



BECs IN VATICAN II AND BEYOND: ROWING, NAVIGATING RIVERS, SAILING ON¹

Estela P. Padilla

With insight born from a longstanding experience and life lived together with the people, the paper deftly marries the doctrine put forth by the Second Vatican Council – on what is the church and how to be ‘church’ – with its actual practice and application through the journey of the Basic Ecclesial Communities in the Philippines in the past 50 years.

Culturally-sensitive in its theological approach, the paper gleans the stories and rich accounts of the people in the BECs and provides a remarkable and even radical picture of the faith and human life of these communities. The paper, thus, harvests a substantial, if not comprehensive, validation of the impetus of the change that Vatican II initiated in the Church.

INTRODUCTION

The oldest BECs² in the country (Tagum, Mindanao) are preparing to celebrate their 50 years of existence making BECs a fruit of Vatican II. Life in the BECs therefore is a way of receiving Vatican II teachings, a continuing interpretation of this paradigmatic church

¹This paper was presented in Butuan City. The title was drawn out of the image of *balangays* - boats of ancient Filipinos (also called Butuan boat) used for trading with neighboring Asian countries in the 10th century. The *balangays* and their enterprising crew showcased the engineering, economic and communication/negotiation capabilities of Filipinos five centuries before the Spaniards (who were supposed to have ‘discovered’ the Philippines) arrived. This paper is using this image of the *balangay* to articulate the creative and empowering journey of BECs in the Philippine church and in the wider world.

²For general information about BECs in the country, check the doctoral dissertations and writings on BECs of Emmanuel de Guzman (Quezon City, Maryhill School of Theology) and Amado Picardal (CBCP-BEC Desk, Intramuros Manila). See also G. Mendoza, *Church of the People: the Basic Christian Community Experience in the Philippines* (Manila: Bishops-Businessmen Conference on Human Development, 1988); J. Delgado, E. Gabriel, E. Padilla, A. Picardal, eds., *BECs*:



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event.³ However, life grows faster than what a document can predict. This article will explore how life in the BECs has explored deeper or perhaps even furthered the teachings of Vatican II. Although using stories and examples from BECs, this is **not** a general report on the description of life in the BECs. This article is a limited way of looking at *some* aspects of life experienced by *some* BECs allowing for reflections on *some* possibilities for a church relevant for our times.⁴

This paper will look into two church concepts/images discussed in *Lumen Gentium* (LG) – the church as ‘local’ and as the ‘Body of Christ’. To explore these images, this paper will use the imagery of boat/sailing – the *balangay* – to articulate the journey of BECs in the Philippines in relation to its reception of Vatican II. Exploring the two church concepts/images, **rowing** (*pamamangka*) will mention briefly how BECs have affirmed some specific Vatican II (LG) teachings; **navigating or crossing rivers** (*pagtawid sa mga ilog*) will discuss how BECs have explored deeper or furthered Vatican II (LG) teachings; **sailing on** (*paglalayag*) will briefly mention how BEC life and mission in the Philippines can also sail on to other (western) seas as some local aspects of its life and mission dialogue with contemporary theological and philosophical waves in late modern or post Christian settings⁵.

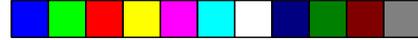
The exploration for each part starts with a local BEC story and closes with a short contextualized theological articulation (in Tagalog) arising from the life in the BECs.

Dream of Reality (Taytay: Bukal ng Tipan – CICM, 2004) and Y. Arquiza, ed., *Creating a Culture of Sustainability for BECs* (Manila: CBCP-BEC Desk, 2008). For updated reports on BECs in the country, visit <http://www.cbcpbec.com>.

³For general theological reflection on interpreting Vatican II, see the following: Alberto Melloni and Christoph Theobald, eds., *Vatican II: Forgotten Future? Concilium* 2005/4; Vatican II Fifty Years Later *Concilium* 2012/3; D. Schultenover, ed., *Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2007); Raymond Lucker and W. McDonough, *Revelation and the Church: Vatican II in the 21st Century* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003).

⁴The reflections on this paper came from my experience as BEC pastoral worker for 20 years (parish level), 14 years (national level), 20 years (Asian level) and the past 3 years networking at the intercontinental/global level.

⁵The past 5 years, I have had contact/working relationships with some dioceses, parishes and faith communities in Germany, Switzerland and the UK regarding BECs and the development of their local churches.



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PART I: BEC AND THE CHURCH AS LOCAL

The Story of a BEC in Cabanban, Cebu **May the joy of the Risen Lord be with you!**

We are a basic ecclesial community in Cabanban, Lutopan, Toledo City, Cebu. Cabanban is a small hamlet on top of a mountain, near the mining area of the Atlas Mining Company. The company stopped its operation in 1992 due to labor unrest and an impending bankruptcy.

In 1999, our parish priest, Fr. Mike Hisoler, sent the parish formation team to our place to conduct an orientation seminar about the BEC. This was attended by over 30 people. The seminar started in the morning and went on until late in the evening. There were many topics that we discussed: the situation of our country, God's dream for humanity, the Church, the BEC as a new model of being church, the process of reflecting on the Word of God as a community, etc.

After the seminar we were divided into 3 *selda* (cells) with 7 to 12 members each. The cells were called *Birben sa Fatima* (Virgin of Fatima), *Inahan sa Kanunayng Panabang* (Mother of Perpetual Help) and *Birben sa Medalya Milagrosa* (The Virgin of the Miraculous Medal). Each *selda* elected its own leader (*alagaad*), assistant (*kaabag*), secretary and treasurer. The whole community also elected the *Presidente sa Katilingban* (the president of the small Christian community).

The members of the Parish follow-up team visited us occasionally and encouraged us to meet regularly to reflect on the Word of God. Thus, every week each cell comes together for the MaKaLiPang. This is an acronym for *Maayong Balita* (good news), *Kasinatian* (experience), *Libok* (action), *Pangamuyo* (prayer). This describes the process of our weekly gathering. There is time to listen to and reflect on the Good News. This is followed by the sharing of our experiences in the light of the Word. Then we discuss any concrete problem and plan on how we can act together to help solve the problem. And we end with a prayer. The weekly gathering of each cell has brought the



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members of the cells closer to one another. All the cells and members of the community also come together every Sunday for the Bible-Service in our chapel. A lay minister from the parish comes to lead the liturgy and give us communion.

The members of the follow-up team meet the whole community once a month for the visitation. The members of the three cells gather in the chapel to pray and reflect on the Word of God. After this, the members of the team inquire from the people what is happening to their cells and the problems that they have encountered. Then we draw up plans that will help in the development of the cells and the BEC.

In 2000, Fr. Hisoler encouraged all the BEC cells in the parish to engage in income-generating activity and livelihood program. The parish multi-purpose cooperative was organized and we were invited to a pre-membership seminar. Many of our cell members attended this seminar and learned how to start income generating projects. After the seminar, the cells started their own income generating project. The *Birben sa Fatima* cell decided to start a community consumer cooperative store. The members were able to start with only a capital of P2,500.00. After more than a year, the asset has gone up to P50,000.00. Our store is able to help the members of the community by selling basic commodity goods at a lower price. The members who are in need can also borrow money from the store. Out of the common fund, the community was able to help other communities in the parish that were in need (e.g., when some houses in a neighboring small Christian community were burned down).

The parish priest celebrates the Eucharist with the community two to three times a year. The most recent one was on the occasion of our fiesta. This was the time when almost all the members of the community gathered in the chapel to celebrate our union with Christ and with one another. After the mass, we had a banquet inside the chapel and shared the food that we brought. So, as a community together with our parish priest we gathered around the table of the Lord to share not only the body of Christ but also our boiled rice, roast pig, and fried chicken.



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ROWING (PAMAMANGKA): AFFIRMING VATICAN II TEACHINGS

People of God: a social and religious community

The most important contribution of Vatican II is a shift in the understanding of the church. Placing the chapter on ‘People of God’ before the ‘Church is Hierarchical’, Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium* (LG) described this “new People of God” as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation”; the state of this people is that of dignity and freedom of the sons of God” (#9). The term ‘people of God’ has also clarified that the church is both a social and a religious community.

BECs have given flesh to this main conciliar idea of church as ‘people of God’⁶. BECs have encouraged the participation of the baptized from the base, from the neighborhoods, from the grassroots level. But more than composition and percentages, BECs have reshaped ‘church’ by making it a verb. As believers gather in their daily life settings, reflect on the Bible and respond to the social issues that confront them prodded and guided by the Word of God, BECs make ‘church’ happen, as what we can see from the story of BEC in Cabanban, Cebu (previously narrated).

Participation and Shared Responsibility

Although many images of church have been explored in Vatican II, its main point is participation and shared responsibility. The people of God, the baptized, are the church and all are called by God and responsible for its mission. LG emphasized that all the faithful are incorporated into Christ and share in his priestly, prophetic and kingly office (#31); that they share a true equality between all with regard to the dignity and to the activity of building up the Body of Christ (#32, #34).

⁶Some post-conciliar theologies have developed ‘*communio*’ as the main ecclesiology of Vatican II which is not acceptable to some theologians; see some arguments in Jose Comblin, *People of God* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004).



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For Claver, ‘participation’ is the one key idea from a pastoral perspective that summarizes Vatican II. And for him the most creative and effective pastoral initiatives arising from Vatican II is the building up of a more participatory church. For Claver, this ethic of participation would change the church’s focus “from hierarchical leadership to lay empowerment, from institution to its membership, from canonical concerns to life problems of people”.⁷

BECs have been called ‘self-governing, self-ministering and self-sustaining communities’⁸, a description which articulates the sense of vocation and mission that BEC members carry. The story of Cabanban with the story of so many thousands of BECs around the country where the baptized spend time and resources, share blessings and woes, pray and work, convinced of their calling and motivated to follow Jesus’ mission out of their own volition and faith conviction.

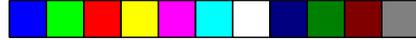
CROSSING RIVERS (*PAGTAWID SA MGA ILOG*): EXPLORING VATICAN II TEACHINGS MORE DEEPLY

A church, the People of God, where every baptized participates in the priestly, prophetic and kingly role of Christ (*LG*, Chapter 1) naturally forms local churches or local faith communities. However, life as a ‘local church’ is a less explored topic in Vatican II. References to the local church found in Chapter 2 (Church is Hierarchical), basically talked about the relationship and distinction (especially on authority, #23) between the universal and local church, which spawned long debates as well as in depth reflections through the years.⁹ *LG* stressed the importance of the structures of episcopal

⁷Bishop F. Claver, “The Church in Asia: Twenty and Forty Years After Vatican II” in *The Second Vatican Council and the Church in Asia, EABC Papers* No. 117, 73-77.

⁸The second Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference held in Cagayan de Oro City in 1974 entitled “Building Christian Communities in Mindanao-Sulu: the Self-nourishing, Self-sustaining, and Self-governing Communities. The Mindanao Church and MSPC in particular were at the forefront of BEC-organizing in the 70s. For Mindanao BECs and MSPC, see books and articles of Karl Gaspar; see also Warren Kline, *The Splintered Staff: Structural Deadlock in the Mindanao Church* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1990).

⁹Discussions and conflicts about the church as universal and local have flourished, most prominent was the exchange of opinions between Cardinal Ratzinger and Cardinal Kasper; see Kilian McDonnell in “The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate: The Universal Church



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collegiality, which is a great stride in itself especially as compared to Vatican I. But such discussions did not actually further the reflection on what it means to be a local church.

Popularly known as a ‘new way of being church’, BECs as ‘church’/ ‘church in the neighborhood’ can be read in church documents from different parts of the globe¹⁰. Latin America, soon after Vatican II, in 1968 in Medellin, said:”The Christian base community is the first and fundamental ecclesiastical nucleus, which on its own level must make itself responsible for the richness and expansion of the faith.” (JPP 10-11). In Africa, the AMECEA in 1974 already said, the BECs are the ‘most local incarnation of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church’. FABC, in its 1974 Assembly, mentioned that BECs are the ‘most fundamental ecclesial experience’. In the Philippines, our PCP-II has mentioned that “The dream of church as priestly, prophetic, kingly; as a church of participation, communion and mission and as church of the poor, is today finding expression in one ecclesial movement – that is the movement to foster BECs”. (# 137)

It has been asked many times: Is BEC church? Are BECs local churches? Although there are important theological questions to answer¹¹, this section of the paper chooses to delineate instead how BECs have enriched the concept/theology of local church.

Bridging the Gap between Church and Daily Life

In the BEC story on page 2, we see the bridging of the gap between ‘church’ and daily life. BECs have brought ‘church’ into the neighborhoods, in the streets, in the fields. Church and daily life

and the Local Churches,” *Theological Studies* 63 (2002): 227-250. See several theological reflections on Vatican II and the Local Church in R. Lucker and W. McDonough, *Revelation and the Church: Vatican II in the Twenty-first Century* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2003), 67-85; R. Gaillardetz and C. Clifford, *Keys to the Council: Unlocking the Teachings of Vatican II* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Order of St. Benedict, 2012); R. Gaillardetz, *Rediscovering Vatican II: the Church in the Making* (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 86-88 and 117-129; and R. Michiels, “The Self Understanding of Church after Vatican II” in *Louvain Studies* 14 (1989), 83-107.

¹⁰ FABC Fifth Plenary Assembly Article # 3, 5.

¹¹Read the discussion on theological issues of BECs as local church in Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, “Some Theological Questions BECs Love to Ask”, in *BECs: Dream or Reality*, 83-87.



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appear to be two different worlds – in terms of location (church is ‘over there’, daily life is here), language (church uses ‘theology’, ‘doctrines’, ‘sacraments’; daily life uses ‘jobs’, ‘school’, ‘food’), materials used, systems and structures employed, etc. But in this BEC story, we see church happening in daily life – praying, celebrating, working to make their lives better guided by their faith.

‘Moving’ the experience of church from center to the communities/neighborhood re-shaped how baptized live church and its mission. As church in the neighborhoods, daily life became the locus to share and discuss and live the faith. Daily life made the faith palpable around the dining table, in the living room, on the terrace, in streets and fields as people share their joys and pains, implore God’s guidance and help, and try to make sense of and find solutions for the myriad big and small problems that are the stuff of daily life.

When Church happens in daily life, human realities become central concern and linking element in bringing people together. If church is in the homes and streets and fields – as what we see in BEC - faith dialogues with daily human concerns and becomes its energy and wisdom. By living the faith in daily life, the church also becomes more Kingdom-focused and mission-oriented concerned with peace, justice, integrity of creation, and human dignity.

Engaging the Base and the Periphery

The Church has been known as a center-based structure and reality. The church building is built in the center/city. And only those around the center – which in most cases are the richer members of the community - are basically the ones attending Mass and active in some church associations. With only 10-15 % of the baptized attending mass and a much lesser percentage (1-2%) active in church ministries, the church has hardly reached out to the people in the periphery – most probably to the poorer sections of the community - which would make up about 90% of its baptized. Mostly organized in areas far from the city center, BECs are the structures in a parish life that has reached out to the poor, to the masses, to those in the fringes of society.

The Church of the Poor – popularized in Latin America (in the late 60s) and is also the vision of church of PCP II (1991) was not



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mentioned in Vatican II¹². Church of the Poor is a specific contribution of the BEC movement to the wider church. Because of its neighborhood settings, especially among the masses/the base and the grassroots, BECs have facilitated the building up of the church of the poor where the poor feel they belong to the parish and that they are an important part of church life and mission as subjects. Hopefully this perspective and experience from the base, from the poor/poorest, inform church teachings, theology, spirituality, discipleship, leadership, lifestyle of church leaders, financial situation and management, etc.

Building up the periphery through BECs also empowers leadership among the poor/poorest. BECs practice participative leadership as a lot of members are trained to lead different aspects of church life and mission especially through the various ministries set-up by BECs to respond to life issues in the neighborhood such as social action ministers, family life and youth ministries, health and environment ministries, healing relationships, among others.

Neighborhood leaders in BECs are part of the Parish Pastoral Council making it representative of and empowering all towards decision making, and hopefully reshaping the hierarchical and dominating leadership structure of the Center.

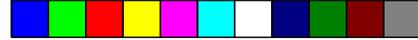
SAILING ON (*PAGLALAYAG*): POINTS FOR DIALOGUE FOR OTHER/POSTMODERN SETTINGS

Emphasizing Baptismal more than Eucharistic Ecclesiology

Vatican II's ecclesiology is founded on the Eucharist¹³. "In the Eucharist, we are built up into the Body of Christ, the church (*LG* #7); through it, the church derives its life and through which it thrives"

¹²Although not mentioned in Vatican II documents, 'church of the poor' was mentioned by Pope John XXIII in his message at the Opening of the Council. 11 Sept.1962: "Confronted by the underdeveloped countries, the Church herself as she is and wants to be: the Church of all men, and in particular the church of the poor." in Yves Congar, *Power and Poverty in the Church* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1964), 149-157. Congar also included the many statements from different bishops on how Church of the Poor as the relevant theme of Council.

¹³Gaillardetz, *Keys to the Council*, 'Eucharistic Ecclesiology', 66-75.



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(LG# 26). This ecclesiology is challenged in BECs as Eucharistic celebrations are few and far between. Since only ordained priests can preside over the Eucharist, the lack of priests also makes this ecclesiology problematic.

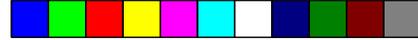
Despite the lack of priests and infrequent or not regular celebration of the Eucharist, the BECs are growing in faith life and mission. Perhaps BECs are pointing towards emphasizing more on baptismal rather than Eucharistic theology as foundation for ecclesiology. The Council also reminded us that “through baptism we are formed in the likeness of Christ” (LG # 7). We become “a spiritual house and a holy priesthood” through baptism (LG #10). It is our baptismal responsibility to engage in apostolate and missionary activity of the Church, “assigned to the apostolate by the Lord himself”. (CFL #3).

Ordaining Lay Leaders

Bishop Fritz Lobinger from South Africa has been involved in BECs for about five decades. Noting how the number of priests is decreasing while faith communities (BECs) are growing, Bishop Lobinger wrote a book where he proposed the ordination of community priests - married men from mature faith communities who have proved their credibility and integrity as leaders (*virī probatī*) in the way they have lived their lives, especially as family men, witnessed by the neighborhood community where he lives. These ordained lay men can team up with the ordained priests in ministering to the different faith communities in a particular locality. Lobinger proposed that the ordained priests – called ‘Pauline priests’ – are responsible for animating new communities to become BECs, while ordained lay men – called ‘Corinthian priests’ – will lead the BECs that are mature and stable.¹⁴

Perhaps in this way, BECs are also preparing the church in the near future as vocations to the ordained ministry are decreasing and

¹⁴Fritz Lobinger, *Priests for Tomorrow* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2004). Bishop Fritz also started and headed LUMKO, a pastoral institute in South Africa under the Bishops’ Conference which serves formation and training needs of Small Christian Communities.



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where lay people are taking responsibility for their own community's growth in faith life and mission.¹⁵

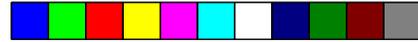
Favoring Rhizome-like Structures

One important feature of our late modern times is the revolution created by information technology. In a few seconds, one is in touch with someone at the other end of the world, views an actual war in real time, opens a whole world of research material. Social thinkers posit that late modern cultures can be described as 'rhizomatic' (a horizontal network of randomly connected roots) rather than 'arboreal' (vertical, treelike structures with firm root systems, trunks and branching extensions).¹⁶ Like rhizome or crabgrass, a person connected electronically is a power center by him/herself (gets information/knowledge, decides and acts) without the usual authority figure (parent, teacher or boss) before him/her. Likewise, while alone sitting in a room, a person can be connected with others for communication or a common undertaking (note sociopolitical awareness and change brought about by social media, e.g., Avaaz, Change.org, etc.)

BECs are rhizome- or crabgrass-like. Although generally connected to a parish structure/setting/system, BECs basically live quite independently of the center/authority. Simply because they are too many, far from the center and rarely have a priest who is involved in their day-to-day lives, BECs are relatively free or unhampered in living its faith life and mission. In doing so, BECs encourage plural and creative interpretation of official church teachings/ doctrines, scriptures and liturgical rules, among other things. Is the official Church prepared for such creativity and plurality?

¹⁵See discussion on lay ordination from a cultural perspective in my dissertation, *Ang Mabathalang Pag-aaral sa Ministri ng Pamumuno bilang Punong Kadaupang-palad sa Katawan ni Kristo at ang Teolohiya sa Ministri ni E. Schillebeeckx: Isang Pag-unsap*, Attachment F (Ph.D. Dissertation, De La Salle University, Taft Manila, 2006).

¹⁶Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983); "Rhizome" in *On the Line* (New York: Semiotext, 1983); and *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3-25 quoted in Nathan Mitchell, *Meeting Mystery* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 3-44.



Welcoming Basic Human Communities

Basic Human Communities (BHCs) is a term that is increasingly being heard in Asian settings, with its context of multiple religions. Basic Human Communities is a gathering of people where the starting point and motivating factor are human realities and concerns (not Church or faith concern).

Although the Philippines is not really into an interreligious setting except in some places in Mindanao, I still hear of talks about BHCs from present BEC practitioners during meetings and assemblies. With BHCs, they refer to the relating, linking and networking of people's organizations, neighborhood associations and government units towards better life and solidarity work in their neighborhood/locality.

Contributing to Public Theology

Public Theology is a relatively new discipline.¹⁷ It wants to engage theology in public issues. It believes that theology has relevance to a wider public, not just for Christians. However, it understands that as Christian, it is only one voice among the many voices in public, does not have a privileged status, and does not seek to convert but concerned with the wellbeing of peoples. Asian theologian and social thinker Wilfred says it will be stronger on 'public' than on theology, as it seeks to address urgent issues and questions that affect society as a whole. For him, public theology is inherently intercultural and interreligious in nature.

Life in the BECs clearly promotes and can contribute to this kind of theologizing. The stories of BECs in different parts of the country have already witnessed to the public relevance of their faith life (cf. BEC of San Fernando Bukidnon (p.12) responsible for stopping illegal logging in their area, the BECs of Marinduque which were responsible for removing Marcopper Mining, hundreds involve

¹⁷See the following: David Tracy, "Defending the Public Character of Theology" in J. Wall, *Theology in Transition* (); F. Wilfred, *Asian Public Theology: Critical Concerns in Challenging Times* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2010); D. Browning, ed. Habermas, *Modernity and Public Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1992).



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in micro-finance and other economic projects to uplift their poverty, and many other similar stories). A lot of BECs also network with non-governmental and governmental organizations as well as people's organizations in pursuing public issues and concerns.

EXPLORING TEOLOHIYA NG BAYAN¹⁸

To summarize the discussion on Church as Local and how BECs have lived and explored deeper this Vatican II teaching, a contextualized theological articulation is attempted below in the local language.

Ang Kaharian ng Diyos – o ang Pamamayani ng Kagandahang-loob ng Diyos – ay ang puso ng buhay at misyon ni Hesus, at gayundin ng bayan ng Diyos. Ang etimolohiya ng 'pamamayani' ay pang+ba+bayani: pag-iral o pangingibabaw.¹⁹ Kukunin ang salitang-ugat na 'bayan' at dadaloy sa 'pamayanan' (pam+ bayan+an), bayani at bayanihan bilang pagpapalalim sa TEOLOHIYA NG BAYAN bunsod ng buhay sa BEC.

Si Hesus, Bayani ng Kaharian ng Diyos

Ayon kay Salazar²⁰, dalawa ang kahulugan ng bayani: 1) 'isang di pangkaraniwang tao na nakatuon ang diwa't gawa sa sariling bayan o kabuuang kinabibilangan' at 2) 'nagkukusang makipagtulungan nang walang anumang bayad sa mga gawaing pangkomunidad'. Tunay

¹⁸ Vatican II historian Joseph O'Malley once commented that Vatican II has failed to produce a theology of the local church. This is a personal response to his challenge.

¹⁹ UP *Diksiyunaryong Pilipino*.

²⁰ Zeus Salazar, *Si Andres Bonifacio at ang Kabayanibang Pilipino*, Bagong Kasaysayan : Mga Pag-aaral sa Kasaysayan ng Pilipinas Lathalain Blg. 2 (Lungsod Mandaluyong: Palimbagan Kalawakan, 1997) at Mary Jane Rodriguez-Tatel, *Ang Dalumat ng Bayan sa Kamalayan at Kasaysayang Pilipino*, Bagong Kasaysayan : Mga Pag-aaral sa Kasaysayan ng Pilipinas Lathalain Blg. 15 (Lungsod Quezon: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 2005).

²¹ Madalas sabihing hindi angkop gamitin ang 'Kaharian ng Diyos' sa pag-uugat ng isang teolohiya dahil wala naman ito sa karanasan ng mga Pilipino. Sa ganang akin, may karanasan ang sinaunang Pilipino sa 'kaharian': ang mga datu, rajah, sultan ay mga tinuturing na 'hari' at ang chiefdoms at sultanato ay isang



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na bayani si Hesus sa Kaharian²¹ ng Diyos! Si Hesus ay isang taong may kahanga-hangang katangian, katapangan at tibay ng loob; isang taong may ginawang dakila at nagmamalasakit sa bayan (tao). Hindi lang simpleng ‘pagtulong’ ang ginagawa ng bayani; ang kaloob ng bayani ay kanyang sarili / buhay para sa karamihan sa lipunan. Ang pag-aalay ng bayani ng kanyang buhay (‘ginhawa’ sa kinagisnang pag-unawa)²² ay nagdudulot ng kaghinaan sa bayan (ginhawang-bayan).²³

Sa unang mga lipunang Pilipino, ang ‘bayani’ ay tumatayo ring ‘pinuno’, kasama ang datu, babaylan, at panday. Ang ‘pinuno’ para sa sinaunang lipunang Pilipino, bukod sa namamalas na pagmamalasakit para sa bayan, ay siya ring hinirang ng Diyos at malapit sa Diyos. Kung papansinin ang mga pang-ulong kasuotan (headgear) ng mga pinuno / pangulo, lalo na sa ating mga tribu, makikita ang simbolo ng araw at ibon, tanda ng langit / Diyos²⁴. Si

kaharian. Makikita rin sa literatura ng Himagsikan, sa mga isinulat ni Andres Bonifacio, ang mga katagang ‘Haring Bayan’ o ‘Haring Bayang Katagalugan’ ay naririnig din. Ito ay tumutukoy hindi lamang sa mga Tagalog kundi sa lahat ng tumubo sa kapulungang ito – Bisaya man, Iloko, Kapampangan ay ‘Tagalog’ din! Ang ‘Tagalog’ ay ang sinumang umusbong sa lupang ito (Pilipinas). Ang ‘Haring Bayan / Haring Bayang Katagalugan / Puring Haring Bayan’ ang hulagway na ginamit ni Bonifacio para pagkaisahin ang mga Pilipino laban sa Kastilang mananakop.

²²Salazar, “Kamalayan at Kaluluwa”, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, 83-87.

²³ Ayon kay Tatel, *Ang Dalumat ng Bayan*, 21, ang pagiging bayani ay ‘pagbibigay ng buhay para sa karamihan o kalipunan – i.e., ka-ginhawa-an.’ Ang ‘kaghinaan’ para kay Tatel ay tumutukoy sa: 1) kondisyon / kalagayan kung saan nararamdaman ang kagaangan ng pamumuhay; at 2) ang pagkakabigkis-bigkis ng mga ‘ginhawa’ (buhay) ng mga tao na nagbubunga ng nasabing kondisyon. Ang pagpupunyagi ng isang bayani ay nagdudulot ng katiwasayan at kasaganaan sa pamumuhay ng mga tao at bilang pinuno siya ang nag-uugnay-ugnay sa buhay ng mga tao. Tingnan din ang ideya ni Salazar, *Manifesto*, 195; 4 ff; Salazar, *Wika ng Himagsikan*, 47, 52. Tingnan din si Z. Salazar, Pangulo / Pang-ulo: Mga Ideyang Pilipino ukol sa Ulo, Pangulo at Pinuno ng Pamayanan, 4 ss., akdang di-inilimbag na inilhad sa symposium ng “Pang-ulo: Philippine Ideas about Heads, Headgears, and Heads-of-Community” na ginanap nuong Dec. 2-3, Pambansang Museo, Manila. Mula sa konsepto ng ginhawang-bayan mauunawaan natin ang himagsikan- ang pagsiklab ng bagsik – inuyom na galit/hinaing mula sa loob – ng bayang pinagsamantalahan. Hindi na makahinga (hinga=ginhawa) ang taong-bayan mula sa paniniil ng mga dayuhan kaya umalma na ang loob, sumabog na ang bagsik. Para sa pagpapalawak ng konsepto ng ‘himagsikan’ sa Salazar, *Andres Bonifacio*, 31-32; *Wika ng Himagsikan*, 43-53.

²⁴ Z. Salazar, *Si Andres Bonifacio at ang Kabayanihang Pilipino*, 6. Tingnan din ang Salazar, *Pangulo / Pang-ulo*.



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Hesus, bilang bayani, ay ‘pinuno’ rin ng bayan ng Diyos. Pinamunuan niya ito hindi bilang hari kundi bilang isang lingkod ng kagandahang-loob ng Diyos. Ang pinuno, mula sa salitang ‘puno’ ay nangangahulugan ng dahilan o sanhi (mula sa puno’t dulo), bukal o pinagmulan (bayolohikal na puno o ulo’ o hulu’, ang dakong pinagbubuhatan ng ilog).²⁵

Si Hesus ang Ulo ng simbahan, ang kanyang Katawan. Siya ang nangulo, nanguna sa pag-abot sa mga walang pumapansin – ang mga dukha, ang mga makasalanan, ang mga isinasantabi. Si Hesus ang nanguna sa paghuhugas ng paa ng kanyang mga disipulo upang gawin din nila ito sa iba. Si Hesus ang nanguna sa pag-aalay ng buhay: sa pagdanak ng kanyang dugo, isinilang ang isang bayang magpapatuloy ng pagmamagandang-loob ng Diyos sa sanlibutan.²⁶

Simbahan: Bayan ng Diyos at Bayanihan Kay Kristo

Kung titingnan natin si Kristo bilang bayani sa Kaharian o sa bayan ng Diyos, maaari nating tawagin ang Simbahan bilang ‘bayanihan kay Kristo’²⁷. Nakaugat sa kahulugan ng ‘bayani’, ang ‘bayanihan’ na walang bayad, sama-sama at tulong-tulong na pagkilos bilang pagmama-gandang-loob sa isang kasama / kapitbahay o para sa ikabubuti ng bayan. Ang bayan (tao) ay samasamang pambabayani upang mamayani ang kagandahang-loob ng Diyos. Sa konsepto at karanasan ng ‘bayanihan’ nakikita ang dalawang mahalagang aspeto ng pagiging simbahan: ang pagsasama-sama sa buhay (community)

²⁵ H. Constenoble, trans. Cecilio Lopez, *Dictionary of Proto-Philippine Languages*, Archives of Philippine Languages and Dialects Special Monograph Issue No. 6 (Feb. 1979), 110-312; sinipi ni Z. Salazar, *Pangulo / Pang-ulo*, 1.

²⁶ Ang sanduguan ng mga miyembro ng Katipunan ay ‘panganganak ng Inang Bayan’; sa pamamagitan ng pagdanak ng dugo isinilang ng Inang Bayan ang Kataas-taasang, Kagalang-galangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan upang makipaglaban sa ‘Madre Espana’.

²⁷ Parilala ring ginagamit upang ilarawan ang mga BECs kung saan buhay pa rin ang kaugaliang ‘bayanihan’. Tingnan ang pagbabayanihang nangyayari sa mga BECs sa iba’t ibang bahagi ng bansa sa Gabriel et al eds., *BECs in the Philippines*, 31-64. Tingnan din sa aklat na ito ang mga artikulo nina Estela Padilla, “BEC Spirituality”, 259-302, at Amado Picardal, “BECs as means of Social Transformation”, 139-160, para sa mga dagdag na kuwento ng bayanihan sa BECs.



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at magkasamang paglilingkod (ministry). Ang bayang (tao) ito at ang kanilang pagbabayanihan ay nakaugat sa isang bayan (lugar). Mahalaga ang Pilipinong konseptong ‘bayan’²⁸ upang lubos na mauunawaan ang ibig sabihin ng pagiging bayani at pagbabayanihan.²⁹

Ayon kay Salazar, sa ‘banua’ nagsimula ang kasaysayan ng Pilipino. Ang ‘banua’ ay taal at buhay na konseptong pan-Filipino, at makikita rin sa mundong Melano-Polynesiano, bago pa dumating ang mga Kastila. Isa itong “madamdamin at malalim na konsepto ng pamumuhay at pagsasama-sama bilang komunidad hindi lamang ng tao kundi ng kabathalaan, mga anito at ibang naninirahan/gumagala sa kalawakan; kasama ang sistemang sosyo-politikal ng mga hari, pag-aampon, pagpapatuli, pagtatatu, maluwag na pagtanggap sa panauhin, pangangayaw, kabayanihan, bathalaing kaisipang Tao-Ibon.”³⁰

Katulad nang nakita sa itaas, ang isang kataga – bayan – ay maaaring mangahulugan ng dalawang bagay: tao (people) at lugar (town, country). Bilang lugar, tumutukoy ito sa kagyat na kapaligirang ginagalawan ng tao, ibig sabihin lupang tinubuan, sinilangan, tirahan – na nag-anyo bilang pamayanan. Mula rin ito sa salitang ‘balayan’ o kalipunan ng mga balay / bahay o lugar na pinagtatayuan ng mga ito. Nangangahulugan din ang bayan ng isang grupo ng tao, mamamayan, publiko, tanan o taumbayan. Ngunit ang bayan ay hindi lamang ‘tao’ at ‘lugar’. Ang bayan ay ugnayan ng mga tao sa kalikasan (ang mga

²⁸ Ugat ng ‘pamayanan’ (*pang+bayan+an*) - ang ‘pamayanan ng kagandahang-loob ng Diyos’ ni Schillebeeckx.

²⁹Tatlong personal na karanasan tungkol sa bayan nang maunawaan kong malalim ang kahulugan nito para sa mga Pilipino: 1) Sinamahan ko ang mga bisitang Aleman para magshopping sa Greenhills. Tinatawaran ko ang south sea pearls kasi interesadong bilhin nung isang Aleman. Sabi sa akin ng tinderang Muslim: “Ate naman, inuuna mo pa ang kaibigan mong Aleman kaysa *kababayan* mo.” 2) Madalas akong magbyahe at madalas makakita ng mga Pilipino sa ibang bansa. Habang naglalakad ako sa kalsada o sakay ng mga tren (medyo naliligaw), may tatawag sa iyo parati ng ‘*kabayan*’ may galak ang boses at ako nama’y lubos din ang galak na makakita at makausap ng isang kababayan. 3) Ang kuya ko ay nagdesisyong mag OFW dahil 3 ang kolehiyong anak. Pero pinili niya ang Afghanistan dahil napakataas ng offer na sweldo dahil may giera duon. Sinapalaran niya ang buhay niya para sa kanyang pamilya. Kaya nuong siya’y *magbalikbayan*, ganun na lamang ang tuwa ng buo niyang pamilya!

³⁰Tingnan ang mas malawak na paliwanag sa Z. Salazar, *Ang Pilipinong Banua sa Mundong Melano-Polynesiano* (Lungsod Quezon: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 2006), 161-166.



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pangalan ng sinauna o prehispanikong bayan ay kaugnay sa katangian ng lugar tulad ng Pasig <paagusan>, Hagonoy <halamang-gamot>, Macabebe, Balayan <pampang, baybayin> at ugnayang tao-sa-tao : ang organikong pagkakaugnay-ugnay o kaisahan ng mga taong nakapaloob sa bayan sa bisa ng pagkakawing-kawing ng kanilang karanasan: pulitikal, ekonomiko, panlipunan, pangkaisipan, kultural, relihiyoso.³¹ Ang bayan, kung gayon, ay kabuuang istruktura, balangkas o kaayusan. Matatagpuan dito ang pagkakaugnay-ugnay at pag-uugnay ng mga halagahin, kaugalian, kagawian, kamalayan, diwa, kaalaman, paniniwala – o pagkakaroon ng isang pananaw-pandaigdig, isang pananaw na binibigyang-buhay ng wika.³²

Sa loob nito, ang isang tao ay isinilang, lumalago, nagkakaisip, nagkakaroon ng paninindigan – ibig sabihin, nabubuo ang pagkatao at pagpapakatao sa isang bayan. Katulad ng nabanggit na, ang tao para sa mga Pilipino ay mayroong loob at labas. Para kay Guillermo, ang loob ay hindi lamang tumutukoy sa ugnayan ng tao sa isa't isa kundi maging sa 'relasyon ng tao sa panlabas na panlipunan at pangkalikasag reyalidad'³³. Ang loob (ugnayang tao-sa-tao) ay naapektuhan at nagkakaroon ng epekto at talab sa labas (lipunan at kalikasan). Sa pagbubuod, masasabing ang bayan ay panglabas na kapaligiran kung saan ipinapahayag ng bawat indibidwal ang kanyang kalooban habang iniuugnay ito sa iba pang kalooban.

Ang bayan, kung gayon, ay ang 'pagdadaop ng mga loob/kalooban ng mga tao – ang pagkakawing-kawing ng kanilang mga pagpupunyagi upang maisakatuparan ang kanilang kaganapan.'³⁴

Kaya mauunawaan natin kapag sinabing ang simbahan ay bayan ng Diyos – isang ugnayan ng mga taong nananampalataya, nakaugat sa isang lugar na may kanyang kontekstong pulitikal at ekonomiko, may kanyang kultura't kalinangan, at humaharap sa partikular na kalagayan at hamon. Nangangahulugan din ito na ang pagiging simbahan ay tuwinang nakaugat sa isang konteksto't kalagayan (inculturated/contextualized).

³² M.J. Rodriguez-Tatel, *Ang Dalumat ng Bayan*, 2-26.

³³ R. Guillermo, "Isang Panimulang Pagbubuo ng Konzeptwal na Balangkas ng Sulat ni Rizal sa mga Kababaihan ng Malolos", manuskrito, sinipi ni Tatel, *Dalumat ng Bayan*, 19-20.

³⁴ M.J. Rodriguez-Tatel, *Ang Dalumat ng Bayan*, 26.



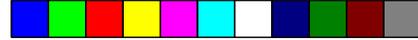
BEC - ANG BAYANIHAN KAY KRISTO TUNGO SA PAMAMAYANI NG KAGANDAHANG-LOOB NG DIYOS

Kung ang bayan ay ang ‘pagdadaop ng mga loob/kalooban ng mga tao – ang pagkakawing-kawing ng kanilang mga pagpupunyagi upang maisakatuparan ang kanilang kaganapan’, ang bayanihan kay Kristo ay lupon ng mga lingkod-bayan, isang pagtutulungan upang makamit ng bayan ang kanilang kaganapan, isang pagpapatuloy ng pagmamagandang-loob ng kanilang lingkod-bayan at bayani na si Hesus, isang kolektibong pakikipaglaban para sa ginhawang-bayan³⁵.

Ang mga kapanalig ni Kristo ay pinagpapatuloy ang pagbabayani – ang pag-aalay ng buhay upang ang bayan ay guminhawa. Sa taglay na kaloob ng Diwang Banal, mamamayani ang kagandahang-loob ng Diyos sa tulong ng taos-pusong at walang kondisyong pagbabayani ng mga lingkod-bayan. Sa magkabakas na pagkilos ng lahat – sa kanilang bayanihan – itinataguyod, iniingatan, ipinaglalaman nila ang misyong iniwan ng kanilang bayani: ang maranasan ng lahat ang katarungan, ang awa, ang kapayapaan, ang di nagmamaliw na kagandahang-loob ng Diyos.

Ito ang pakahulugan at teolohiyang dala ng BEC, bayang nananampalataya’ o ‘simbahang lokal’: ang bayan ng Diyos, ang Bayanihan sa ngalan ni Kristo, ay may bayang sinilangan, nilakihan at pinagkatandaan. Dito nabuo ang kanilang pagkatao at pagpapakatao, ang kanilang paniniwala’t paninindigan. Dito sa bayang ito, sa gitna ng kalagayang pulitikal-economic-panlipunan, pinadadama nila at pinagpapatuloy ang pagmamagandang-loob ng Diyos. Ang Bayanihan kay Kristo, kung gayon, ay nasa gitna ng mga ugnayan sa bayan, hinubog ng kalagayan ng bayan, nakaugat sa kultura ng bayan at tumutugon sa pangangailangan ng bayan.

³⁵ Ang ginhawa (hininga) ay nasa loob ng tao at siyang nagbibigay-buhay sa tao. Ang pagdadaop-loob, kung gayon, ay nagdudulot ng kolektibong ginhawa. Tingnan si Salazar sa ugnayang ginhawa-loob-buhay sa kinagisnang sikolohiya sa Z. Salazar, *Kamalayan at Kaluluma*, 140.



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PART 2: BEC AND CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

A BEC Story (*San Fernando ,Bukidnon*)³⁶

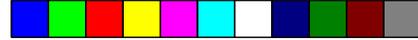
We are poor peasants, living in small Christian communities in a remote valley of San Fernando, Bukidnon (Southern Philippines). This is our story.

There was a time when the mountains were green and the river was blue. The heavy rains did not flood our farms. Nor did the long, hot summer parch the land. That was before the logging companies came. They were owned by the politicians and protected by soldiers. We watched helplessly as the trucks passed by carrying away the logs to be shipped to foreign lands. We signed petitions asking the government to stop the loggers from turning our land into a desert and our river into a highway. But we never got any response. Then the Redemptorist Mission Team³⁷ came: priests, brothers, sisters and lay missionaries. They lived among us and worked with us to build Christian communities (BECs). In our nipa huts late at night, and in our bamboo chapels on Sundays, we came together to listen to the Word and to listen to each others' words. We realized that to be true Christians, it was not enough to worship and to read the Bible. We have to care for others and care for the earth. We have to defend the forest – which is our home, the home of our neighbors – the native Dumagats and Subanons, the home of the birds, the animals, and wild plants.

The day came when we gathered on the road where the logging trucks pass. There were several hundreds of us – men, women, children, and old people. We barricaded with our bodies and the

³⁶Josemarie Delgado, Emmanuel de Guzman, Manuel Gabriel and Estela Padilla, eds., *BECs in the Philippines: Dream or Reality* (Tagaytay: *Bukal ng Tipan*, 2004), 150-154.

³⁷Redemptorist Mission Team is a team of priests and lay missionaries under CSSR (Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer) tasked to organize BECs especially in remote places. They live with the community they are organizing and leave after the organizing process with neighborhood lay leaders in place and empowered to sustain the newly-organized BECs.



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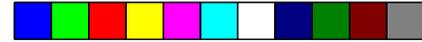
logging trucks could no longer pass. It was like a fiesta. We sang and danced, we shared our food with one another and with the loggers who were stranded. It was a real communion. The priests, the brothers, sisters, and lay missionaries were with us. Even the Bishop came one night to pray with us. They listened to us when we shared with them our stories and our reflections on the Word of God and on the unfolding event. It was our turn to proclaim and witness the Gospel.

On the 13th day in the barricade while celebrating the Eucharist with our parish priest, a truckload of soldiers came carrying an order from the judge to disperse us. They beat us without mercy. When they brought our parish priest to the prison camp we also went with him. We told the soldiers that if they will imprison him they will also have to imprison all of us. They finally told all of us to go home with our parish priest. We went back to the side of the road that we used to barricade and watched helplessly as the logging trucks passed by. We prayed and cried. We were defeated. It was our Good Friday.

It rained day and night for a couple of weeks. The river rose and the overflowing waters crashed against the bridge where all the logging trucks pass. And the bridge collapsed. The road leading up to the logging camp was blocked by a landslide. The logging operations were stopped. Nature continued the barricade for us. God has not abandoned us.

A few weeks later we were ordered to appear in court before the corrupt judge. We filled the courtroom – men, women, children, old people. We were not afraid even if we were poor and powerless because we believed that God's Spirit was with us. We were charged with violating the law and causing the logging companies huge loss of profits. The judge scolded us as if we were naughty children and set the date for our trial. We knew that the judge was on the side of the loggers. Our main worry was where to get that huge amount of money to pay the loggers if we lose the case.

Meanwhile, the newspapers, the TV and the radio began to report our story. Suddenly the conscience of many all over the country was awakened. They realized that our problem was also their problem. Many began to show their support. And there were even others in different parts of the country who followed our example. Our



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voice was beginning to be heard and finally, the President of the Philippines ordered a stop to the logging operations in San Fernando.

When we heard the good news our tears of sorrow became tears of joy. Our suffering had not been in vain. We thanked God by celebrating the Eucharist and by having an instant fiesta. It was our Easter Sunday.

When we went back to the courtroom the judge reluctantly dropped all charges against us. A few months later a pastoral letter of the Bishops' Conference was read in all the Catholic churches and chapels all over the archipelago. It spoke about the ecological crisis in our country. And it mentioned the struggle of the people of San Fernando as a sign of hope and as an example for all. We could not believe that we in our insignificance and powerlessness can make a difference.

Our story and our struggle should have ended then. But it did not. One year later we discovered that while the logging had stopped in San Fernando it continued in the neighboring mountains. We realized that even if it happened in other places we would be affected because we were all connected.

And so we found ourselves once again in the barricade far away from home – in the provincial capital. This time we were more numerous because the people from the neighboring areas joined us. We wanted the logging to be stopped in the entire province of Bukidnon. At first we pitched our tents outside the office of the Department of Natural Resources. They just ignored us. And on the fifth day we transferred to the checkpoint in the national highway where all the logging trucks usually stop for inspection. We took over the place and set up a human barricade. And all the logging trucks could no longer get through. The soldiers came and they could not disperse us. The truck drivers tried to drive through the barricade.

Once again the newspapers, radio and TV reported our story. Finally, Secretary Factoran of the DENR heeded our request for a dialogue. He came on the helicopter to meet with us. After listening to us he granted our demands. He told us the logging in the neighboring mountains and towns would be stopped. He asked us to help guard the



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forest. We went home rejoicing and thanking God once again for not abandoning us. The Eucharist became a victory celebration.

ROWING (PAMAMANGKA): AFFIRMING VATICAN II TEACHINGS

Dignity and Solidarity

The image of the church as the Body of Christ³⁸ in Vatican II (LG # 7) basically took a Pauline perspective focusing on the baptized being members of the body of Christ with its diversity of gifts and functions, the solidarity with the suffering members and the unity of the body through Christ who constituted it and is the head of this body. This body grows in Christ as it is formed in his likeness while Christ continually provides in his body gifts for ministry and service.

BEC as Cells in the Body of Christ

One of the earlier descriptions of BECs – and is still used today in many dioceses in the country - are ‘cells’ in the body of Christ³⁹.

³⁸Read the following on theological reflections on the body/church as the body of Christ: Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, *I am My Body: New Ways of Embodiment* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1994), 103-105; James Nelson, *Body Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1992), 50-51; D. Miranda, “Embodiment, Sexuality, Theology and Morality”, *Diva* Vol. 29 No. 1 (May 2004), 52-53, 62-64; Mary Timothy Prokes, *Towards a Theology of the Body* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1996), 26; Susan Ross, “Then Honor God in Your Body (1 Cor.6:20): Feminist and Sacramental Theology on the Body” in Joan Wolski Conn at Walter Conn, eds., *Horizons in Catholic Feminist Theology* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1992), 121. For a short history of the development of this ecclesiological image, see E. Hahnenberg, “The Mystical Body of Christ and Communion Ecclesiology: Historical Parallels”, *Irish Theological Quarterly* Vol. 70 (2005), 6-16 at Ian McFarland, “The Body of Christ: Rethinking a Classic Ecclesiological Model,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, No. 3 (July 2005).

³⁹James Halloran SDB, *Living Cells* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1980).



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Each cell is composed of about 7-15 families. The regular BEC activities of bible sharing and neighborhood social action are done at the cell level. It emphasizes BECs as the smallest units that actually make up and build up the whole body (of Christ).

BECs, where the flowering of charisms and ministries⁴⁰ in the church have been witnessed – are gifted with charisms for the building up of the Body of Christ. Built up for mission, BEC members engage in different issues and needs of the community and the wider society. Responding to its baptismal responsibility, BECs take part and exercise their prophetic (*LG#12, 35*), priestly (*LG #34*), and kingly (*LG #36*) roles of Christ in the communities where they live.

CROSSING RIVERS (*PAGTAWID SA MGA ILOG*): EXPLORING VATICAN II TEACHINGS MORE DEEPLY

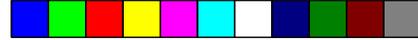
Retrieving the Sensual from the Body of Christ

Reflections on the Body of Christ in Vatican II did not consider the physical body as a *locus theologicus*. Historically, the Catholic Church has an ambivalent view of the body. On one hand, Tertullian⁴¹ said “The body is the hinge of salvation”. However, a negative orientation and attitude towards the body has a longer history, influenced as it was by Greek thought that popularized a dichotomy between the body and soul with the body being the prison of the soul and prevents the soul from being pure⁴².

⁴⁰Lay ministries, or calling the work/service that lay people offer to the building up of church life and mission ‘ministry’, is a postconciliar development. In Vatican II documents, ‘ministry’ was used only for the ordained; for lay people the word ‘apostolate’ and ‘service’ are used. Most parishes in the Philippines have set up different ministries such as family life ministry, youth ministry, social action ministry, formation ministry, etc., which are replicated and set-up at the level of BECs.

⁴¹ Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, ecclesiastical writer from Carthage, 2nd-3rd century.

⁴²Jean-Guy Nadeau, “Dichotomy or Union of Soul and Body? The Origins of the Ambivalence of Christianity to the Body” in Regina Ammicht-Queen and Elsa Tamez, “The Body and Religion” *Concilium* 2 (2000); see also Peter Brown, *The Body and Society* (New York: Columbia Press, 1988) and Frank Bottomley, *Attitudes to the Body in Western Christendom* (London: Lepus Books, 1974).



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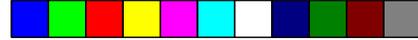
At present, we find our world more and more concerned with the physical body – with an increasing popularity of beauty and beautifying programs and treatments, wellness centers, gymnasium, physical activities, dancing, diet and health food– both for men and women.

Because of high technology in media and social networking, we also see more of bodies - families, friends, colleagues not physically present can be electronically present. But also because of media, we see more of the impoverished and emaciated bodies, of men, women and especially children; as well as mutilated and violated bodies - victims of crime, violence, war.

In religion, this turning to the body, to the more affective and emotional expressions of faith, can also be seen in the increase of the Pentecostal Movement in the country, once commented on as the ‘fastest growing religion in the 20th century’. Not to be confused with Fundamentalism, Pentecostalism means “a Christian movement where vitality of the Spirit in the life of the believers and the church receives a special emphasis resulting in the manifest operation of spiritual gifts, the presence of miracles, lively worship, renewal in the body of Christ, and committed zeal for winning souls through the empowerment of the Spirit.”⁴³ The Charismatic Renewal Movement is also considered a type of Pentecostalism.⁴⁴ By above definition, we may also consider similar religious groups that continue to grow steadily and strongly –for example the Christ Commission Fellowship; and at the Catholic side, the El Shaddai and the Feast (which is not a group but a Sunday worship led by Bo Sanchez). Its Sunday worship is very well attended and is characterized by joyful praise and worship,

⁴³Wonsuk Ma, “Asian (Classical) Pentecostal Theology in Context,” in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, ed. Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, foreword by Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books International, 2005), 74 quoted by Dr. Agnes Brazal in a talk on ‘BECs in the Late Modern World: Bridges of Solidarity’ presented in a BEC Asian Meeting held in Taiwan on Sept. 2-5, 2011.

⁴⁴Christl Kessler and Jürgen Rüländ, *Give Jesus a Hand! Charismatic Christians: Populist Religion and Politics in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 104. Their study showed that 75% of those involved in the Charismatic movement practices strongly charismatic religiosity in *ibid.*, 105, quoted by Dr. Agnes Brazal in a talk on ‘BECs in the Late Modern World: Bridges of Solidarity’ presented in a BEC Asian Meeting held in Taiwan on Sept. 2-5, 2011.



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complete with clapping, dancing, many prayerful gestures, and lively praying, sharing and singing and a supportive community life.

Although parishes do not seem to be much affected by the growth of Pentecostalism and other religious groups, BECs are somehow bringing back the more sensual expressions of faith life of the Body of Christ— in its liturgies and prayer/worship activities and in its formation and mission. Let us look more closely into these areas.

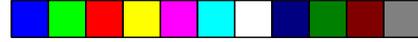
Liturgies: Grounded and Animated

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy is the foremost document of Vatican II but gave little attention – a passing mention – about popular religiosity/devotions (*SC*, # 13). As mentioned already, Eucharistic celebrations are not celebrated regularly in BECs but popular religiosity is widely practised. During the Holy Week for example, the *Visita Iglesia*, *Stations of the Cross*, *Moro-moro and Komedya*, *Pagbababa ng Krus*, *Pabalik sa Krus*, Good Friday procession, *Salubong*, etc. – have more attendance than the formal church liturgies of this Holy Week Triduum. Official church liturgies tend to be formal, cerebral, mechanical, with the priest saying and doing almost everything and “hopelessly distant and cold”⁴⁵. In popular religious practices, people have space to pray personally and express their faith bodily through praying out loud and crying, singing and dancing, in gestures and actions as they touch the cross, kiss their favorite saints, walk under the sun shoulder-to-shoulder with hundreds of people, dance on the streets, etc.

More importantly, the life of prayer and worship in BECs have taken and evolved into different forms, for example, prayer meetings, bible-sharing, a mixture of awareness-raising and prayer, old and new rituals for some special event, etc. Some description as follows....

- BECs in Mindanao: praying the rosary first, before going into bible sharing, and then talking about tasks in the community/neighborhood

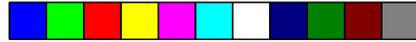
⁴⁵ Anscar Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacraments, Religiosity and Catechesis* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 98.



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- In Pangasinan, neighbors in a BEC meeting gather around the image of the patron saint. After lighting candles and placing flowers in front of the image, there is praying of the rosary. After the rosary-praying, the Sunday gospel is read, then some silence. They were asked a focus question about the reading (e.g., Gospel text read was Mary's visit to Elizabeth – Focus Question: How did God visit you today/recently? Then sharing follows after some moment of reflection. After the sharing/meeting, a potluck meal brought and shared by the people.
- In Paranaque, in one BEC meeting in October, which is the Rosary Month, a BEC decided to visit all the pregnant women in their neighborhood. They were surprised to hear some of the sad and even painful stories of these women: two had husbands working in the Middle East, one got pregnant in the Middle East, one was a teenage mother, one was very sick. After the story-telling, the members of the BEC prayed the rosary with and for these pregnant women and in the evening, after all the visits, there was a procession of pregnant women carrying candles and rosaries to the village chapel.

As what can be seen from these descriptions, life of worship in BECs can no longer just be classified under Eucharistic celebrations and even popular religious practices. They have grown into something wholly BECs' – could be a mixture of one form and another – but truly rooted in their settings, reflecting their faith life and with more affective expressions. Moreover, after prayer meetings in BECs, there is almost always the sharing of simple meals. In fact, the sharing of stories continues and even deepens as BEC members share a meal. This brings us back to the liturgical celebrations of the early Christian communities mentioned in the Scriptures as well as the liturgies in the first centuries of Christianity: liturgies happen in the homes/neighborhood, there is reading of the Word and teaching from the apostles followed by a lot of sharing of thoughts, feelings and ideas; and capped by a shared meal.



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In prayer meetings and popular religious practices, aside from being able to express their faith bodily, BEC members are also able to talk about and share their concerns - which rarely if at all happens in Eucharistic celebrations - and usually daily life is not boring or routinary but full of drama. Concerns about jobs, sickness and health, prices of commodities, news of abuse and corruption, crime in the neighborhood, wayward teenagers, etc.– the stuff of daily life are (emotionally) shared and prayed about. Emotions are part of the way we think and decide and act. Body, sensing, emotions are part of our discernment and decision making. Believing in the wisdom of our bodies and our senses, Filipinos assess and analyse situations by asking – *Anong pakiramdam mo sa mga bagay-bagay?*⁴⁶ Our body knows. Our bodies are intelligent.

Formation: Affective and Experiential

BECs, as faith communities in neighborhood settings, encounter and are confronted with daily life challenges, concerns and problems: out-of-school youth engaging in all kinds of petty crimes; a Muslim community is slowly growing in a Catholic town; who to vote for in the coming local elections; marriages breaking up; continuous illegal logging and mining with local politicians owning the licenses, etc. These are not simple problems and challenges. In their meetings, they talk about these, discuss roots and causes and effects, discern what the Word of God is telling them, then decide and act accordingly. The discernment and decision-making processes however, as we have seen in the BEC story on page 12, were not easy.

In the midst of challenges that people or communities are experiencing, BECs try to make sense of what is happening to them: What is the meaning of a particular difficult experience? What is God telling them? How do they approach this problem? How do they survive this trial? What do they do?

⁴⁶ Some popular sayings: “A body knows” usually heard from our grandmothers. “There is more wisdom in our bodies than in our knowledge.” - Nietzsche. “There is nothing in our intelligence that has not passed by the senses.” – Aristotle.



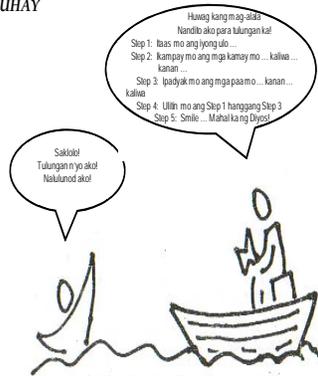
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Christian Formation in BECs would take the form of awareness sessions following the Pastoral Cycle or more popularly known as the See-Judge-Act method, an example below:

Sample BEC session – “Nalulunod”⁴⁷

In the story of the BEC of San Fernando, *Bukidnon* (page 12), as well as in the sample awareness session above, the community bodily engages in the whole formation (dialogue-discerning-and-decision making) process. They lined up the streets voicing their disagreement; lain on the pavement to physically stop the trucks carrying logs. Although their bodies were beaten,

1. BUHAY



Mga Tanong:

- Ano ang nakita ninyo? Ano ang nangyari sa kuwento?
- Ano kaya ang naramdaman ng taong nalulunod? Bakit kaya ganito ang kanyang naramdaman?
- Ano naman kaya ang naramdaman ng taong nasa bangka? Bakit kaya ganito ang pagtulong na ginawa niya?
- Nangyayari ba ang ganito sa ating kapitbahayan? Sa paanong paraan?
- Bakit kaya nangyayari ang ganito sa ating kapitbahayan?

2. SALITA NG BUHAY

Bilang mga Kristiyano, hayaan natin ang ating mga sarili na hamunin ng buhay na Salita ng Diyos.

Basahin nang dalawang beses ang Santiago 2: 14-18.

Magbigkas ng mga salita o maikling parirala na mahalaga.

Pagbahaginan ng magkatabi (dalawahang) ang salitang nakaapekto sa kanila.

Tanong-talakayan sa malaking grupo:

- Paano pinag-uugnay ng sipi ang mga salitang “pananampalataya” at “gawa”?
- Ano ang sinasabi ng sipi sa ating problema sa kapitbahayan?

3. PAGSASABUHAY

- Ano’ng problema sa kapitbahayan ang pinag-uusapan lamang natin pero wala naman tayong ikinikilos tungkol dito?

Tumanggap ng maraming suhestiyon.

Pumili lamang ng isa.

- Ano ang mga praktikal na bagay na maaari nating gawin tungkol ditto?

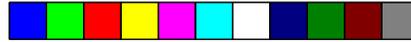
Ilista ang mga bagay na gagawin.

Pag-usapan kung sino-sino ang gagawa?

Pagkasunduan kung kailan gagawin?

they all marched to jail to accompany their parish priest. They prayed and shared on God’s Word, laughed and cried, struggled and celebrated and struggled some more. Finally, they trooped to the next province to lend their bodies once again to protest and be in

⁴⁷ From *Bukal ng Tipan* BEC Organizing Manual.



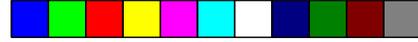
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solidarity with those who have the same dream. This is a different brand of formation: not just sitting down and listening to experts give people information. This one involves the people from the very start and in every step of the way – with the senses attuned to God and to one another (*pagdama*), with bodies engaged in action and reflection (*pagdamay*).

The Maturing of the Christian ‘Sense’: Building up the Sensus Fidelium in BECs

When one reads the story of the BEC in Bukidnon, maybe one asks how and where that community got the conviction and the courage to lay down their lives for what they believe in. In fact, how does ‘Christian maturing’ or ‘honing the Christian instinct’ happen in the ordinary life of a baptized Catholic? Perhaps, one immediately thinks of formation seminars and liturgical activities as ways of building up the faith. However, there is hardly any opportunity to deepen formation and reflection on one’s faith life and mission in present parish set-ups. Aside from some catechism classes when one was a kid or brief catechetical sessions before one was confirmed or married or when one’s child was baptized, there is hardly any Christian formation to attend. Also judging by the decreasing numbers of Catholics who attend Sunday Mass, Sunday liturgies are inadequate sources of Christian formation or ways of deepening the faith. If one belongs to an active parish, there could be formation seminars and spiritual activities offered seasonally, with good speakers and excellent presiders invited from outside.

In BEC meetings, reading and sharing on the Word of God, praying through different kinds of liturgies and devotional practices, reflecting on their own indigenous wisdom and practices, BEC members discern on what God wants them to do or what Jesus would stand for if he were with them (*pagdama sa ‘sinasabi’ ng Diyos*; sensing what God is ‘telling’ us). BECs therefore give opportunities for an ordinary baptized Catholic for regular faith formation and thus deepen their Christian living and missioning. This is a very important contribution of BEC to an individual’s and a community’s life of discipleship.



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Through their regular formation, BEC members hone their Christian instinct.⁴⁸ BEC is an important location and instrument of Christian maturing. In doing so, they build up a collective Christian sense, a Christian wisdom that will guide and sustain their faith life. This collective faith consciousness and wisdom becomes an inner authority informing and guiding them how to discern and decide and act in fidelity to Jesus (*LG* #12).

This collective Christian wisdom has been called *sensus fidelium*⁴⁹. Reflections on *sensus fidelium* as a major contribution to the ecclesiological vision of Vatican II has been growing through the years⁵⁰. Theological reflections on *sensus fidelium* are connected to the most important Conciliar themes such as church as people of God; the participation of all the baptized in the three offices of Christ as priest, prophet and king; charisms bestowed by the Spirit on all the believers, active participation of all in the mission of Christ⁵¹.

⁴⁸ J. and E. Whitehead, *Community of Faith: Crafting Christian Communities Today* (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-third Publications, 1992), 91-99.

⁴⁹ There are several terms that are used: *sensus fidei*, *sensus fidelium*, *consensus fidelium*. *Sensus Fidei* refers to the individual believer's sense of faith (Rush); can also refer to the content of what is believed (Burkhard).

Sensus Fidelium refers to the collective faith consciousness. *Consensus Fidelium* refers to the agreement that arises among believers as a result of the sense of faith with regard to particular items of faith; and also the form of expression such agreement takes. See Herbert Vorgrimler, "From *Sensus Fidei* to *Consensus Fidelium*" in *The Teaching Authority of Believers, Concilium* 4 (1985), 3-11. For a good theological exposition on *sensus fidei*, see Ormond Rush, "Sensus Fidei: 'Making Sense' of Revelation" in *Theological Studies* 62 (2001), 231-261.

⁵⁰ For a summary and analysis of theological reflections on SF since Vatican II, see: John Burkhard, "*Sensus Fidei*: Theological Reflection Since Vatican II" (I.1965-1984) in *Heythrop Journal* XXXIV (1993), 41-59; J. Burkhard, "*Sensus Fidei*: Theological Reflection Since Vatican II" (II.1985-1989) in *Heythrop Journal* XXXIV (1993), 123-136; J. Burkhard, "*Sensus Fidei*: Theological Reflection Since Vatican II" (1990-2001, Part 1) in *Heythrop Journal* XLVII (2005), 450-475; J. Burkhard, "*Sensus Fidei*: Theological Reflection Since Vatican II" (1990-2001, Part 2) in *Heythrop Journal* XLVII (2006), 38-54.

⁵¹ J. Burkhard, *Heythrop Journal* XLVII (2006), 49.



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SAILING ON (PAGLALAYAG): POINTS FOR DIALOGUE FOR OTHER/POSTMODERN CONTEXTS

Inculturation as Witnessing: Sustaining and Passing on the Faith to the Next Generation

BECs, in their daily living of the Christian faith and the collective faith wisdom - *sensus fidei* - that they build up out of this daily living, become instruments of inculturation. As they reflect on God's Word, they sense God from a particular location and language and experience. Their response to God's Word is also a specific response from the challenges of their own context. And the particular lives of BECs enrich or reinvigorate as well as expose a specific angle of a traditional doctrine. *Sensus Fidelium* is this 'practical, sapiential and critical sense: it is faith knowledge applied in the concrete everyday – bridging theory and practice, doctrine and life'.⁵²

Lumen Gentium #12 says that *sensus fidelium* has a prophetic role. The one word that sums up the exercise of the role of all the faithful (ordained and lay) in the prophetic office of teaching is 'witness'.⁵³ The Word of God propels the BECs to reach out to the neighbor, to the other, so that the Word becomes flesh in their acts of compassion and justice. Their response is their witness, the testimony to their *sensus fidei*.⁵⁴

When faith is inculturated, *tradition* is built and passed on. In BECs, the building up of collective faith consciousness - through their sensing of God (*pagdama sa kalooban ng Diyos*) which leads to solidarity (*pagdamay sa kapwa*) – enables the faith tradition to be passed on to the next generation especially because BEC settings are families and homes and neighborhood in fields and streets. Their Christian witness –through the struggles they faced, the decisions they made, the actions of service and solidarity they took – become part of the living stories of the communities and their children. With such witnessing, they pass on collective faith wisdom to the next generation coming from lived convictions and beliefs.

⁵² Rush, *ibid.*, 249.

⁵³ O. Rush, *Pacifica*, 149.

⁵⁴ Vorgrimler, *Concilium*, 8-9.



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This type of Christian formation that is experiential - bodies and the senses engaged in the wisdom-building process of *reflection* and action- becomes lodged in individual and collective memories because experiences are marked on the bones and skins. They would remember and pass it on to the next generation who have witnessed and experienced their common seeking and learning and committed action. It is through this experiential and affective learning that BECs in its family and neighborhood settings pass on the faith to the next generation.

Turning to the Body, to Beauty and the Arts: the Return of God in Postmodern Settings?

This more affective and experiential expression of faith life in the BECs especially through their liturgies and formation resonates with the concern for the body in late modern times, ushering as well the turning to the body as a site for imaginative theological reflection/articulation. Claiming that it is the flesh that makes the words⁵⁵and that it is the soul that imprisons the body⁵⁶; this turning to the body/the carnal/the sensual has moved God-talk from *theology* to *theopoetics*⁵⁷.

Indeed, theologically, there has been a renewed interest in the physical body as a locus for reflecting on the faith in the fields of liturgy⁵⁸, biblical studies⁵⁹, morals/ethics⁶⁰, spirituality⁶¹ and systematic

⁵⁵Melanie May, *The Body Knows: Theopoetics of Death and Resurrection* (New York: Continuum, 1995), quoted in Holland, 123.

⁵⁶ Foucault () quoted in Holland, 125.

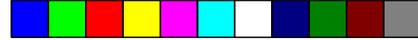
⁵⁷ See for example: D. Robinson, Amos Wilder, *Theopoetics: Theology and Religious Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress Books, 1976); Patty Willis, "Theopoetics of the Body", *Cross Currents* 60, 1 (March 2010), 115-124.

⁵⁸ For example, L.M. Chauvet, *Sacraments: the Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1995)

⁵⁹ For example, Y. S. Kim, "Reclaiming Christ's Body: Embodiment of God's Gospel in Paul's Letter", *Interpretation* Vol. 67 No. 1 (Jan. 13), 20-29.

⁶⁰ For example, S. Bong, "Suffering, Resisting and Healing: An Asian View of the Body". *Concilium* 2002 No. 2, 122-129.

⁶¹ For example, Body and Spirituality, *Jeevadbara* Vol 45 No 252 (Nov.2012), 437-450; B. Paulin, Body and Prayer: Christian and Asian Methods of Meditation, *EAPR* Vol 45 No. 1 (2008), 70-90.



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theology⁶². In the 80s and the decades following, the popularizing of narrative theology as a way of doing theology has also strengthened this more affective way of Christian witness as mission, especially in BECs.

Theodrama has also been popularized of late⁶³. In the Philippines, Fr. Rey dela Cruz, SDB, has worked on using *theodula* (as he calls it) as an approach to deepening one's theological reflection and integration of popular religious practices. Bibliodrama, a more bodily interpretation of the Word of God – making use of drama, dance, gestures, art, symbols - is also becoming popular in the Philippines and in Asia for the past ten years.⁶⁴

Body, beauty and art/aesthetics are common points of engagement with others, with people of other faiths, with post Christian societies, etc. These are human elements that attract all, maybe because art and religion and rituals are part of the bio-historical origins of humanity.⁶⁵

David Tracy who said “Art...is the the nearest analogue of religion”⁶⁶ and that the religious imagination is an “aesthetic and incarnate imagination”, affirmed the importance of art as *locus theologicus*: “As the theological retrieval of the symbolic imagination continues on several fronts – on the realities of images, myths, metaphors, analogies, stories, and rituals – we may well find an increased interest among theologians for adding aesthetic criteria as a major component in the present post modern determination of theological criteria.”⁶⁷

⁶² For example: J. Moltmann and E. Moltmann-Wendell, “To Believe with All our Senses: the Resurrection of the Body”, *CTSAP Proceedings* No. 60 (2005), 1-12; M. Illathuparampil, Body in Theology, *Jeevadharma* Vol. 45 No. 252 (Nov. 2012), 405-419.

⁶³ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theodrama: Theological Dramatic Theory* (San Francisco: Ignatius, c. 1988-98). In the Philippines, Fr. Rey dela Cruz, SDB, lectures on *TheoDula* (*dula* as drama, a series of lectures given in conferences).

⁶⁴ Joy Candelario, coordinator of youth and spirituality unit of *Bukal ng Tipan*, was mainly the one who brought bibliodrama to the Philippines as well as to Asia.

⁶⁵ Roy Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); see also Ellen Dissanayake, *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art comes From and Why* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992).

⁶⁶ “The truth of religion, like the truth of its nearest analogue, art, is primordialially a truth of manifestation.” David Tracy, quoted in Holland, 3.

⁶⁷ David Tracy, quoted in Holland, 179. See also Ingrid Shafer, *The Incarnate Imagination: Essays in Theology, the Arts and Social Sciences in Honor of Andrew Greehy*,



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Some theologians are saying of late that this turning to the body, to the sensual, to beauty and the arts, to the imaginative, to passion and desire could have actually ushered the ‘return of God in postmodern conditions’⁶⁸.

EXPLORING TEOLOHIYA NG KATAWAN: *PAGDAMA AT PAGDAMAY*⁶⁹

To summarize the discussion on Church as Body of Christ and how BECs have lived and explored deeper this Vatican II teaching, a contextualized theological articulation is attempted below in the local language.

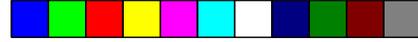
Ang katawan ay katauhan (ka-tawo-han)⁷⁰, ang buong pagka-ikaw. Sinasabi nating “Ako ang aking katawan.” Makikita natin ang katotohanang ito sa paggamit ng mga salitang ‘may katawan’ (‘Pagdesisyunan ang maykatawan’); ‘pangatawanan’ (‘Pangatawanan mo ang iyong sinabi dahil kung hindi ay hindi ka totoong tao’); katawanin (‘Katawanin mo na yan’). Gayung ang ating mga katawan ay may loob at labas, hindi masasabing ang katawan ang labas ng loob. Bagkus ang katawan ang pangangatawan ng loob. Kaya kapag sinabi nating ‘nagkatawang-tao’ ang Diyos sa pamamagitan ni Hesus, ibig nating sabihin ay naging tao si Hesus.

A Festschrift (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Press, 1988) quoted in Holland, 179 and Richard Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and *Theology and the Arts: Encountering God through Music, Arts and Rhetoric* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000).

⁶⁸ Scott Holland, “Theology is a Kind of Writing: The Emergence of Theopoetics,” *Cross Currents* 47 (1997), 317-331 quoted in Scott Holland, *How Do Stories Save Us? An Essay on the Question with the Theological Hermeneutics of David Tracy in View*, Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs 35 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2006), 127-129, 137. See also David Tracy, “The Return of God in Contemporary Theology,” *Concilium* (1994) 6, *Why Theology?*, edited by W. Jeanround and C. Geffre.

⁶⁹ Footnote # 18. The following is an attempt for a local theological articulation culled from the preceding reflection of BECs and Church as the Body of Christ.

⁷⁰Panganiban, *Diksiyunaryo-Tesaurus Pilipino-Ingles*, 238.



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Si Hesus, ang Kumatawan sa Pagmamagandang-loob ng Diyos

Si Hesus ang kumatawan sa lahat ng niloob ng Diyos para sa tao. Pinangatawanan ni Hesus ang pangako ng Diyos, ang sinabi ng Diyos, ang naramdaman ng Diyos, ang pangarap ng Diyos. Si Hesus ang naging kinatawan ng Diyos upang mahawakan at marinig at maamoy natin ang Diyos at ang Kaharian.

Ang Simbahan – Ang Katawan ni Kristo

Bilang Katawan ni Kristo, ang maging simbahan ay ang pangatawanan ang mga paninindigan ni Hesus – ang tumindig kung saan siya tumindig; ang bigkasin ang kanyang mga binigkas; makita ang mga nangyayari sa pamamagitan ng kanyang mga paningin; at higit sa lahat ang magmahal bilang pagpaparamdam ng kanyang pagmamahal. Ramdam ng mga tao si Hesus sa pamamagitan ng kanyang katawan, ang simbahan.

Ang mga BEC – Pinangangatawan ang Kristiyanong Pananampalataya sa Kanilang Pakikidama at Pakikiramay

Bilang malilit na bahagi ng Katawan ni Kristo, pinangangatawanan ng mga BEC ang Kristiyanong pananampalataya sa pamamagitan ng kanilang pakikiramdam at pakikiramay sa bayan ng Diyos, sa nais ng Diyos, sa pagkilos ng Diyos.

Kapag sinabi nating pakiramdam, maaari itong maging ‘*dama*’ or ‘*ramdam*’⁷¹. Gayung parehong may kinalaman sa pakiramdam ang dalawang katagang ito, mayroon itong kaibahan. Ang tulak ng ‘*dama*’

⁷¹ On *dama*, *damdamin*, *damayan*, see the works of Enriquez, “Kapwa: a Core Concept in Filipino Social Psychology” in *Philippine Social Science and Humanities Review* 42 (1978; and *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology: the Philippine Experience* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1994); Jocano (*Filipino Value System* (1997) and *Filipino Worldview* (2001), “The Notion of Value in Filipino Culture: The Concept of *Pamantayan*”, *Punlad Research Paper No. 2 (Series on Filipino Values)* (1992) all published by Punlad Research House in Quezon City) and Talisayon



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ay galing sa labas (tulad ng mga pandama – pantingin, pandinig, panlasa) at ang tulak naman ng ‘ramdam’ ay galing sa loob (‘ramdam ko’). Magaling daw makiramdam ang Pilipino!⁷²

Dama ang pangunahing pagpapahalagang nagpapaikot sa mga Pilipino⁷³. Sa ‘pagpapa-ikot’, ibig sabihin ay ito ang nagpapagalaw sa iba pang pagpapahalagang Pilipino tulad ng damayan at bayanihan. Nagpapagalaw marahil dahil ito ay nakaugnay sa ‘*kapwa*’ na ayon sa mga antropologong Pilipino ay ang ugat at batayan ng mga pagpapahalagang Pilipino. Ibig sabih’y mahalaga sa atin ang pakikipag-ugnayan⁷⁴ ang ‘iba’ ay ‘di na iba’ dahil siya ay kapwa.

Ang tunay na pakikiramdam (‘*dama/ramdam*’) ay tumutuloy sa ‘*damay/damayan*’. Ang tunay na pakikiramdam ay nagtutulak sa ating dumamay sa ating kapwa. Ang pagdama na walang pagdamay ay hungkag. Ang pagdamay na walang pagdama ay limos.

Maraming pakikiramdam at pakikiramay din ang nangyayari sa mga BEC: una, ramdam nila ang kanilang kalagayan at ito ang kanilang inilalapat sa Diyos kapag sila ay nagpupulong. Pinapakiramdam din nila ang sinasabi ng Diyos sa kanila – sa pamamagitan ng sinasabi ng kanilang mga kasama, sa pamamagitan ng pagbasa sa mga tanda ng panahon, sa pamamagitan ng pananalangin at pagdiriwang, sa pamamagitan ng pakikinig din sa kanilang mga tradisyon at kultura.

(“Distinct Elements of Filipino Values: Cross National Comparisons”. *Series on Filipino Spiritual Culture No. 3* (Quezon City: Mamamathala, 1995). This paper’s author wrote on the values of *dama* (sensitivity) that leads to *damay* (solidarity) in BEC settings on “BEC Spirituality” in *BEC: Dream or Reality* (Taytay: *Bukal ng Tipan*, 2004), 277-281.

⁷² Nakaugnay ang pakikiramdam sa mga salitang ito: ‘*nilay*’, ‘*bimay*’, ‘*binagap*’, ‘*binuha*’, ‘*guniguni*’, ‘*gunam-gunam*’, ‘*bulo*’, ‘*lining*’, ‘*nuyunuy*’, ‘*wari*’, ‘*muni*’, ‘*dili*’, ‘*limi*’, ‘*bulay*’, ‘*lirip*’ in Grace Odal-Devora, “Ang Kamalayang Pang-isip ng Tagalog Pinoy: Isang Mapaglarong Pagwawari sa DiwangIsip”, quoted in T. Obusan, “*Kinaiyang Pamamaraan*: Towards Discovering the Wisdom of our Nation” in *Hiyang: Papers of the Colloquium on Research Methodologies in the Study of Spirituality in the Philippines* (Manila: Center for Spirituality, 2005), 33-34.

⁷³ Enriquez, *ibid.* and Jocano, *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Jocano, *ibid.*; see also S. Talisayon, “Distinct Elements of Filipino Values: Cross National Comparisons”. *Series on Filipino Spiritual Culture No. 3* (Quezon City: Mamamathala, 1995).



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Sa kanilang pagbabahaginan ng Salita ng Diyos, ramdam nilang tinutulak sila ng Diyos na dumamay sa isa't-isa, lalo na't dumamay sa kapwang naghihirap; makidamay sa mga nangyayari sa lipunan. Ang tunay na pagdama ay tumutuloy sa mainit na pagdamay.

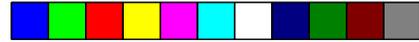
BUHAY NG PAGDAMA AT PAGDAMAY SA BECs: ANG BAGONG KATESISMO AT PAGESAMBA

Ang buhay sa BEC ay buhay ng pagdama at pagdamay. Dito sila natututo kung ano ba ang ibig sabihin ng Kristiyanong pananampalataya. Mas matibay na instrumento ng pagkatuto ang pagdama at pagdamay – walang sinabi ang salita't seminar, lektura't homilya sa harap nito! Kapag nakinig sila sa pamamagitan ng kanilang mga puso, natatagpuan nila ang Diyos sa kanilang kapwa. Kapag dumamay sila susog ng Salita ng Diyos na buhay, natutunan nila kung ano ang ibig sabihin ng maging tao.

Ang pagdama at pagdamay ang kanilang katesismo. Dito sila natututo. Ngunit ito rin ang paraan kung paano nila itinuturo sa iba ang kanilang pananampalataya – lalo sa susunod na henerasyon. Dahil sa patotoo ng pagdama at pagdamay sa mga taong nangangailangan at sa mga problemang panlipunan, natututo ang kanilang mga anak, ang kanilang mga kapitbahay, ang nakalalaking lipunan, na ito pala ang ibig sabihin ng pagsunod sa Diyos. Sa pamamagitan ng patotoo ng kanilang pagdama at pagdamay, naipapasa nila ang Kristiyanong pananampalataya sa paraang tumatatak sa katawan, sa puso, sa alaala ng susunod na henerasyon.

Ang kanilang pagdama at pagdamay ang kanila ring paraan ng buhay na panalangin at pagsamba sa Diyos. Ang pagdama at pagdamay sa kapwa ang kanilang pangangatawan sa paniniwala nila sa Diyos, ang kanilang makakatawang pagbigkas ng pagsamba nila sa Diyos.

Hindi ba ang pagdama at pagdamay ang puso ng Diyos! Hindi nga ba't sinabi niya sa Exodo 3: “Ramdam ko ang paghihirap ng aking bayan sa Ehipto at narinig ko ang kanilang mga hinaing at alam ko ang kanilang pinagdadaanan. Kaya, dadamay ako sa kanila.” At mula dito, nakilala ang Diyos sa kasaysayan bilang Diyos na ramdam



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ang ating kalagayan at palaging handang dumamay sa atin. Pinangatawanan ni Hesus ang dakilang kagandahang-loob ng Diyos at tinawag din siyang Damay ng Diyos. Pinagpatuloy ng Simbahan, ang Katawan ni Kristo, ang pangangatawang ito sa kanilang pagsusumikap na iparamdam ang kagandahang-loob ng Diyos sa ating panahon.

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