

Christian Education in Emerging Asia (1978)

Christian colleges and universities in the world today, particularly in Asia, are falling short of the standards of a Christian institution. This was a comment made by Dr. Paul T. Lauby, executive director of the New York based United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (UBCHEA), when he spoke at the Silliman University in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental.

Dr. Lauby, who just recently visited the United Board - supported schools in Asia, said that institutions of higher learning are facing "serious accusations of elitism and expansionism because they are torn between the lure of expansionism and the fulfillment of their missions."

He mentioned that it is not the largest university that is the most influential but the one with ideals and integrity. He also stated that Asia's vast expenditures on education are not paying off in terms of quality of life and social justice. He added that nations are not getting the fruits of their tremendous outlay in money; there is little correlation between education and the development of nations.

Lauby claimed that Christian schools are falling short of their Christian ideals, despite of their material expansion.

What is the state of Christian education in Asia today? What are its opportunities? Where are its problem areas? Does it have a future?

We live in post-colonial times. In the colonial area. Western powers often exploited their subjects. However, colonialism also brought benefits. It was under colonial rule that freedom of religion developed as a basic human right in Asia and Africa. In 1947, the United Nations drew up a "Universal Declaration on the Rights of Man", which it officially adopted at its General Assembly meeting in Paris in 1948. In this document, freedom of religion for everyone was proclaimed. In our post-colonial times, freedom of religion is on a serious decline. The situation is grave! The Church of Jesus Christ in the Western world must become a real voice for those who are threatened by the loss of this basic human right - the freedom of religion.

In many Asian nations, the whole enterprise of Christian education is either impossible to carry out or it is in a precarious state. In communist countries, the government monopolizes education with its Marxist ideology. In Islam and Buddhist nations, these religions have taken the sole right to feed the minds of youth.

Buddhism

Buddhism, as an ideology, lays claim to the total man, his culture and nation. Buddhists are rising up with the cry, "One religion, one race, one language."

In Thailand, Theravada Buddhism has been the religion of the state since the twelfth century. According to the constitution, the king must be a Buddhist. The princes bear the title "Defender of Buddhist Teaching."

Buddhism penetrates every part of Thailand's life. Westerners are often enamored by the Thai Buddhist way of life. They are impressed with the Buddhist teaching on the love for life. What do the Buddhists mean with "love for life"? It means leaving people well enough alone. If a man walks towards a collapsed bridge, you don't stop him. You don't want to interfere in the life of your fellowman. Buddhists are forbidden to kill. Thais don't kill their fish, but let them die on the beach until they die, and then eat them. What hope does Buddhism offer? Buddha claimed to be the "Enlightened One"; yet his answers to his disciples regarding the eternal destiny of the Buddhist were vague. When a young mother Kisogotami lost her first born baby and asked Buddha for "medicine" which would give life, Buddha told her, "You thought that you alone have lost a son? The law of death is that among all living creatures, there is no permanence!" As a former devotee of Buddha put it, "Buddhism is a 'law of death' rather than 'the Way of Life.'"

Thailand is a one religion state. Yet other forces, including growing evangelical Christianity, gain on influence in social and political life.

Islam

The cradle and center of Islam is oil rich Arabia. The vast majority of Muhammad's followers are in Africa and Asia. It is a theocratic religion. Politics and religion are intertwined. There is no separation between religion, and state in Islamic thought. In many new nations, Islam is the established religion. The Muslim philosopher Al Gazali wrote, "When Muhammad became head of state it was not a temporary expedient but the essence of Islam; and the notion that Islam can be merely religious is a ruse from Europe to undermine the faith. Sayyid Qutb defines social justice as the proper Islamic harmony between all departments of life."

In nations where Islam is the ideology of the state, you may become a Muslim, but the death penalty is reserved for converts to Christianity. In Iran the struggle is waged to make the nation an Islamic republic, governed by the dictates of the Koran. Western educated Iranians are deeply worried about this post-Shah development. They know that Islam isn't able to cope with modernization. Indicating a strict return to the new Islamic structures, Theran's educational department chief Ali Akbar Salimi Jahromi, ruled that "coeducation will be abolished throughout the country" as of the new school semester. How can Western-educated Iranians fit into an Islamic state?

Pakistan's very reason of existence is Islam. Pakistan means the "Holy Land." This implies that it was established as a religious state. Pakistan's new leader is a militant Muslim. He no longer allows conversion from one religion to another. This is in line in teaching with the Koran. This new decree has created a very uncertain situation for

missionaries and Pakistan's Christian minority. How can they spread the Gospel if nobody is allowed to convert to the Christian faith?

In the Philippines there has been a century old Muslim-Christian conflict. In search for peace and national unity, a spirit of Muslim-Christian ecumenicity is advocated by some observers. Father Thomas J. O'Shaughnessy wrote in his article "Christian-Muslim Empathy in an Hour of Crisis": "Deep sympathy should unite Christians with Muslims in the crisis of faith all believers are now going through. Both religions hold many basic doctrines in common; one God, creator and judge of mankind, who is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Moses; the prophets and the revelation they brought; Jesus, the sinless Messiah and worker of miracles, born of Mary, a virgin; the need for prayer, fasting, and alms-giving. It was not courtesy alone that led the fathers of Vatican Council II to say: `The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the creator. In the first place among these are the Moslems ... Upon the Moslems, too, the Church looks with esteem.'"

This new approach blurs the uniqueness of Christianity and dulls the sharpness of the Gospel. The antithesis is gone. The true distinctiveness of the Christian faith is still in apostle Paul's message: "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling; and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." (I Cor.2:2-5)

Hinduism

Hindus argue that an atheist can be a Hindu if he is a "good human being." Inter-faith dialogues are supposed to create a spirit of understanding and mutual tolerance for other religions. Hinduism claims to be THE religion of tolerance. Is this true in practice?

The Christian cause in Great India, a powerful federation of separate nations, is experiencing hard going. In a few small states 20 to 40 percent of the population are now Christian Protestant or Roman Catholic. Some remarkable expansion of denominations is going on in some parts of India. But last year's passing of Arunachal Pradesh's Freedom of Indigenous Faith Bill No. 4 1978 poses a serious threat to the freedom of religion all across India.

The Bill requires the signature of the President of India before it becomes law. Christians have urged their President not to sign it. What is the issue? The bill attempts to exterminate Christianity in the territory of Arunachal. It declares that offering "divine inducements" to anyone to persuade him or her to change his/her faith is a crime punishable by two years in prison and/or a fine of ten thousand rupees.

What does this mean? If a missionary or any other Christian reads John 3:16 or any other passage of Scripture to a citizen of Arunachal, this would be a criminal act and subject to punishment. If India's President signs the bill, nothing prevents similar bills

from being passed in other states in India. Tribals in Arunachal desire to become Christians, but the Hindu government is placing serious restrictions on civil liberties and human rights with the passage of bill 4 1978.

Secularism

Secular anthropologists still blame Christian missions for undermining the cultural practices and basis of faith of tribes and nationalities. Are missionaries agents of Westernization? The instruments of Westernization are no longer sold by Europeans or North Americans, but by Asians.

Don Richardson, author of *Peace Child* and missionary with Regions Beyond Missionary Union in Irian Jaya, comments: "I am amazed that when a Communist ideology drives hordes of young Red Guards to smash thousands of priceless works of art in China, or causes Cambodian soldiers to herd millions of city dwellers into rural areas, cultural purists do not raise their voices to condemn international communism for its worldwide destruction of cultures! But let them hear of a missionary giving a steel axe to a stone age tribesman, and the same scholars will write "diatribes!" Even though the tribesman will eventually get his axe elsewhere in any case, but at a price that may leave him impoverished!"

Europe and North America have spread the deadly sickness - secularism - throughout the world. What has dazzled the poor Third World countries has been the material achievements leading to comfort and luxury. The current economic crisis in the West caused by exuberant oil price increases has done little to dampen the Third World's enthusiasm for acquiring material wealth for the benefit of its masses.

Western secular education has provided a powerful solvent of Asia's inherent beliefs and ideologies, but it has been anything but a preparation for a favourable reception of the Gospel. It has knocked down ancient idols and put up new ones. The greatest danger in Asian higher educational institutions is the current infiltration of secular materialism. Rationalism as unaided human reason is taught to be the source of all human knowledge.

A recent editorial in the *Philippine Daily Express* vividly describes the destructive results of secularism in Southeast Asia: "While the torch of knowledge has guided the way to prosperity and undreamed of science and sophisticated social structures, it has also foisted new standards and ethics, new demands and pressures which contemporary man finds more and more difficult to cope with. The modern man's moorings have been cut. Where once he sought liberation from darkness, he now seeks bondage in his isolation, a gnawing alienation which cries out of subjugation to almost anything - beliefs, causes, mass movements- wherein he can still feel his presence as a human being in an increasingly mechanized world.

"His departure from idols, superstitions, and deeply held traditions has left modern man with nothing to cling to or seek home and meaning from. This may perhaps provide a

clue as to why there has been a proliferation of strange and at times violent sub-cultures in the world today - hippies, the love people, tattooed gangs, religious cults, the Symbionese Liberation Army, the People's Temple, the Lapiang Malaya, and a host of others. Cast into isolation, the modern man fends for himself against the social, economic, cultural, and political pressures which he hardly comprehends but is victim to. Science has turned into a race towards world annihilation. Industrialization has led to resource depletion and economic domination. Modernization has created goals and expectations beyond the reach of many."

I haven't written about communism as a hindrance to Christian education in Asia. The facts are too obvious. Wherever communism is in control, freedom of thought is squashed.

Is there an Asian philosophy of education? Each nation has its own way of educating its youth. Asia is a contrast with widest diversities. In a very real sense there is not one Asia but many. Most Asian nations are searching for self-identity and a new and viable social order that differs from any of the existing alternatives - capitalist or communist. Many Asian governments believe that a new order can only come through a unique Asian approach to social justice and nation building.

Education has a special role in nation building in Asia. In the Philippines, the government uses the educational system to promote its objectives. The Philippines is a difficult country to govern. The ministry of education faces an enormous task. And the educational problems of the Philippines must be understood before we can meaningfully discuss the role of Christian education in Asia.

Language

Anyone travelling in the Philippines far from his home must become somewhat of a linguist. English used to be, and in many cases, still is The language that can be used to some degree anywhere in this country. The only way an Ilocano and a Visayan Filipino can communicate is through English.

The administration of a national system of education for an area so rich in language must of necessity direct itself to the problem of the medium of instruction. When the Americans colonized the Philippines, they didn't only introduce to their new possession the secular public school system, but also the language. The initial choice of English is a medium of instruction for all grades made possible the rapid development of a school system that aided the unification of the Philippine islands and opened doors to a larger world. When independence came in 1946, English was retained but Tagalog (Filipino) the language spoken in Manila and Central Luzon is gaining momentum. The present government has decided to switch - within the very near future - to Tagalog as the major medium of instruction. The Board of National Education in 1972 said that "the educated Filipino will be bilingual in both English and Filipino."

The spirit of nationalism desires a Philippine national language. In practice it creates many difficulties as there are a few textbooks in Tagalog. And not all Filipinos welcome Tagalog as their national language. Cebuanos say: "Why use Tagalog? There are as many Cebuanos as Taglogs." English must be kept as the main language. Many Filipinos fear a narrowing of vision through the use of Tagalog as the major language of instruction in the schools. The Philippines as a nation is dependent on foreign trade and English is still the world's trade language.

As you meet older Filipinos, you find that they are quite proficient in English. They have received their schooling from American-trained teachers. The younger generation is far less proficient, depending on the schools they attend. In the Christian Reformed Seminary and Bible College there are students who have an excellent command of English, others can hardly understand it. The language problem in the Philippines is difficult to solve. It is hard on the students. It often hinders their educational progress.

The Moros In Southern Philippines

When Miguel Lopez de Legazpi arrived in the Philippines in 1565 to undertake the occupation of the islands for Spain, he discovered the presence of many Muslims. As the Spanish came into contact with Muslim Filipinos, they called the "Moors" or Moros, a name that is still in use today, but not necessarily appreciated by the people involved. The Spanish were never able to completely conquer the Southern Philippines where the majority of the Muslims live. It is the boast of the Filipino Muslims today that while other tribes were either forced to surrender to the Spanish or persuaded to accept them as their rulers, the Moros in the South were never conquered.

When the Spanish surrendered to the Americans in 1898 and the Philippines became a U.S. possession, the Moros were surprised. They never thought that they belonged to Spain. So they were not ready to welcome the Americans as their new masters. The Moros fiercely resisted the colonization of their part of the Philippines. But they were no match for the well armed and disciplined U.S. troops. The victory of the American led Filipino Scouts in June, 1913 at Mt. Bagsak near Jolo was the last bloody battle. During the Japanese occupation the Moros fought with Christian Filipinos against the invaders. It is said that, under the Americans, Moroland became "effectively a part of the Philippine nation ... Christians and Moros were brought into friendly peaceful contact ..." However, "the mandate was only partially fulfilled" before independence came to the Philippines in 1946.

Christian Filipinos, whom the ordinary Moros thought of as traditional enemies, controlled the new nation. The Philippine government has been sensitive to the Moros, but hasn't always understood them. The problems were complicated by the fact that when the Philippine government took control, their land had been devastated by the Japanese. The nation was in ruins and rebuilding took time, strenuous effort and millions of dollars.

The Moros are typical Muslims in orientation to life. They base their outlook on life on the dictates of the Qur'an. They view life as a unit. They feel far greater affinity towards their fellow Muslims in Borneo and Indonesia than for the Christian Filipinos. Congressman Salih Ututalum gives as an example the case of so-called "smugglers" accused of importing goods from Borneo into Sulu but who regard Borneo as a territory of the Sultan of Sulu.

The Moros generally see their relationship with the Christian Filipinos in religious terms. They just cannot understand or accept the religiously indifferent secularism of contemporary Philippines. They fear the secular public schools in the Philippines. They believe that the public school system is nothing but a conspiracy to destroy their faith. Peter Gowing, in his book *Muslim Filipinos - Heritage and Horizon*, writes that the Moros look upon population education and family planning programs as a plot to reduce their numbers. And they regard the national integration policy of the government as a devilish device to undermine their religion and culture and turn them into Christians.

The Moros today are also caught up in the resurgence of Islam. Many make the pilgrimage to Mecca. They are also in close contact with Arabian countries. Islamic literature is widely circulated. There is a lively interest in Arabic.

The prospect of a peaceful solution to the Moro problem has been rudely shattered by violence. In the late 60s, outright intervention through outside finances and military support for Moro rebels drastically changed the picture. Dissidents were trained under the banner of "Muslim Independence Movement" with local "Revolutionary Committees." The Moro rebellion was one of the reasons of the imposition of martial law by President Marcos in 1972. The Marcos government, to its credit, launched an all out effort to pacify the Southern Philippines through economic and educational programs.

The government has recognized Muslim customary law even when it conflicted with statutory law. Mecca bound pilgrims in distress have been given aid. Arabic has been recognized as a subject in elementary schools. Muslim religious holidays are accepted as national holidays in areas in which Muslims are numerous.

Many new religious schools (Madrassa), usually connected with mosques, have been established. They overflow with enrollees, both young and old. These schools are usually staffed by teachers who have studied in Islam centers in the Middle East. The basic principles of the Qur'an and the performance of Islamic ritual are part of the curriculum. The Philippine government has also sponsored the opening of two institutes of higher Islamic learning: The King Faisal Center of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Mindanao State University and the Institute of Islamic Studies in the Philippine Center for Advanced Studies, University of the Philippine System in Quezon City.

The establishment of the Mindanao Institute of Technology and the Mindanao State University (MSU) has been of great importance for the Moros. The MSU was authorized by legislative action in 1955 and established in September 1961. Of the 1,367 enrollees in 1965-1966 no less than 65 percent came from Muslim homes.

Philippine Catholic education

The Philippine Roman Catholic Church has vast agricultural and commercial holdings. Its financial assets are a noticeable factor in economic life. The wealth of the church has led to economic disputes. It has been involved in all the problems of the landlords, hacienda operations and business enterprises.

Vatican II and other winds of change have led to intense debate within the church regarding its wealth. How should the Philippine church react to the new social consciousness raised within various sectors of the Roman Catholic Church world-wide? What responsibility does the church have for the poor?

In the Philippines there is some revulsion against the statements made on social justice by the church's hierarchy. Activism by priests is often feared. Liberation theology hasn't taken root anywhere. It is espoused by a few, but very vocal and militant priests.

The average Roman Catholic finds the social justice rhetoric of church leaders often hard to distinguish from the communist line on the primacy of social justice. Many church members see the primary duty of the church as the guardian of the future life. Eternal life is the church's business and the problems of the world should be of little concern to the church. Private morality and not social ethics should be taught by the priests. Religion is otherworldly. It must not be engaged in social reform.

Roger Goulet wrote in the Philippines Free Press: "Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world' and the church took it from there. Those who would shake the church out of her 'centuries-old lethargy' with regard to social as opposed to individual sin should realize that it was not lethargy but keen tactical judgment that kept the church silent in regard to Caesar's doings."

The well known publicist Bishop Fulton J. Sheen holds a similar position. He says that Christ is concerned only with individuals and not with social structures. He claims that our Lord never criticized Roman Imperialism. He wrote in the Manila Daily Bulletin that

Christ "left Roman coins jingling in subjugated pockets, alien politicians in domestic courts, Caesar's legions tramping in drill around his Father's temple."

The Philippine Catholic Church faces a tremendous shortage of priests. The Philippines had nearly the same number of priests in 1960 (3,239) that it had in 1898 (3,044) when the population was only one-fourth as large. This means a ratio of one priest to every 7,004 Roman Catholics. The clergy shortage is worse today. There are parishes of 20,000 souls or more with only one priest. About a third of the Roman Catholic priests are foreigners. Many of them come from Holland, Belgium, Germany, U.S. and Ireland. Though the priests are generally respected and the priesthood considered important, few Filipinos are willing to choose this vocation for themselves.

This shortage of priests has led to a minimum of services in the rural areas. Most barrios (villages) seldom see a priest and have mass only on special occasions.

Religious education is virtually non-existent. The priest is too busy with funerals, weddings, celebrations of the mass and baptisms to have time to instruct youth in the basic doctrines of catholicism. The result is known as "folk-catholicism." The specific practices of the people vary greatly from the official teaching of the church. But folk catholicism is not only found in barrios. Many educated as well are its devotees.

Folk-catholicism is a type of compartmentalization. Christianity is not only believed, but the idea of ghosts and the powerful influence of evil spirits is also accepted. A Filipino said about the persistence of ancient beliefs in his own mother: "One of those who mentioned Kal-la is my own mother. Now my mother is as Christian as any woman I know, but yet when she gave vent to the emotion of grief, she spoke the idiom of our father's father and turned for assuagement to the pre-Spanish god. For Kal-la is the name of the old god of the underworld which our forefathers believed in. He and other gods, as well as fairies of our pagan past, still hover over our dark rural communities, occupying the dark trees, the rivers, the depth of the sea, the loneliness of the Islands, the anthills, and the subconscious of our people."

Even the students of the scientific seventies haven't been able to entirely shake 'off the shackles of ancient Philippine beliefs and practices. A college teacher commented: "I found a group of students in a college class in literature heavily believing in superstition ... They could not understand how terribly inhibiting of spiritual growth superstition can be. They could not understand the 'unbeliever' who must be either a snob or a charlatan They must have felt I was betraying our old customs and traditions; or so their youthfully reproachful faces looked when I debunked their cherished beliefs in the old man of the mountains, the aswangs (witches), the mangkukulams (wizards)."

Many educated contemporary Roman Catholics compartmentalize - religion and secular life - creating a special existence for the two. (Yet, the secular Roman Catholic Filipino also believes in the ancient spirits.) He talks about holy living, but at the same time he says that "business is business." The worker should be hired for the lowest possible wage. A little graft will go a long way to expedite business transactions. This split-level thinking explains, in some measure, the frequent cases of corruption in the Philippines, social injustice and exploitation in a so-called Christian nation.

Religious orders operate private schools. Only the rich can afford them, but they do provide education at a responsible academic level. There is a marked difference between the schools for the poor and the rich. Rich children are driven to their elementary schools by their chauffeurs. These kids don't even carry their own schoolbags. They are carried for them by either their chauffeur or their personal maid.

At all levels the Roman Catholic schools operate with the nature-grace scheme. Religion classes are taught, religious rituals are observed, but the curriculum is secular.

The Philippines has 12 Roman Catholic universities. San Carlos in Cebu and Santo Tomas in Manila are the two oldest. San Carlos was established in 1595 by the Jesuits.

In 1935 it was taken over by the Society of the Divine Word and university status was achieved in 1948.

Santo Tomas was founded by the Superiors of the Dominican Province of the Most Holy Rosary In 1811. It was raised by Pope Innocent X to the rank of a university in 1845. It was placed under royal patronage In 1880 by Charles II. In 1902, Pope Leo XIII bestowed upon the university the title Pontifical. Santo Tomas is the only Pontifical university of the Philippines and the Far East. Catholics from all over Asia attend Santo Tomas as it offers an excellent education and a wide spectrum of courses.

Why did the Spanish establish universities? Spanish education was almost entirely under the direction of the friars. Education was seen as a means to substitute the pre-Christian Malay civilization with the Spanish Christian civilization. The friars saw no difference between Christianization and Hispanization.

The Philippine Roman Catholic universities have broken with their colonial past. They desire a positive role in the formation of the Philippine nation. The 1978-1979 Prospectus of Santo Tomas say: "The Catholic University according to Gaudium et Spec should be a meeting place among cultures, a place of encounter, dialogue, and exchange of culture in order 'to enable society to be responsible for and to promote the spiritual and moral maturity of the human race.'"

Roman Catholic education in the Philippines is in the midst of the throes of change. It is drinking deeply from the wells of secularism, while the students are still Influenced by ancient Philippine Malay beliefs and practices.

With the American occupation of the Philippines in 1898 came an influx of Protestant missionaries. The first Protestant missionary to arrive on the new field was the Presbyterian pioneer missionary Rev. James B. Rodgers, who came in April, 1899. He started his work in Luzon. The American Baptists arrived on the field in 1900 and concentrated their efforts on the islands of Panay and Negros. The Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches was formed in 1935. Convention Baptist churches are now not only in the cities, but even in small barrios. Leadership of their churches is drawn from the College of Theology connected with the Central Philippine University in Iloilo, and the Convention Baptist Bible College in Bacolod City.

Protestants experienced good numerical growth for years. But with the growth of the various denominations came division. Peter G. Gowing comments in his book *Islands Under The Cross*: "This was perhaps inevitable, given the principle of religious liberty, unavoidable personality differences in understanding of the Gospel, and the dynamics of Filipino nationalism, to say nothing of the misjudgments and mistakes of the American missionaries."

Since the Second World War many new Protestant mission societies and denominations have started work in the Philippines. Protestantism is now frightfully fragmented. Denominational disputes are often American imports. Many of the separatistic Baptists

groups have continued to fight their battles in the Philippines, instead of leaving their differences behind in their home-land. In Negros Occidental there are some 30 different Baptist churches. The continued and ever increasing divisions within evangelicalism is a great hindrance to an effective Gospel witness. The large Roman Catholic majority and the Muslim population find the multitude of denominations, missions and sects are hard to grasp.

From the very beginning of their mission efforts, Protestants saw the need for educational opportunities for their converts. Schools were soon started in many parts of the Philippines. These Protestant schools don't owe their origin so much to the official action of churches or organizations, but to the enthusiasm of missionaries, pastors and local laymen. Among the Protestant denominations, the Episcopal schools are cited as the most extensive. They have 212 elementary schools with 2,811 pupils, 9 high schools with 5,602 students, employing a total of 375 teachers.

The Protestant schools are of the American type, strongly influenced by Western philosophies of education. They are also feeling the current of secularism. Direction is lacking.

Protestant schools are scattered in different areas in Mindanao, Visayas and Luzon. Of the 19 Protestant-related universities and colleges, only two are located in Manila. Therefore, those who have no opportunity to go to Manila, the educational centre of the Philippines, can avail themselves of an education in a convenient location.

Filipinos are grateful for the educational services provided by the Protestant schools; but the close relation of Protestant education to the U.S. is criticized. Filipino Christian educators David and Evelyn Feliciano say regarding the Protestant-run schools: "For our changing society it may not be the perfect type. And it is our responsibility as Christians and as citizens to evolve one that will answer our particular needs."

Many Protestant schools are members of the Association of Christian Schools and Colleges (ACSC), a government approved association of schools. This organization reports 48 member schools, 8 affiliate member schools and 2 fraternal member schools enrolling more than 50,000 students as of 1965.

The two most outstanding universities within the ACSC are Silliman University and Central Philippine University (CPU). Silliman University is located in Dumaquete City in the province of Negros Oriental. It had a small and humble beginning. In 1901, the Rev. and Mrs. David S. Hibbard opened a school with the help of a \$10,000 gift from Col. Horace B. Silliman of Cahoes, New York. The first students were fifteen barefooted elementary pupils. This once small school is now a full-fledged university, comprising eleven schools and colleges. In 1935 it received university status. The first Filipino president was appointed in 1953. Its academic standards are excellent. In 1972 the enrollment was 4,080.

Stillman's roots are evangelical, but it has gradually lost its evangelical basis and testimony. It is also influenced by the secular spirit of our times. In December, 1964, an unprecedented event for the Philippines took place right at Silliman; Bishop Epifanio Surban of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dumaguete gave an address of welcome to the delegates of the Asian Christian Youth Assembly held on the campus of Silliman University.

In 1905 a Baptist missionary couple, the Rev. and Mrs. W. Valentine organized the Jaro Industrial School in Iloilo for poor boys on Panay Island. This school developed into the Central Philippine University. It is run and operated by the American Baptists and the Convention of Philippine Baptist churches. It received university status in 1953. In 1972 the enrollment was 5,426.

CPU has no longer a positive evangelical witness. Its ministry is suspect by the Convention Baptist Churches in Negros Occidental. Within the faculty there is no unanimity on either the creeds or philosophical direction. I have talked with several CPU faculty members and convention Baptist leaders who were discouraged by the educational trends and lack of positive Christian stance and philosophy within their denominational schools.

Protestant schools in the Philippines are caught in the winds of change. Through their close relation to the American school system, they have been strongly influenced by secularism. The close ties with America have also often prevented the meeting of the needs of the Filipino, who is becoming increasingly conscious of his national identity and Malay-Oriental heritage.

Values, strengths, weaknesses

Education doesn't take place in a vacuum. The traditional values, the influences from abroad, as well as the hopes and dreams for a greater developed nation determine the direction of education in the Philippines.

The Filipino believes himself to be the most modern of Asians. Yet Philippine society has remained by and large a society with a stress on tradition, authority, personalism, harmony with nature and people rather than autonomy, mastery and achievement.

The Filipino rather avoids than resolves conflict. Loyalty to the family has greater value than self-reliance. Any great event in an individual's life is a family concern. The family offers security in times of crisis, and emotional and material assistance. Even in our day of greater independence and freedom in dating, the parents' opinion and evaluation still determine to a large extent the individual's choice of a mate.

Women are more faithful worshippers in the Roman Catholic Church than men. Women are also predominant in the activities of the Protestant churches, though to lesser extent than their Roman Catholic counterparts. Protestant men are more willing to take up leadership roles in the church. The male Roman Catholic Filipino believes that he has

complied with his religious obligations when he makes sure that his wife and children regularly attend church services. He doesn't see any wrong in occasionally missing church if he has been out on a heavy Saturday, evening party with his friends. Sunday is either spent working or with his family.

Students coming from a traditional Filipino oriental home respect authority, find systematic planning, scientific experimentation and independent research difficult. Smooth interpersonal relationships between teacher and student are valued. If at all possible, disagreement and outward signs of conflict are avoided.

Filipino schools stress rote memorization. I have met students who were able to reproduce their lecture notes almost verbatim. This enables them to pass their exams with flying colours without necessarily having absorbed the content of the lectures. One of the challenges the teachers of the Christian Reformed Seminary and Bible College face is the development of teaching methods that will encourage students to learn to grasp the thought of a lecture or a book and to write in their own words a term paper, instead of copying sections or paragraphs of a book. The development of critical thinking is necessary for the Filipino church in its process of producing an indigenous Biblical theology.

How well prepared for college is the average graduate from an ordinary school? Many college students need five or six years to complete a four year college program. Extra summer courses are often required to help students overcome their academic weaknesses. Students from barrio high schools never get the opportunity to become acquainted with good books or even with a library. Their academic development is usually sketchy. In 1947 the late Dean Francisco Benitez said before the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities (PACU): "You are building great institutions for higher education, but I would remind you of the plight of our elementary schools. Unless these are improved, you are building a concrete house on bamboo foundations."

In the Philippines the time has come to consider two different standards what is wanted and what is needed. A college diploma and a degree, regardless of content, are highly priced possessions. The desire for college education at all cost has led to the founding of "diploma mills." Many of the colleges and universities with the largest enrollment are owned and operated by stockholders for a profit. These schools are classified by the government as "non-sectarian." In defense of the profit making schools, Mr. Sotero H. Laurel of the Lyceum of the Philippines declared at a conference on "Nation Building and the Private Schools" held in 1964: "The truth is that, contrary to popular belief, only a few private schools have declared annual dividends, often not more than 6% on total investment. ... The Lyceum of the Philippines, for instance, has declared dividends only once in the course of its twelve-year existence-token 1 % six years ago."

The diploma mills churn out hundreds of students each year with low quality of education. Students in these institutions also live in terribly crowded housing. Poor students can usually only afford a "bed-space." In cramped quarters students have only a bed to sleep in, but no place for study or recreation.

In the eyes of the Westerner the educational picture in the Philippines appears to be gloomy and quite faulty; but considering the past, real progress has been made. The government is constantly trying to find ways to upgrade the school system. Improvements are badly needed, but the educational system has also some measure of success. The writer of a critical review in *The Economic Monitor* prefaced his analysis of the faults and weaknesses in today's education in the Philippines by a timely reminder that not everything is wrong: "Basically, the system is working; more people have received education than have received none; more people are literate than are illiterate; more people are employed than are unemployed There are professionals, semi-professionals, and laborers who have gone through the school system and have received excellent training."

How do young churches in Asia hold on to their youth? How are their young people kept within the fellowship of the Church? How do Asian Christian leaders present the fullness of the Gospel to a rising generation? How can Asian Christians overcome the foreign image of Christianity, as it is still commonly regarded as a western religion and the Christian mission still generally identified with a white face?

Witness the one-way relationship of the "older" with the "younger" churches; the leadership of Christian missions is still mainly in the hands of Western specialists and strategists. Schools of missiology are located in the West and not in Africa or Asia where the action is. A paternalistic attitude towards the "young" mission church is often still obvious.

Theological education, as one way of equipping converts for the task of pastor or Bible worker, has always been given a prominent place in mission strategy. "Western missionary history," wrote Dr. Verkuyl in his latest book, *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction*, "and the history of the young churches, prove time and again that, humanly speaking, whether a church will expand or decline is so vitally linked to the training and equipping of native leadership."

Assisting education has always ranked as one of the oldest forms of financial support in the modern history of missions. Large sums of mission money has gone into educational institutions. "Such ventures," comments Dr. Verkuyl, "deserves the support of Christians everywhere, and it is gratifying to note the number of organizations which support such undertakings."

The Christian Reformed Seminary and Bible College in Negros Occidental is one such institution that is still totally dependent on foreign funds. Leadership training is badly needed for the young and growing Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines, but this small denomination has no financial resources of its own. Even the students themselves need almost complete financial assistance throughout their years of study at CRSBC.

One question often raised by Western Christians is: Why can't more highly qualified and prospective leaders come to the West for training? Training Asians in the West for effective leadership in their own churches is not the answer. Theological education must

take into account cultural dynamics. An Asian Student in the West will not receive the sensitivity towards his own culture so badly needed for effective communication and leadership in his own country.

Far too many theological students are invited to study in the West. I believe that this is a misuse of the Western churches' financial resources. Funds for the education of Third World Christian leaders are far better spent in their own countries, where educational facilities are steadily improving.

Funds for the improvement of higher theological education in the Third World is a matter of great urgency. The well known missiologist Stephen Neill notes that it has to be admitted that the well meant efforts of the Theological Education Fund have resulted only in further westernization of theological training, and so in the production of leaders even further removed than their predecessors from the ordinary life and activities of the churches. He also observes that there is no agreement as to the steps that need to be taken, but that there is agreement that they need to be radical and that the western pattern of training is no longer acceptable.

Theological schools in Asia are challenged from many directions to reexamine their structural models. A survey of non-evangelical Asian schools show that they want to address themselves to what they view as their basic concerns: How to interpret aspects of Asian traditional cultures. How to see poverty, modernization, development and social revolution in the context of God's redeeming purpose for mankind.

Social justice for the Third World's poor is of foremost concern to Asia's theologians. Their approach to the issue betrays their theological background, their view of Christ and the Scriptures. At Wennappuwa, Sri Lanka, the Asian Theological Conference met from January 7-20, 1979. The conference was sponsored by the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians. It brought together some 80 Asian theologians, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. Its theme was "Asia's Struggle for Humanity." It emphasized the desire for a "liberational thrust" in theology: "We believe that God and Christ continue to be present in the struggles of the people to achieve full humanity as we look forward in hope to the consummation of all things when God will be all in all."

A most encouraging development is the attempt of Asian evangelicals to face today's issues. There is a new desire to work together. To name a few of these developments: The Evangelical Fellowship and the Theological Society of India has been formed. In recent years the Japanese Evangelical Association and the Japanese Evangelical Theological Society were founded. This spirit of cooperation authenticates the Gospel message in Asia, where denominational fragmentation has been a real stumbling-block for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Christian education is of course not confined to theological education. Christian universities and colleges are also in the process of rethinking fundamental questions, their ministries and their place and function in Asia.

What is Christian education?

The term itself is simple enough and yet many Christians don't agree on its meaning. Not only in North America, but also in Asia, many evangelicals still associate the term with Sunday school, and Sunday school in turn is associated with the one hour of church education before or after the Sunday morning worship service.

Philippine evangelicals view Christian education as "essentially the educating of people everywhere in the life and way of Christ and in accordance to biblical principles." However, even this concept of Christian education is largely meant to be implemented through the Sunday school. Therefore, much time and a great deal of energy are spent on promoting and improving the Sunday school.

A few years ago, the Philippine Association of Christian Education (PACE) was founded to assist the evangelical churches with their education program. The general aim of PACE is to bring together evangelicals from every denomination in the country for an aggressive and nation-wide drive "to set high standards of C.E. in each agency of the local churches of the Philippines."

To motivate, train and mobilize C.E. leaders, National Sunday school conventions, staffed by experienced Bible teachers and theologians from the Philippines and other countries, have been conducted. However, Christian education shouldn't be limited to the one hour Sunday school class. Jesus Christ must be recognized as Lord in all aspects of education.

It is encouraging that more and more evangelical leaders in Asia are coming to see the need for a broader view of Christian education. A real breakthrough came when in November, 1978, at the University of Singapore, the 5th ATA (Asian Theological Association) Theological Consultation, with 90 theologians, met simultaneously for several joint sessions with 110 Christian educators from 16 Asian countries (including Australia and New Zealand), who attended the Pan-Asia Christian Education Seminar (PACES). Dr. Bong Ro, the executive secretary of ATA reported that both groups recognized their interdependence and pledged themselves to cooperative ventures. It was said that the ministry of Christian education is not just for women, nor confined to Sunday school. Christian education must play a significant role in the total ministry of the church.

In the theological consultations a greater awareness of the dangers of secularism was noted. Topics for discussion included "the importance of the Scripture on Gospel and Culture, Contextualization and Syncretism, Sociological Perspectives, and the Gospel and Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Communism, and Secularism." Christians were urged to re-create elements of their own culture under the Lordship of Jesus Christ while other elements, like idolatry, must be rejected as contrary to the Word of God.

ATA and PACES were part of a larger conference. The Asian Leadership Conference on Evangelism (ALCOE) also met. During their conference evangelical leaders affirmed together their commitment to evangelization, "pledging themselves to seek to establish a Christian witness in each of Asia's unreached people groups, to evangelism and loving service, to pray and show concern for those who suffer for Christ." " ALCOE participants noted that the task of evangelism in Asia has become more difficult because of an "all-pervading materialistic worldview."

They also said: "Political utopianism is simplistic because of its unfounded optimism about human nature. Individualistic escapism into selfish materialism is an unacceptable alternative. All ideologies which deny God, our Creator and Redeemer, his rightful place and distort man's true value and goals, must be countered by relevant Christian response in words and deeds." They called for the training of the most able Christian "minds to write and speak so as to show the relevance of the Gospel to the whole of society, not only to the individual but also to human society." And they encouraged "gifted young men and women to enter all levels of society, to maintain Christian standards, to seek a just human society, and to alleviate the suffering caused by poverty."

Will this deeper insight into Christian education lead to the forming of a holistic biblical world and life view, able to battle the hosts of ancient and modern Asian idols? Will evangelicals develop such a broad vision that it will lead to the establishment of Christian education centers, institutions and even universities? Let us pray that this will indeed happen. But time is running out. Jesus said: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

When Dr. Paul T. Lauby, executive director of the New York-based United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (UBCHEA) was at the Silliman University in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, some time ago, he voiced his concern about the shortcomings in the standards of Christian colleges and universities in the world today, particularly in Asia. He also gave his opinion on what an ideal Christian university should be.

Does Christian education have a future in Asia? I believe so. One of the most promising signs is the realization among prominent evangelicals that Christian education is broader than the Sunday school hour.

What type of Christian education will be effective in Asia? Let me be so bold as to make a few suggestions.

Lordship of Jesus Christ

The Lordship of Jesus Christ must not remain limited to the life of the individual Christian. The biblical message is radical. Christ must be confessed as the Sovereign Lord who gives salvation and shalom. Christian educators need to see the cosmic - every sphere

reign- of Jesus Christ. Christ must be central in education. In the classroom the teacher and student both must realize that there is no distinction between truth and Christianity (John 14:6). Nothing can be separated from Christ.

Authority

Loyalty to Scripture is needed. The Bible is the "book of the Kingdom of God." From it we derive our authority. In our age, the sayings "I think this way" or "I feel that way" have often more authority even among Christians than the "Thus says the Lord." In Christian education the Word of the Lord must give directives. Nothing is to be excluded from the authority of Scriptures.

Mission and the cultural mandate

I have been asked: "Isn't foreign mission work more important than Christian education?" I don't believe that a Christian can ever say; "I will support missions, but not education," or vice versa.

Our world is belaboured by antagonism, social injustice and violence. Our world is distressed, distraught and frightened as a result of its offenses against the holy and just God. In this world the liberating Gospel must be proclaimed with urgency. The love of Christ constrains every Christian to be a witness and to call sinners to repentance. But this is not all. The Christian as a new creature in Christ - as the restored image-bearer of God- still has to fulfill his cultural mandate. Genesis 1:28 and Matthew 28:19 are both in Scripture.

In Asia the emphasis on the cultural mandate is much needed. Man's role as ruler of nature as well as steward who cares for God's creation must be taught.

Antithesis

Antithesis? Is this not an old fashioned word? No! The term clearly expresses the battle that is being waged in Asia. There is no neutral territory, neither in Asia nor for that matter in any part of the world. A war is being waged between Satan and his forces, and Christ and his kingdom. In human affairs there is a war fought between those who serve God and those who don't serve him (Mal. 3:18). It is a global war and it is a battle for the mind of man. There is a warfare in the field of reading, nature, history etc. "Our Christianity is to cover the whole of our life, and effect our every relationship. Nothing that the Christian does is the same as that which is done by a non-Christian." (D.M. Lloyd Jones, *Life in the Spirit in Marriage, Home and Work*.)

Christians should not be ashamed if they encounter opposition to the Gospel from natural man, but they should be ashamed if they soften the Gospel to make it palatable to one and all. (1 Cor.1:21-25).

Christians must declare that only Christ can save man and his culture. It is Christ by whom all things consist. It is to him that everything must be subjected. If you are not subjected to him you are driven and motivated by forces opposing Christ. (II Cor.10:4-5). Reformed missionaries face a tremendous challenge. They are at the forefront in the battle for the heart and mind of man. I hope that the Reformed community will continue to prayerfully support their missionaries as they proclaim the liberating message of the Gospel with all its implications for this life and the life to come.

Give tongues of fire and hearts of love,
To preach the reconciling Word;
Give power and unction from above,
Where're the joyful sound is heard.

Johan D. Tangelder