⁸⁷ CBCP, "Toward Building a Just and Lasting Peace in Mindanao (A Statement of Catholic Bishops in Mindanao on the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro)," 14 October 2012, <http://www.cbcnews.com/cbcnews/?p=5759> (accessed 7 November 2012). While it is the people of Mindanao who will be directly affected by any peace agreement, this statement will have more political weight if it was issued not only by the Mindanao bishops but by the entire CBCP.

⁸⁸ Mohagher Iqbal, "The Need for Urgency in Negotiation," http://www.luwaran.com/home/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1715:the-need-for-urgency-in-negotiation&catid=58:speeches&Itemid=543 (accessed 30 June 2011). These "decision-makers" that Iqbal refers to are mostly Christian politicians and

business people and Muslim political leaders who have been co-opted by the Philippine government.

⁸⁹ Iqbal, "The Need for Urgency in Negotiation."

⁹⁰ Bong D. Fabe, "Mindanao Dioceses, Catholic Universities Urged to Help Push Peace Process," CBCP News, 14 June 2011, <http://www.cbcnews.com/?q=node/15830> (accessed 30 June 2011).

⁹¹ Admittedly, the church in Muslim Mindanao has other faces. For instance, during the martial law years under President Ferdinand Marcos, many church people were at the forefront of the battle for human rights. Unfortunately, this and similar faces of the church have been marginalized with respect to the Moro issue.

⁹² Cf. John Paul Lederach, "Justpeace: The Challenge of the 21st Century," in *People Building Peace: 35 Inspiring Stories from Around the World* (Utrecht: European Center for Conflict Prevention, 1999), 27-36.

⁹³ Wilfred, *Margins: Site of Asian Theologies*, xi.

⁹⁴ For a study that highlights the agency and the power of the *bakwit* in the face of suffering, cf. Jose Jowel Canuday, *Bakwit: Power of the Displaced* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 2009).

⁹⁵ Proactive measures on the part of the church would mean a more active involvement on the part of its leaders in establishing harmonious relationships with leaders of both the military and the Moros and in building Christian communities of healing and reconciliation.

⁹⁶ Orlando B. Quevedo, "Injustice: the Root of Conflict in Mindanao," <http://www.bangsamoro.info/modules/wfsection/article.php?articleid=46> (accessed 30 June 2008). While Quevedo seems right in emphasizing injustice as the root of the conflict in Mindanao, Patricio Diaz argues convincingly that the solution to the "Muslim Problem" is the upliftment of the socio-economic life of the Muslim masses and not just the appeasement of Muslim leaders, cf. Patricio P. Diaz, *Understanding Mindanao Conflict* (Davao City: MindaNews Publication, 2003), 2-22.

⁹⁷ See the groundbreaking work, Robert J. Schreiter, R. Scott Appleby, and Gerard F. Powers, eds. *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010).

⁹⁸ Orlando B. Quevedo, "An Open Appeal for Peace and for Our Evacuees," 23 July 2009.

⁹⁹ On the ministry of reconciliation, cf. Robert J. Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies* (Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis Books, 1998); Robert J. Schreiter, "Reconciliation and Healing as a Paradigm for Mission," *International Review of Mission* 94 (2005): 74-83.

¹⁰⁰ Appleby, "Closing Statement."

¹⁰¹ While *pakikipagkapwa-tao* appears to be a distinctive Tagalog value, it seems that based on my informal conversations with persons of other ethnic groups *pakikipagkapwa-tao* has a dynamic equivalence in their own languages. Yet, this apparent similarity of values is not treated in this paper for reasons of brevity and will be explored in another study.

¹⁰² Virgilio G. Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology: The Philippine Experience* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1992), 43. For Enriquez, *kapwa* is a core Filipino concept that explains Filipino interpersonal behavior (*From Colonial to Liberation Psychology*, 39-55).

¹⁰³ Cf. Eduardo C. Vasquez, Jr., "A Glimpse on the Plight of the Internally Displaced Persons of North Cotabato and Maguindanao," 17 September 2009. Vasquez was the head of the interreligious ministry of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and concurrently parish priest of Sta. Teresita Parish at the time of the war. His stories of the experiences of several of the "bakwit" are heartrending and at times infuriating. For instance, money is extorted from the "bakwit" by unscrupulous individuals in order for the evacuees to receive the food tickets of the World Food Program (WFP). They were made to pay 5 pesos for every name that was registered in the WFP master list and when the food arrived, they were being charged 500 pesos when everything was supposed to be free!

¹⁰⁴ Appleby, "Closing Statement."