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PENTECOSTAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: HOW ILOCANO  
PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES BUILD  
POOR COMMUNITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES<sup>1</sup>

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**1. Introduction**

Social capital has been increasingly recognized as one of the resource capitals available to the poor. Yet, how can religious sectors such as the Pentecostal movement utilize its potential in empowering the poor in rural areas? Ilocano Pentecostal churches are considered to be one of the most influential segments of Pentecostals in the Philippines with a network of churches (873 local pastors, 704 local churches, and 5 Bible Schools) in 14 provinces<sup>2</sup> in Northern Luzon. The Ilocano Pentecostals is considered one of the largest groups among the Pentecostal churches in the Philippines.<sup>3</sup> IP local churches in the rural areas are grappling with many issues of poverty.

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<sup>1</sup> This essay is a brief synopsis of my research project, entitled, "Developing a Pentecostal Civic Engagement as a Way of Building Poor Communities in the Philippines: A Case of Lowland and Highland Ilocano Pentecostals in Northern Luzon Philippines (D. Min. Dissertation, Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> These 14 provinces are located in three regional divisions of Northern Luzon. The *Ilocos Region* is comprised of four provinces; namely; Pangasinan, La Union, Ilocos Sur, and Ilocos Norte. In the *Cordillera Administrative Region* we have the Abra, Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, and Mountain province. The *Cagayan Valley Region* includes Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Viscaya and Quirino.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, Conrado Lumahan stated that as of 2005, there were 3,800 AOG churches in the Philippines and lately it was claimed that there were 5000 existing local churches within the organization. If this figure is true, then it is correct to assume that the 704 local churches within these four districts represents the larger segment of Pentecostal AOG churches in the organization,

Ilocano local communities where these churches are planted are characterized by a lack of access to economic resources, such as, low income, hunger, unemployment, labor export, superstitions, fatalism and various forms of exploitation. Ilocano Pentecostal Christians in the rural areas are equally poor and they constantly struggle to get out from poverty. Yet, Ilocano Pentecostal local churches, beginning from their inception up to the present, emerged as a vibrant force of Christian witness in Northern Luzon, Philippines.

This research project is centered on answering important crucial questions regarding the social capital of Ilocano Pentecostal local churches: What is the impact on civil society, if any, of the Pentecostal/charismatic religion? What contribution does the study of “spirit-empowered” religion make to our understanding of the role of religion in human society?

Using a participatory approach as a way of enquiry, this study will evaluate the social capital of Lowland and Highland Ilocano Pentecostal churches that are serving in the poor communities of Northern Luzon Philippines. In the process of this study, data collections are used through survey questionnaires, statistical examinations, personal visits and interviews, small-group dynamics and field observations.

In this study, I will argue that Ilocano Pentecostal local churches, regardless of their low socio-economic conditions and constant struggle with poverty, are developing a strong social network that enables them to build local communities. Civic engagement is thoroughly examined to investigate the outlook of their social capital.

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since the PGCAG is comprised of 21 district councils in the entire archipelago. For further studies on Ilocano Pentecostals in Northern Luzon, see, Conrado Lumahan, “Facts and Figures: A History of the Growth of the Philippines Assemblies of God” *AJPS* Vol. 8. No. 2 (July, 2005): 331-344; available from [www.aps.edu/aeimages/File/AJPS\\_PDF/05-2-CLumahan.pdf](http://www.aps.edu/aeimages/File/AJPS_PDF/05-2-CLumahan.pdf); Internet; accessed 7 March, 2010; and also, see the work of Doreen Alcoran Bernavidez, “The Early Years of the Church of God in Northern Luzon (1947-1953): A Historical and Theological Overview,” *AJPS* 8:2 (2005): 255-269; available from [http://www.aps.edu/aeimages/File/AJPS\\_PDF/05-2-DAlcoran.pdf](http://www.aps.edu/aeimages/File/AJPS_PDF/05-2-DAlcoran.pdf); Internet; accessed 17 December 2010.

## 2. A Search for Theological Framework of Civic Engagement

### Defining Pentecostal Social Capital

In this study I defined Pentecostal social capital as a resource for collective movement performed by Spirit-filled believers in their community, in order to actualize, engage and outwork the public meaning of Christian witness for the common good and transformation of the civil society. Pentecostal social capital is a resource embedded in the Christian faith to enable individuals and communities toward a just and loving society.

### The Impact of Social Capital in the Civil Society

The concept of social capital, in search for a broader answer to the social ills that confronted various sociological and organizational issues, has increasingly attracted social scientists to examine the philosophical and theoretical concept of social capital and its implications to the socio-economic development of the poor.<sup>4</sup> Sociological researchers not only acknowledge that social capital is gaining attention from various fields, but it is also becoming a potential resource for economic growth and well being,<sup>5</sup> providing

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<sup>4</sup> See, R.W. Jackman and R.A. Miller, "Social Capital and Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* (1998): 47-73; A. Portes, & J. Sensenbrenner, "Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Economic Action," *American Journal of Sociology*, (1993):1320-1350.

<sup>5</sup> M. Geepu Nah Tiepoh and Bill Reimer, "Social Capital, Information Flows, and Income Creation in Rural Canada: a Cross-Community Analysis," *Journal of Socio-Economics* 33 (2004): 427-448; available at <http://nre.concordia.ca/ftp2004/reports/tiepoh-reimer.pdf>; Internet; accessed 05 February 2010. Also see, Jonathan Fox and John Gershma, "The World Bank and Social Capital: Lessons from Ten Rural Development Projects in the Philippines and Mexico," (UC Sta Cruz: Center for Global, International and Regional Studies, 2000; available from: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1vj8v86j>; Internet; accessed 15February 2010; Yuko Kobayakawa, "The Land Acquisition Program As A Key To Social Capital-Case Study of the Urban Poor Community in Cebu, Philippines," A paper presented at The 13th Philippine Studies Forum of Japan, Doshisha University, Imadegawa Campus 2008; World Bank, *The State in a Changing World* (Washington D.C.: World Development Report, 1997); The World

organizational success<sup>6</sup> and employment,<sup>7</sup> facilitating economic action and performance,<sup>8</sup> creating intellectual capitals and team effectiveness,<sup>9</sup> facilitating entrepreneurship,<sup>10</sup> strengthening organizational relationships,<sup>11</sup> and providing resources for conflict resolution and peace building.<sup>12</sup>

### Pentecostals as Producers of Common Good

In recent years, the religious sectors began to apply the concept of social capital in various religious organizations and para-churches, examining the nature and impact of religious groups in a larger network

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Bank. *Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Washington D. C: World Development Report, 1999). Available from [www.fsa.ulaval.ca/personnel/vernag/REF/Monde/Goad.htm](http://www.fsa.ulaval.ca/personnel/vernag/REF/Monde/Goad.htm); Internet, accessed 17 December 2010.

<sup>6</sup> S.M. Gabbay and E.W. Zuckerman, "Social Capital and Opportunity in Corporate R&D: The Contingent Effect of Contact Density on Mobility Expectations," *Social Science Research*, (1998):189-217; M. A. Belliveau, C. A., O'Reilly, III, and J. B. Wade, "Social Capital at the Top: Effects of Social Similarity and Status on CEO Compensation" *Academy of Management Journal*, (1996): 1568-1593.

<sup>7</sup> M.S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (1995): 1360-1380.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1995): 1.

<sup>9</sup> J. Nahapiet, and S. Ghoshal, "Social Capital, Intellectual Capital, and the Organizational Advantage," *Academy of Management Review* (1997): 242-266.

<sup>10</sup> L. Chong and P. Gibbons, "Corporate Entrepreneurship: The Roles of Ideology and Social Capital," *Group and Organization Management* (1998):10-30.

<sup>11</sup> B. Uzzi, "Social Structure and Competition in Inter-firm Networks: The Paradox of Embeddedness," *Administrative Science Quarterly* (1997): 35-67.

<sup>12</sup> Allen Toohey, "Social Capital, Civil Society, and Peace: Reflections on Conflict Transformations in the Philippines," *A Paper* (Australia: Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Queensland, 2005), 1-19; available from <http://www.engagingcommunities2005.org/abstracts/Toohey-Aileen-final.pdf>; Internet; accessed 17 December 2010.

of society.<sup>13</sup> For instance, studies made by Cnaan, Boddie, and Yancey underscore the intrinsic norms of civic engagement within the Christian churches, identifying that religious congregations have long-held and enduring social norms. Such norms are characterized by the way in which people gather for worship and their willingness to become involved in community services.<sup>14</sup>

In the studies by Warner<sup>15</sup> and Wuthnow,<sup>16</sup> religious organizations develop a high level of social trust that results in personal involvement and sharing of resources. Evidence shows that the church through collective partnership and networking with government and civic society is instrumental in unmasking the social blight of the poor.<sup>17</sup> This notion is corroborated by the studies of Sanguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in the US, which shows that religious organizations are vitally important community organizations that have played a central role in many of the great social and political transformations in history.<sup>18</sup> Putnam and Feldten critically addresses the issue that religious organizations can be potential tools to organize civic life and teach the values of compassion, forgiveness, fairness, altruism, and respect for the world beyond oneself.<sup>19</sup> In the same manner, religious

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<sup>13</sup> Corwin Smidt, ed. *Religious Social Capital: Producing the Common Good* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), 7.

<sup>14</sup> Ram A. Cnaan, Stephanie C. Boddie, and Gaynor I. Yancey, "Bowling Alone But Serving Together: The Congregational Norm of Community Involvement," in Corwin Smidt, ed. *Religious Social Capital: Producing the Common Good* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003), 20.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen R. Warner, "Work in Progress toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States," *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (1993):1044-93.

<sup>16</sup> R. Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 23.

<sup>17</sup> Goschin, Zizi, Constantin, Daniela-Luminita and Roman, Monica "The Partnership between the State and the Church against Trafficking in Person," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, Vol. 8, No. 24 (2009): 231-256.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Putnam and Lewis L. Feldten with Don Cohen, *Better Together: Restoring the American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

organizations can be vibrant voluntary associations that teach people how to organize events, speak in public, and work together toward common ends.<sup>20</sup> Studies conducted by Dougherty and his colleagues in 2005 regarding community involvement and political participation of Pentecostals in the US reveals that Pentecostals participate less in community organization and politics than non-Pentecostals.<sup>21</sup>

Recent findings, however, show that there is a growing movement of community and political participation emerging around the globe among Pentecostal people.<sup>22</sup> In recent empirical studies done by Miller and Yamamori, Pentecostals are not only an emerging force in world Christianity but through this cohesive and active actualization of their faith to the civil society, they are transforming local individuals and communities.<sup>23</sup> Recently, Professor Douglas Petersen of Vanguard University initiated a joint research on social capital with the partnership of Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Initiative Center for Religion and Civic Culture of the University of Southern California,<sup>24</sup> to examine the nature of Pentecostal social capital and its

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Kevin D. Dougherty, et al. "Sideline by Religion: Community Involvement and Political Participation of U.S. Pentecostals," Paper presented at 2009 Symposium on Religion and Politics (Department of Sociology: Baylor University, May 12, 2009), 3, 15; available from: <http://search.yahoo.com/search?fr=msgr-buddy&ei=UTF-8&p=Sideline%20by%20Religion>; Internet; accessed 10 March 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Ari Pedro ORO, "Religious Politicians" and "Secular Politicians" in Southern Brazil, *Social Compass* 2007; 54; 583; available from: <http://scp.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/54/4/583>; Internet; accessed 10 March 2010; Ahn Bersten, "Pentecostalism in South Africa and its Potential Social and Economic Role," A Comprehensive Research Report of Centre for Development and Enterprise (Johannesburg, South Africa, March 2008); available from: [http://search.yahoo.com/search;\\_ylt=A0oGkxVDkZdLweYAZZFXNyoA?p=Under+the+Radar%3A+Pentecostalism+in+South+A](http://search.yahoo.com/search;_ylt=A0oGkxVDkZdLweYAZZFXNyoA?p=Under+the+Radar%3A+Pentecostalism+in+South+A); accessed 10 March 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, (Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2007), 1, 99.

<sup>24</sup> Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Initiative, "Research Questions" *University of Southern California*, available from <http://crcc.usc.edu/initiatives/pcr/>; Internet; accessed 05 February 2010.

impact on civic and political society.<sup>25</sup> In the words of David Martin of London School of Economics, the Pentecostals are the “little platoons of democracy” – places where often very poor people learn to function democratically, elect their own officers and develop leadership skills.<sup>26</sup> Martin also acknowledged that Pentecostals “learn to participate in and run meetings to conduct business to handle money, to budget, to plan, to compromise, to formulate and ‘own’ a course of action.”<sup>27</sup>

### 3. Methodology

The research methodology employed for this study is a combination of multiple approaches. First a quantitative survey questionnaire is given to pastors, church workers, Bible school students, and members in order to measure and draw inferences regarding the nature of civic engagement of Pentecostals known as the social capital. The survey is comprised of 29 domains with 5 sets of questions in each domain with a total of 162 questions. The questionnaire is classified into four parts that include the demographic information of the respondent, the self-understanding of the respondent regarding the program and mission of his/her local church, perceptions of poverty and church action in combating poverty, and questions regarding the respondents’ civic participation in the community. The 15 domains of the questionnaire are as follows:

#### Domains: Civic and Community Engagement

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Family and Social Relationship | 5 |
| 2. Trust Other People             | 5 |
| 3. Civic Solidarity               | 5 |

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<sup>25</sup> Douglas Petersen and Magali Negron Gil, “Pentecostals and Social Capital in Nicaragua and Costa Rica,” Unpublished Paper, Judkins Institute for Leadership Studies, Vanguard University of Southern California, Costa Mesa, CA.

<sup>26</sup> Centre for Development Enterprise, “Untapped Social Capital Burgeoning under the Radar,” *CDE*, March 12, 2008; available at: [http://www.cde.org.za/article.php?a\\_id=278](http://www.cde.org.za/article.php?a_id=278); Internet; accessed 10 March 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



4. Leisure and Entertainment	5
5. Public Affairs	5
6. Civic Leadership	5
7. Giving and Volunteering	5
8. Informal Social Ties	5
9. People's Empowerment	5
10. Community Needs	5
Total	50 items

The process by which the questionnaire is given to the respondents is through personal participation in a collective meeting of ministers, with voluntary assistance of selected research staff who administered the survey, letters and emails, and by conducting collective interviews with group respondents such as church members or theological students. The second approach used for this study is descriptive research analysis. Collecting and analyzing the data is not sufficient to understand the nature of Pentecostal civic engagement. The researcher of this study has chosen selected local churches to examine and closely investigate their participation in the community as a pilot project. This process is done through personal visits to these selected local churches to interview local pastors and members and to observe their existing ministries.

#### Target Respondents and Procedures

The major respondents of this study are focused on two groups of selected local churches of Ilocano Pentecostals: the lowland and highland Ilocano Pentecostals. The lowland Ilocano Pentecostals are identified as the people of Ilocos Region and Cagayan Valley. Among the lowland Ilocano Pentecostals, there are 123 respondents represented by 21 local churches, 91 respondents came from the Assemblies of God, and 27 of them came from Independent Pentecostal charismatic members. Among the highland Ilocano Pentecostal churches, respondents are comprised of 121 respondents, 83 respondents came from the Assemblies of God and 38 of them came from independent Pentecostal churches.

Table 1: Summary of the Demographic Information of the Respondents

Sex	N=123 Lowland	N=121 Highland
Male	58	63
Female	65	58
Age		
Under 25	29	62
26-35	28	32
36-45	32	19
46-55	21	5
56 above	13	3
Marital Status		
Single	55	72
Married	67	49
Widow/Separated	1	1
Education		
HS or less	21	29
Vocational	3	4
Some College	48	45
College Graduate	46	36
Graduate or Postgraduate	5	7
Length of Service in the Church		
Below 5 Years	52	70
6-10 Years	23	20
11-15 Years	13	11
16-20 Years	5	6
21-Above	30	3
Church Affiliation		
Assemblies of God	94	83
Charismatic/Independent Pentecostals	29	38

Status in the Church		
Member	27	32
Church Officers or Workers	49	50
Pastors/Administrators	47	39
Current Jobs and Employment		
With business and employment	78	64
Students/No employment	43	57

The processes by which the questionnaire was administered to the respondents used the following procedures. The researcher sent request letters to the office of the organization with the endorsement of the director of the Doctor of Ministry program. When the request was granted, the researcher personally attended the ministers' meetings of these local churches and administered the survey. The survey questionnaire was executed and read in front of the respondents in English and Ilocano and it was administered in 45 minutes to one hour.

### Statistical Treatment of Data

The data was presented using tables, graphs, and texts. Inferential statistics were used in the interpretation of data. The Microsoft Excel was utilized in the computation of desired output. For the qualitative part that deals with the perceptions of the respondents, the responses were tallied and tabulated. Results were subjected to computations, such as frequency counts, weighted means, and ranking. Frequency tables were constructed; to compute for the weighted means, the following formula was utilized:

$$WM = \frac{\sum (w_1 f_1 + w_2 f_2 + w_3 f_3 + w_4 f_4)}{n}$$

where  $w_1$ ,  $w_2$ ,  $w_3$ , and  $w_4$  are the respective weights (rating);  $f_1$ ,  $f_2$ ,  $f_3$ , and  $f_4$  are the respective frequencies per question/indicator;  $n$  is the total number of respondents.

#### 4. Presentation of Analysis and Findings

##### Civic and Community Engagement of Lowland and Highland Ilocano Pentecostals

Figure 1 is a graphical presentation of the level of civic and community engagement of the lowland and highland Ilocano Pentecostal church members.

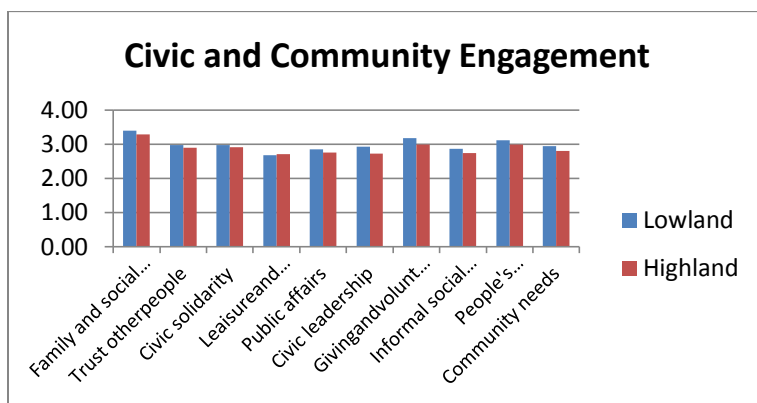


Figure 1

##### Family and Social Relationship

Family and social network is fundamental to social and economic well-being. In fact, the saying that “It’s not what you know, but who you know,” is so very true and practiced among Filipinos. An individual might not have sufficient financial capital, but if he or she has a network of friends, that relationship with others can be converted or become a potential tool for economic well-being. In this section, respondents were asked if it is normal to help their friends or neighbors when they are in need. They were asked whether members were really taught to love their families and neighbors and show collective concern whenever they are in need. The central issue in this concern is whether the local church is actively participating in helping meet the needs in their immediate context such as their families and neighbors.

Results of the survey show that respondents from LIP and HIP with the mean of 3.49 and 3.29 strongly agree that Pentecostals must demonstrate collectively and concretely deep concern and good works before their families and neighbors. Pentecostals are quick to suggest that whether in devotion or recreation, Pentecostals must first be a witness with their families and neighbors. Developing a close relationship within their immediate families is highly valued by the HIP. While this value is worth pursuing even to the HIP, they also recognized the value of trust and reciprocity in building a strong network and solidarity in the community. Both the LIP and HIP strongly place the family and neighbors as the central venue of developing trust and solidarity.

Table 2. Civic and Community Engagement of the Lowland and Highland Pentecostal Churches

Areas	Lowland			Highland		
	Mean	Desc	Rank	Mean	Desc	Rank
Family and social relationship	3.40	SA	1	3.29	SA	1
Trust other people	2.98	A	4.5	2.91	A	5
Civic solidarity	2.98	A	4.5	2.92	A	4
Media Communication and Public entertainment	2.68	A	10	2.72	A	10
Public affairs	2.86	A	8	2.76	A	7
Civic leadership	2.94	A	6	2.73	A	9
Giving and volunteering	3.19	A	2	3.00	A	3
Informal social ties	2.86	A	9	2.74	A	8
People's empowerment	3.13	A	3	3.00	A	3
Community needs	2.94	A	6	2.81	A	6
Average	3.00	A		2.89	A	

$$t_{\text{stat}} = 1.307$$

$$t_{\text{critical}} = 2.101$$

Interpretation: No significant difference

### Trust Other People

Developing trust as a way of building a community is another factor that empowers the social and economic well-being of a society. In this study, respondents were asked to test if Ilocano Pentecostal local churches from the lowlands and highlands generate trust and contribute trust for the increasing reciprocity of communities. Respondents were asked if there are people whom they think deserve to be trusted. Given their friends, neighbors, politicians and fellow believers as examples, respondents were asked if they trusted these people. The goal of the study is to know if there is a significant contribution of Ilocano Pentecostal believers in building trust in the community.

The results of the survey show that LIP has a mean of 2.98 and that HIP has a mean score of 2.91 which demonstrates that both lowland and highland Ilocano Pentecostals practice a high degree of trust with their fellow members, neighbors, etc. The survey shows that the people least trusted are the politicians, but perhaps this analysis is based on the disappointment of the church people because of the scandals that plague the political sectors. While the survey is ranked 4.5 and 5 from ten domains of civic engagement, results of the studies show that there is a significant correlation between the perceptions of LIP and HIP with respect to trusting other people.

In contrast, this study greatly differs with the findings of Berggren and Bjørnskov that religiosity discourages trust.<sup>28</sup> Ilocano Pentecostals in this case demonstrate that the exponential growth of the movement shows both the increasing development of social trust within and outside the movement. Recent research of American social scientists found a decline of social trust due to the waning voluntary participation from political, social and religious sectors. However, the exception to these findings was the Evangelical-Pentecostal movement, which experienced growth because they tend to focus on developing within the community.<sup>29</sup> In a Pentecostal local church with large reservoirs of

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<sup>28</sup> Nicolas Berggren and Christian Bjørnskov, "Does Religiosity Promote or Discourage Social Trust? Evidence from Cross-Country and Cross-State Comparisons," Aarhus School of Business, Aarhus University, Department of Economics, Frichshuset, Hermodsvej 22, DK-8230 Åbyhøj, Denmark. chbj@asb.dk. October 10, 2009; 4, 21; available from [http://www.ratio.se/pdf/wp/nb\\_cb\\_Religiosity.pdf](http://www.ratio.se/pdf/wp/nb_cb_Religiosity.pdf); Internet; accessed 17 June 2010.

<sup>29</sup> Joseph P. Daniels and March von der Ruhr, "Trust in Others: Does Religion Matter?" *A Working Paper*, Center for Global and Economic Studies,

social capital, members spend more time participating in community organizations, volunteer more often, and are more likely to vote. They are also likely to spend more time socializing with family, friends, and neighbors. They are more likely to trust, not just their intimates, but people in general. Such a Pentecostal church functions better in a wide variety of ways.

### Civic Solidarity

Pentecostals are oftentimes thought of as other-worldly. Thus they are perceived as anti-social with not much interest in civic participation. This study recognizes the importance of civic solidarity or a collective cooperation of the people, including the church for a community to attain progress and economic well-being. The surveys under the domain of civic solidarity asked the respondents their perceptions and personal involvement in the development of their own communities. Respondents were asked if they are willing to cooperate with local government officials when asked to conserve water or power supplies. This posed question is to test the degree of cooperation of Pentecostals. Regarding their perceptions of the community, respondents were asked if they felt it was unlikely that they would be victims of crime and if they considered their community a peaceful place to live or if they were considering transferring to another location. This domain ended with a question whether Pentecostals from LIP and HIP believe they can potentially make a contribution in their community to make it a better place.

Results of the survey ranked civic solidarity at a number four level of civic engagement of Lowland and Highland Ilocano Pentecostals. With a mean of 2.98 for LIP and 2.91 for HIP, it demonstrates that Ilocano Pentecostals have an average level of civic cooperation in their respective villages. While both LIP and HIP agree that local members perceive the role of Pentecostals is to demonstrate collective solidarity in the community, the result shows that this role is not yet fully developed as a practice within the local congregation.

LIP suggests ways to demonstrate civic solidarity and also show the burgeoning interest of LIP to cooperate when the local community asks them to participate. LIP recognizes the importance of mutual help

(*Bayanihan*), voluntary involvement and seeking the best interests of the community as a way of demonstrating authentic solidarity in the community. Moreover, living a godly character expressed by loyalty toward common programs and vision in the community are ways to demonstrate good citizenship in the community. While HIP agrees on the recommendations above, they believe that these actions should be outward manifestations of the practical outworking of the command of Jesus to love our neighbors. In other words, the actualization of one's faith in the community is rooted in the values of the kingdom, which are to love God and to love our neighbor.

### Media Communication and Public Entertainment

Communication and entertainment as part of civic and social well-being plays an important role in developing the whole person. Christians are not exempted from it. While Christians believe that God created the world for his creation to enjoy, Christians, likewise, are selective as to what kind of media communication and social entertainment they should engage in. This study supports the idea that Pentecostals should be entitled to interact in the society where they live. They have the right to know and be informed about what's happening in their surroundings. They have the liberty to exercise and practice what is right as long as it will not contradict the Word of God.

In this section, all the respondents—a total of 123 from LIP and 121 from HIP—were asked if they regularly read newspapers to be informed on what is happening in local and national affairs. They were also asked if they watch TV, use the Internet to communicate and network with their friends. The researcher is also interested to know the attitude of Pentecostals toward watching movies and to check if Pentecostal believers consider sports as part of their Christian life and physical well-being.

Results of the survey interviews show that LIP has a mean of 2.68 and HIP has a mean of 2.72 which demonstrate that they agree that Pentecostals should be open to media information, social gatherings such as entertainment and sports. However, the studies also reveal that this activity is ranked number 10 and is considered less likely to be activities that Pentecostals should participate in civic society. Respondents are suspicious that when Pentecostal believers are increasingly immersed in media and entertainment that these will affect their social behavior, especially those who are not rooted in their faith. Some respondents, however, believe that media and entertainment can



be powerful tools for social education. Therefore, when Pentecostal believers use and link themselves in this context, most likely they will be more aware of what is happening in civil society.

### Public Affairs

Close participation in the affairs of the community by local Pentecostal churches is another way of bearing witness and helping the poor in the communities. This study believes that Pentecostal churches should be “watchmen” and act as the “moral conscience” of society. The Church contains “the light” and is called to be instrumental in influencing and affecting the moral fabric of the community. In this study, respondents were asked if they were interested in knowing what is happening in community affairs whether related to political issues or to the public community. To test the respondents regarding their close participation, they were asked if they were free to vote for their own candidates and willing to participate in civic meetings. Respondents were also asked if they trust their local and national leaders and would be willing to report to the police anything illegal happening in the community.

Results of the study show that LIP has a mean score of 2.86 and HIP has a mean of 2.76. This demonstrates that both LIP and HIP agree that local Pentecostal churches should closely watch and participate in the happenings of the community. The results of the study however ranked this study as number 7 for HIP and 8 for LIP.

As to how to demonstrate the closer participation of Pentecostal churches in public affairs, HIP has a broader suggestion. For LIP, local churches should positively join and participate in community affairs, show deep concern for the needs of the community and contribute good ideas during community meetings. While these suggestions are strongly supported by HIP, the respondents strongly feel that they were involved closely when they act as law-abiding citizens within the community, wisely voting during elections, and participating voluntarily when the community is in need. When illegal activities are taking place, HIP strongly suggest that Pentecostal Christians should not be afraid to verbalize their sentiments and campaign for righteous governance in the community. HIP positively look at the potential contributions of Pentecostals if they will closely participate and keep track of the activities in the community.

### Civic Organizational Membership and Leadership

Civic organizational membership and assuming leadership responsibilities for righteous governance and effective advocacy for the creation of a just and loving society are crucial needs in the community. This study advocates a creation of social justice and equal participation of people in the community. It affirms the importance of godly leadership and the organization of people's groups and associations that look closely at the welfare of the community. Results of the study reveal that LIP has a mean of 2.94 and HIP has a mean of 2.73. The study also reveals that this study is ranked number 6 for LIP while ranked number 9 for HIP. The study reveals a minimal difference with respect to points, but overall, both LIP and HIP agree that Pentecostals should join and assume leadership roles in the community organizations that support social and political reforms.

As to how to develop a strong associational network within the community, LIP agrees that Pentecostals members should participate and if given the opportunity to lead, they should take responsibility. LIP also suggests that to make a greater impact in the community, they should foster strong and positive moral values that somehow impact local communities. To HIP, there is a growing interest in participation in civic leadership. Taking responsibility to lead is an important participation of church members in the community. But contrary to the contemporary practice of civic leadership, Christians should foster servant leadership in their service to others. They strongly suggest that those Christians running for politics should be received positively by local churches and given moral and spiritual support.

Large stocks of community social capital are associated with effective governance and a healthy participatory democracy. A vibrant associational life, whether organized around "private" goals like entertainment, socializing, worship, or organized for specific or local public purposes like erecting a playground, creates a community resource. This organizational resource can be mobilized to meet unforeseen problems or to represent the beliefs and interests of community members to governmental bodies. The broader the web of associations, the more likely all members of the community will have access to government, not just the few "well connected." Also, small local associations give many citizens the chance to assume leadership

roles and learn the vital democratic skills of coalition building, organizing and cooperation.<sup>30</sup>

### Giving and Volunteering

Giving and volunteerism are also important components in building a strong and prosperous community. Giving and volunteerism in this study are not only practices within the church, but to the people of community as well. Historically, giving and volunteerism have been proven as important tools in building conflict resolution and resolving problems in the community. When a community does not have strong ties of sacrificial giving and volunteerism, most likely this community will not prosper and succeed in all its endeavors. To the Filipinos, the culture of mutual help (*bayanihan*) is one of the most powerful in building lives and communities whenever they are in danger or calamity.

Results of the studies show that Lowland Ilocano Pentecostals have a mean of 3.19 while Highland Ilocano Pentecostals have a mean of 3.00. Both LIP and HIP agree that Pentecostals should demonstrate a high level of giving and volunteerism. Giving and volunteerism for LIP ranked number 2 while HIP ranked it number 3. Relatively, there is no significant difference with respect to their perceptions on the given subject.

There are increasing suggestions from LIP that Pentecostals should increase the value of giving and volunteerism whenever their community is in need. Giving and volunteerism should be expressed for the up-building of the community and not for personal reward or profit. HIP, on the other hand, suggest that because Pentecostals are a part of the larger segment of religious bodies or in the community itself, they encouraged greater civic participation through giving of resources and money. Christians should be more expressive in the actualization of their faith through concrete actions in the community. Giving and volunteerism are manifestations of that action.

### Informal Social Ties

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<sup>30</sup> Robert D. Putnam, "The Prosperous Community: Social Capital and Public Life" *The American Prospect* no. 13 (Spring, 1993) <http://epn.org/prospect/13/13putn.html>; Internet; accessed March 10, 2010.

In this domain respondents were asked if they usually visit their own relatives, socialize with workmates outside their work, hang out with friends in public places, chat with neighbors or play sports with their friends. Results of the survey reveal that LIP has a mean of 2.86 and HIP has a score of 2.74 respectively. Informal social ties is ranked number 9 for LIP while number 8 for HIP. Obviously there was a significant difference with respect to ranking, but both LIP and HIP agree that Pentecostals should develop informal social ties. The results, however, show that informal social ties are less likely to be the strength of Ilocano Pentecostals. This observation is perhaps due to the kind of social capital Ilocano Pentecostals have developed within the movement. This observation also reveals that Pentecostals sometimes tend to develop a “bonding” capital than a “bridging” capital because of strong levels of trust within their religious affiliations. Nevertheless, the survey shows that Ilocano Pentecostals support the developing of a strong network with their peers and workmates.

Moreover, LIP believes that developing an informal social tie can also help and support their relatives and peers in times of need. Participating in sports and other community events can also be a vehicle to develop intentional relationships and network with people in the community. With respect to the social attitudes of HIP, they believe that friends and neighbors are gifts from God and, therefore, should be treasured. HIP encourage Pentecostals to be active and outgoing so as to develop a closer involvement with their neighbors and people in the community.

### People's Empowerment

Pentecostals were distinguished as a religious organization that places importance on being filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit builds lives and transforms communities. As a result, Pentecostals within or outside their organization actualize this empowerment in everyday life. Pentecostal adherents believe that the Holy Spirit is not only for spiritual encouragement, but they also affirm the social impact of that empowerment in people's lives and communities.

The results of the study show that LIP have a mean of 3.13 and is ranked as number 3 among the list of civic participation of lowland Pentecostals. HIP have a mean of 3.0 and equally ranked as number 3 among the most important activity of civic engagement of Pentecostals in the rural areas. While there is little difference with the total mean (.13), both LIP and HIP agree that Pentecostals as a religious

organization are involved and participating in the empowerment of local people as expressed in their strong advocacy of greater realization of democracy, creation of equal distribution of wealth and resources and the preservation of the environment.

LIP strongly suggests that Pentecostal Christians should make themselves available for those in need. On the other hand, HIP strongly suggests that Pentecostals should increasingly create programs that boost and maximize the potential and talents of the people in the community. By doing so, they should encourage closer participation of their own people in civic affairs, teach social awareness, and foster strong moral values in the community.

### Community Needs

Pentecostals advocate a deep burden for the people and strongly believe that for a Pentecostal church to be effective in the ministry they should have a collective vision for the community in which they are called to serve. In fact, a local church that is able to address community needs is mostly supported by the people in the community. Thus, this study believes that a Pentecostal church that develops a program that keeps on track with the needs of the community can be a powerful vehicle of building a just and prosperous community.

Results of the study show that LIP have a mean of 2.94 while HIP has a score of 2.81, ranked as number six in important activities of lowland and highland Pentecostals. This demonstrates that both LIP and HIP agree that Pentecostal local churches should have a holistic vision of the community and innovatively develop cutting-edge programs that address the needs of the community.

As to how to demonstrate these activities, LIP strongly suggests that Pentecostals should not be afraid to develop and use technologies that address the multi-faceted needs of the community. By doing so, they should also organize programs and activities that develop the social and economic well-being of the people in the community. Such programs are the creation of people's organization such as cooperatives, learning centers, feeding programs and medical mission for the poor. For HIP, they strongly recommend that Pentecostals be more responsive to the changing needs in the community. While maintaining their Christian values and convictions, they should foster flexibility in tracking the needs of the community.

The t-test was also used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the perceptions of lowland and highland Ilocano

Pentecostal church members. Based on the results, there is no marked difference between the two groups at the 5% significance level, as indicated by the t-statistic of 1.307 which is lower than the tabular value of 2.101. This implies that lowland and highland Ilocano Pentecostal church members have the same level of enthusiasm and vigor in engagement in civic and community activities and programs.

## 5. Recommendations

### Develop a Contextual Model of Pentecostal Civic Engagement That Empowers Rural Poverty

Pentecostal ministry from its very nature is characterized by the passion and willingness to interject the gospel into every situation. This Pentecostal involvement depends on the challenges that emerge from a given context. While it is true that Pentecostals are accused of being socially irresponsible because of their futuristic attitude, this concept is rather inconclusive. Therefore, since endemic poverty characterizes the majority of the rural areas, Filipino Pentecostal civic engagement must responsibly correspond to the pressing needs of the poor people in the rural areas.<sup>31</sup> Any serious civic participation of local church endeavors must not fail to ask the issues the people are asking. A mission that is “divorced from reality,” as Jose de Mesa puts it, “is irrelevant and meaningless.”<sup>32</sup> Immanuel Luna reiterates this point when he says:

The lack of involvement of the local churches in the community issues and affairs is a withdrawal from the battle the Lord has called us to fight. Relegating these to the heathen is shunning away from the great mandate for us to rule and be good stewards of the Lord’s creation and affairs.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Carlos Abesamis, “Ano Po Ang Laman ng Mangkok? How (not) To Do Theology in Asia Today” *CTC Bulletin* (January 1999): 1-23; also available from <http://www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc98-01/preface.htm> ; Internet; accessed 17 December 2010. See also, Melba Maggay, *The Gospel in Filipino Context* (Mandaluyong, Metro Manila: OMF Literature, 1990), 1.

<sup>32</sup> Jose M. De Mesa and Lode L. Wotsyn, *Doing Theology: Basic Realities and Processes*. (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 1990), 16-17.

<sup>33</sup> Emmanuel Luna, “Paglalatatag ng Aral: Moving on to another Season of Sowing” in *Hasik-Unlad: An Experience in Community Development Training*.

### Churches and Theological Schools as Centers of Education for Pentecostal Civic Engagement

Because the concept of social capital known as civic engagement is almost foreign to Pentecostal believers, local churches and theological schools as well as Pentecostal organizations should increase awareness at the local, regional, and national level whereby research and training should be conducted and disseminated.

Fundamental to the development of a Pentecostal form of civic engagement, the task of positioning the local church as a center of social concern should be practice and implemented within the local churches. Pentecostal local churches should not be understood as caretakers and dispensers of spiritual truth and values, but they should creatively integrate in their training and Bible studies the importance of educating the members to participate creatively in the regeneration of their local communities.

### The Call for a New Breed of Pentecostal Scholars and Christian Workers for Civic Engagement

Until recently, the concept of social capital was being developed as a “science” of empowering communities. Scholars from different fields have attempted to interpret the philosophical and social implications of the theory in broadening the core values of social capital in their organizations. While volumes of literature have been produced by secular scholars, only a few religious scholars have applied its potential, especially in Pentecostal circles, despite the call of research organizations, calling a new breed of Pentecostal scholars to critically analyze the concept of social capital of Pentecostals and its implications in civil society.<sup>34</sup> The concept of social capital until this

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(Diliman, Quezon City: Institute for Studies in Asia Church and Culture, 1998). 75.

<sup>34</sup> Chris Baker and Hannah Skinner, “The Dynamic Connection between Spiritual and Religious Capital” Final Report of the William Temple Foundation’s Research Project (2002-2005) in

William Temple Foundation. *Regenerating Communities: A Theological and Strategic Critique*. End of Year One Report: Mapping the Boundaries. Manchester: WTF. (December 2003):1-75; also available from

time remains a new field of theological and sociological education for Pentecostals. Thus, it calls scholars within the Pentecostal camp to arise, use, and seize its potentials in empowering civil society.

### Proposed Manual and Guidelines for Pentecostal Civic Engagement

Akin to recommendation above, this study suggests the creation of a manual and guidelines of Pentecostal civic engagement in civil society. Pentecostal organizations are taught to act civilly within their organization and with their counterparts, but the shortage of literature that aid Pentecostal believers to link their ministry to civil society is almost foreign. Studies in the past regarding the perceptions of religious organizations to the possible partnership of Christian organization and the government shows that Christian organizations are not ready to build such partnerships because of the fear that the imposition of political agenda and local government might lead to a sense of disempowerment and loss of identity.<sup>35</sup> Thus Christian organizations choose to remain independent or even isolated when tracking the needs of the community. While this study acknowledges the concern expressed by churches in how power is practiced in the context of partnership and consultation between religious sectors and government agencies, there is an increasing need for Christian churches to initiate this kind of partnership so as to fast-track the needs of the community through a collective partnership in civil society. Christian organizations, including the Pentecostals, have not developed a policy that enables the church to relate effectively to government sectors and to their communities.

## 6. Conclusion

At the outset of this study, a research question was posed: what kind of civic engagement are Ilocano Pentecostal churches in Northern Luzon practicing? It was asked whether there was an impact and contribution of Ilocano Pentecostals in the creation of common good in civil society. As a response, this research pointed out noticeable patterns of civic engagement within these selected local churches

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<http://www.wtf.org.uk/documents/faith-in-action.pdf>; Internet; accessed 17 December 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 9.



among Ilocano Pentecostals. First, while it was acknowledged that Ilocano Pentecostals were quite late in developing a theology and praxis of civic participation, yet it was enormously demonstrated in the study that Ilocano Pentecostals in the lowlands and highlands are slowly developing a practice of civic engagement rooted in their biblical conviction, Christian values and praxis of ministry. Second, while this research acknowledged that some Pentecostals groups in other parts of the globe are on the sidelines of civic participation, it is becoming more apparent that this is not, in fact, the case in this study. Ilocano Pentecostals both lowland and highland are developing a significant impact in the formation of healthy communities.

The complexities of various contexts where these local churches are placed forced them to act wisely in appropriating their Pentecostal witness in their respective communities. Emerging patterns of civic engagement such as establishing schools, childcare and orphanages, community development projects such as church-based micro-financing and cooperatives, political participation in the form of active engagement in community leadership, are a few of the emerging patterns evidenced by the Ilocano Pentecostals. In light of these examples, Ilocano Pentecostals not only serve as a model for a closer participatory ministry in civil society but they also call the larger community of Spirit-filled believers to increasingly serve as witnesses in their respective communities until Jesus Christ comes.