

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF DIVISION OF PENTECOSTAL-EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

ABSTRACT

The Church is an important social institution (1): Throughout history, it has proven its significance in the society yet also been a face of controversies such as divisions (2). The Sociological Perspectives of Religion (such as of Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx) pointed how religion, as a social institution, is very crucial in its role in the society (3). Using the case study design, this study aimed to determine and analyze the causes and effects of Pentecostal Churches in Luna, Apayao. Participants in the study were chosen using the unique selected sampling technique. Interview documentation and documentary materials were the primary tools in gathering the data needed. Results reveal that the causes of divisions of Pentecostal-Evangelical Churches were due to financial, spiritual (doctrine), and personal matters. It was also found out, as effect of these divisions, the society perceived it in two ways as generally good for the spread of Churches and generally bad for the disunity it brought in the society. Church leaders and followers generally described this social situation as challenging to all social institutions. Results of this study could serve as a basis in developing relations between Churches themselves and other social institutions in which it is to address Church Divisions for the sake of our society.

Keywords: Church, Church Divisions, Religion, Society, Pentecost, Evangelical

1. INTRODUCTION

The church's mission includes assisting people in expressing and preserving their identities in the face of modernization, urbanization, and exploitation, as well as preserving and promoting cultural traditions (4). The church engaged in discourse with traditional religions' adherents in order to reinforce the excellent divine and human values expressed in them, as well as to create solid foundations for forms of cooperation with traditional religions' adherents. The church safeguards indigenous/tribal peoples' rights to become Christ's disciples without losing touch with their ancestral origins (5). The Church therefore as describe is very important in the development of a society especially in remote areas like in Apayao.

The Church also united the Filipinos by promoting camaraderie amidst differences. The Igorots needed to be moved to regions in the plains where they could be educated and christianized in order to bridge the divide between lowland Filipinos and mountain residents (6). The majority of Igorots choose to stay in the lands of their forefathers. As a result, throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, American Protestant and Belgian Catholic missionaries were tasked with establishing and spreading Christianity in the Cordillera region (6).

Apayao is a part of the Cordillera region. In the Spanish Colonial Times, the Gran Cordillera Central is not a regular province but there were districts like Bontoc, Kalinga, Ifugao, Apayao and Comandancia Politico-Militar (6)(7)(8). Apayao therefore is often

associated with another Cordilleran province like Ifugao and Kalinga. The efforts of the missionaries to evangelize the Cordilleras especially Apayao is a great sacrifice for the natives to be civilized with Western influences and be converted as Christian followers. Many people are afraid of going to the Cordillera during the Spanish period because Cordillerans are feared for their headhunting activities (9). But the missionaries continued to evangelize the Gran Cordillera Central despite of risking their own lives. Notably, the evangelical efforts of persons from colonizing nations directed towards indigenous populations led to the advent and spread of Christianity. For the missionaries, 'the Great News of Jesus Christ' should be proclaimed to save the heathen soul (10). The sacrifice of the missionaries is a hope of their own that the churches established in their blood, sweat, and faith will forever stand and multiply.

The Church has a history of conflicts and divisions (11)(12)(13). The statement that the Church as the most influential institution, to be viewed for internal and external divisions must have a lasting impact in the community (14)(15). This is one of the reasons why we want to conduct our study--- to distinguish and analyze the causes and effects of Church divisions in the local level.

The Causes and Effects of Separations of Pentecostal-Evangelical Churches in Luna, Apayao is an important study to determine the roots of divisions of churches in the local level in which the place of the study is Luna, Apayao. The purpose of the study is to clarify such church divisions that may or may not profoundly affect local history of the place.

It is also significant in this study to analyze the effects of such divisions in other social institutions such as Government, Education, Family and others. The research is a vital factor in contributing the history of the province of Apayao as well as a basis for research in other towns and provinces.

The Church's current situation, wherein churches were divided, is a big question for humanity. Regardless, the significance of this study will be paved way for understanding regarding its causes and effects of such divisions as also as the lasting effect of it in our society.

Problem Statement

Like other social institutions, the Church (Religion) has undergone changes throughout history that profoundly affects the society. It is within this context that this study is conceptualized to address the Causes and Effects of Pentecostal Church Divisions in Luna, Apayao especially that the said town is where many Pentecostal-Evangelical Churches were established within the province of Apayao, the last environmental frontier of the Cordillera region.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the causes of Pentecostal-Evangelical Church Divisions met by Christian leaders and followers?
2. What are the effects of Pentecostal-Evangelical Church Divisions within the society?
3. What are the specific events/cases in the Church that was characterized Pentecostal-Evangelical Church Divisions?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focuses on the causes and effects of Pentecostal-Evangelical Churches in Luna, Apayao from interviews and other sources available from prominent Church and Community Leaders and followers. This study is limited by the number of respondents because some respondents may not cooperate due to the sensitivity of the issue. This study is limited from having deep accounts of the personalities and Churches involved in the study. This study is limited from conducting any major statistical data. This study does not tolerate any bias matters involving the research.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study is aimed to address the Causes and Effects of Pentecostal-Evangelical Church Divisions in Luna, Apayao especially that the said town is where many Churches were established within the province of Apayao, the last environmental frontier of the Cordillera region.

Research Design

To realize the aforementioned major purpose, this study used the qualitative research design following the case study design in which the causes and effects of Pentecostal-Evangelical Church Divisions in Luna, Apayao will be captured in-depth.

Setting, Participants, and Sampling

The study was conducted at the municipality of Luna of Apayao province within different barangays where the subject Churches are established. The municipality of Luna was founded in October 16, 1939 by virtue of the Executive Order of the then Governor General Leonard Wood creating the Municipal District of Macatel. During the term of the then Municipal District President Antonio Barroga, Macatel was renamed Luna through a municipal council resolution. This was in honor of the late Ilocano General Antonio Luna and to do away with the name Macatel which means "itchy." The first official census of population was in 1939, with a population of 6,353. Generally, the municipality is characterized by scattered low hills, mountains found in scattered locations and areas. The contour varies from level to nearly level, gently sloping. The eastern portion is generally flat agricultural to mountainous lands while rolling to mountainous on the western portion.

The respondents in the study were determined using the unique selected sampling technique since only prominent leaders and followers were taken as respondents. There is a total of six (6) respondents in this research.

Data Collection

After seeking the permission to conduct the study from the Presbyters and Senior Pastors of the respective organization of churches in the town, the researchers identified the Respondents based on the advice of their superiors and factual turn of events. The researchers came up with a list of Pastors and Members in which their names were listed from seniority in service and role in the society.

After determining the sample of the study, the researchers secured consent from the respondents to be a part of the study. Afterwards, the schedule of dates of interviews was arranged with the respondents. Next to this was the preparation of list of questions for the interview.

The respondents were individually interviewed. Interviews were documented. Information sheets were also given to the respondents for them to fill up regarding their identity in which it is keep confidential.

A non-disclosure agreement was talked by both the researchers and the respondents because in the course of the interview, sensitive issues that is or may be bad for the image other personalities or institutions may be revealed and identified. Moreover, negative feelings and intimacies may be revealed.

Data Analysis

The interview documentation was analyzed. Coding was employed in the analysis of the transcriptions. Compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting and concluding were followed in the coding. Document Analysis was done for triangulation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the results and discussions of the study gleaned from analysis and coding of the respondents' answers in the interviews.

A. Causes of Division of Pentecostal-Evangelical Churches.

In history and general studies, there have been identified causes of church divisions. But within this study, the setting is set on the local level. Both Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches experienced this divisions whether in the small or higher level.

One major cause of church divisions, as also true in the general level, is about Doctrine Matters. This cause of division has been hotly debated by Church leaders among themselves which have been amplified in the past in which now creates various denominations. According to the respondents, this factor has been quite sanitized by the establishment of unified religious organizations but has still remained the visible gap of church divisions. Misunderstanding of followers also in the doctrine has been a factor also in causing division within the church.

Another cause of Church Divisions is Financial Matters. Respondents have emphasized the use of money to fund its activities however mishandling of funds has been the center of misunderstanding which has accumulated to become one of the major cause of schisms. Lack of financial transparency and irresponsibility of church financial officials has marked Financial Matters as a malignant cause of divisions.

The most noted cause of church divisions is Personal Matters. Most of the respondents directly and indirectly mentioned that persons wanting to become the top of their organization/ denomination has been the leading cause of internal and external conflicts which can be aggravated for the church to be divided. Although such want of leadership is part of human nature, negative issues such as personality embitterment and attacks has led divisions. Respondents acknowledged that some elected church leaders are incompetent. Their activities and goals are not reared on the development and sake of the church itself but focus solely on their personal careers. Followers, with their own personal opinions, sometimes do not submit to the authority of their leaders.

B. Effects of Church Divisions within the Society.

The Church has been considered as the influential institution of our society. Any events within it will have profound effects in the society. Whether by negative and positive situations, the church is still influential as it is.

One effect of church divisions, mentioned by the respondents, is the Rapid Spread of the Gospel. This has been as far the positive mentioned effect of church divisions within the society. Respondents mentioned that church divisions has created a ripple effect of establishment of independent and dependent churches which has reached many places to evangelize new followers.

Another effect of church division is Culture/Tradition Differences. Respondents mentioned that due to different doctrines of churches, the society is very much affected as it became integrated in our culture. If there's a large member of a church within a local community, its traditions may become the prevalent culture in the locality. This is also true for minor churches which may sometimes be persecuted in the community.

The emerging leading effect of church divisions is the Negative Image of the Church within the Society. Respondents has concluded that this effect is prevalent nowadays which can be the leading cause of church followers not going to church and further discouraging unsaved ones to convert. This ugly truth has been the motivation of some church enthusiasts to further develop new ways to reach people. The negative image of the community for the church will become the basis of foundation of rapid agnosticism less handled well.

C. Specific Events/Cases Characterized by Church Divisions.

The causes and effects of Church divisions mentioned above is true to itself. Below is some of the specific events/ cases characterized by church divisions.

One situation mentioned is: After a succession in leadership of a Pastor, he/she abuses the power without allotting responsibilities to other leaders. In this situation, church leaders and members are pissed for superior leaders who are not inspired to lead based on the ideals of their tradition and of scripture.

Another one: There's a Pastor that after being lose in election for district leadership, he/she and his/her companions broke away to form their own district of leadership jurisdiction. This situation is so much true for every church election characterized by sensitive environment within the context of electing leaders.

Another mentioned: Misinterpretation of the Scripture by members. Respondents said that during Sunday school, members argued with each other sometimes not accepting the

final verdict of their church authority. Pastors, who sometimes, cannot control their subjects may cause minor conflicts which may aggravate into large conflicts.

Another case answered is: Churches, closely located, have no fellowship with each other because their church leaders and members were fighting. This case is very discouraging for many persons who ought to believe that churches must unite to promote values.

4. CONCLUSION

There have been causes and effects of division of Pentecostal-Evangelical Churches which has profoundly affected our community. The Church, however its history, still held its role in the community as a holder and changer of culture. Identifying such issues by means of correctly addressing them may prevent further social phenomenon that can cause negative profound implications within our society. It is recommended for Church Leaders and Members that there should be an open forum regarding church division and closure for it to further promote unity and influence of the church in our ever-dynamic society.

CONSENT (WHERE EVER APPLICABLE)

All authors declare that written informed consent was obtained from other approved parties) for publication of this study and accompanying images. A copy of the written consent is available for review by the Editorial office/Chief Editor/Editorial Board members of this journal.

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APPENDIX

Causes and Effects of Division of Pentecostal-Evangelical Churches in Luna, Apayao

Name: _____
 Denomination: _____
 Location of Church Attending to: _____
 Church Position: _____
 Other Social Positions/Status: _____
 Years in Service: _____

Guide Questions:

1. What are the causes of Church Divisions met by Christian leaders and followers?

(Please check the following corresponding to. Provide a short description if possible.)

Financial Matters

Doctrine Matters

Personal Matters (Please specify) _____

Others (Please Specify) _____

Short Description: _____

2. What are the effects of Church Divisions within the society?

(Please check the following corresponding to. Provide a short description if possible.)

Rapid Spread of the Gospel

Conflict within Family

Conflict within School

__Others (Please Specify) _____

Short Description: _____

3. What are the specific events/cases in the Church that was characterized by Church Divisions?

Respondent

UNDER PEER REVIEW

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

1. _____ / Disclosing Party and
2. **FRANCIS DAVE N. MABBORANG, (RESEARCHER)/ Receiving Party**
collectively referred to as the "Parties".

RECITALS

The Receiving Party understands that the Disclosing Party has disclosed or may disclose information relating to Causes and Effects of Divisions of Pentecostal Churches which to the extent previously, presently, or subsequently disclosed to the Receiving Party is hereinafter referred to as "Proprietary Information" of the Disclosing Party.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS

1. In consideration of the disclosure of Proprietary Information by the Disclosing Party, the Receiving Party hereby agrees: (i) to hold the Proprietary Information in strict confidence and to take all reasonable precautions to protect such Proprietary Information (including, without limitation, all precautions the Receiving Party employs with respect to its own confidential materials), (ii) not to disclose any such Proprietary Information or any information derived therefrom to any third person, (iii) not to make any use whatsoever at any time of such Proprietary Information except to evaluate internally its relationship with the Disclosing Party, and (iv) not to copy or reverse engineer any such Proprietary Information without the consent of the Disclosing Party.
2. **The Receiving Party can derive generalizations / conclusions/Summary based on the information provided by the Disclosing Party. In contrast to all provisions written in this agreement, the Receiving Party can disclose information both written and verbal means as long as both written and verbal consent is approved by the Disclosing Party.**
3. Without granting any right or license, the Disclosing Party agrees that the foregoing shall not apply with respect to any information after five years following the disclosure thereof or any information that the Receiving Party can document (i) is or becomes (through no improper action or inaction by the Receiving Party or any affiliate, agent, consultant or employee) generally available to the public, or (ii) was in its possession or known by it prior to receipt from the Disclosing Party as evidenced in writing, except to the extent that such information was unlawfully appropriated, or (iii) was rightfully disclosed to it by a third party, or (iv) was independently developed without use of any Proprietary Information of the Disclosing Party. The Receiving Party may make disclosures required by law or court order provided the Receiving Party uses diligent reasonable efforts to limit disclosure and has allowed the Disclosing Party to seek a protective order.
4. Immediately upon the written request by the Disclosing Party at any time, the Receiving Party will return to the Disclosing Party all Proprietary Information and all documents or media containing any such Proprietary Information and any and all copies or extracts thereof, save that where such Proprietary Information is a form incapable of return or has been copied or transcribed into another document, it shall be destroyed or erased, as appropriate.
5. The Receiving Party further acknowledges and agrees that no representation or warranty, express or implied, is or will be made, and no responsibility or liability is or will be accepted by the Disclosing Party, or by any of its respective directors, officers, employees, agents or advisers, as to, or in relation to, the accuracy of completeness of any Proprietary Information made available to the Receiving Party or its advisers; it is responsible for making its own evaluation of such Proprietary Information.
6. The failure of either party to enforce its rights under this Agreement at any time for any period shall not be construed as a waiver of such rights. If any part, term or provision of this Agreement is held to be illegal or unenforceable neither the validity, nor enforceability of the remainder of this Agreement shall be affected. Neither Party shall assign or transfer all or any part of its rights under this Agreement without the consent of the other Party. This Agreement may not be amended for any other reason without the prior written agreement of both Parties. This Agreement constitutes the entire understanding between the Parties relating to the subject matter hereof unless any representation or warranty made about this Agreement was made fraudulently and, saves as may be expressly referred to or referenced herein, supersedes all prior representations, writings, negotiations or understandings with respect hereto.

7. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the jurisdiction in which the Disclosing Party is located in the Philippines and the parties agree to submit disputes arising out of or in connection with this Agreement to the non-exclusive of the courts in the Territory.

Disclosing party

Receiving Party

Name

XXX

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