

**THEOLOGICAL FIELD EDUCATION: TOWARD A HOLISTIC AND TRANSFORMATIVE
MINISTERIAL FORMATION AND MINISTRY IN THE PHILIPPINES**

Cristina Nicolas Manabat
Harris Memorial College

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined the holistic and socially-transforming ministries being carried out by selected United Methodist pastors and deaconesses in the Philippines. The results of this study showed how theological education in general, and especially, field education in particular, has significantly contributed and has been successful in the ministerial formation, education and empowerment of pastors and deaconesses to engage in holistic and transforming ministry in the Philippine context.

This study used grounded theory as primary approach to understand the ministry experiences of the research participants. It also employed naturalistic ethnography, appreciative inquiry, and narrative approach.

This study concluded with listing key insights about how to enhance field education and theological education. The findings of this study may be helpful to theological schools as they continue enriching and strengthening their curriculum, as well as to the United Methodist Church (UMC) in the Philippines as it strives to enhance the mission and ministry of the church in the country.

INTRODUCTION

While serving as Director of Field Education of Harris Memorial College (HMC) for more than ten years, the researcher witnessed how field education has contributed in the education, training and preparation of some student deaconesses for holistic and transformative ministry. Also, the researcher saw and heard how field education and summer exposure programs have helped and equipped some student pastors for these ministries. The researcher was privileged working with some deaconesses and pastors who exhibited strong passion and deep commitment to holistic and socially-transforming ministry, and with others who faithfully served God through the different traditional ministries of the church such as preaching, teaching, and the like.

This study focused on how field education has been successful or has fallen short in the ministerial formation, education, skills development and empowerment of deaconesses and pastors for holistic and socially-transforming ministries, as well as the ministries of justice and peace-making in Philippine society. Moreover, this study seeks to find out how pastors and deaconesses have been effective or not in nurturing and in enabling their congregations to engage in these ministries, which are considered essential components in the ministry and mission of the Church in the world, and vital parts of the values of the reign of God.

Holistic and Socially-transforming Ministry

The Bible presented God's ministry as holistic, transformative, and inclusive. Jesus Christ served as the role model, and his ministry as the paradigm for doing holistic and transformative social ministry. Jesus reached out and ministered to all peoples, especially the outcasts and marginalized people, during his time. Jesus engaged in holistic ministries of preaching, teaching, healing, feeding, bringing the death to life, making the lame walk, restoring sight to the blind, setting free the oppressed, and restoring the worth, dignity, and value of human beings.

Jesus brought the fullness of life for all, and made the values of the reign of God - love, peace, justice and wholeness of life -- an experienced reality in the lives of the people through his manifold ministries. According to John's Gospel, Jesus said, "I came so that everyone would have life, and have it in its fullest" (John 10:10). Moreover, *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (2008) is clear and replete with beliefs and teachings, with emphasis on holistic ministry for all peoples, specifically the ministries of personal and social transformation and justice and peace.

In the New Testament, Jesus called, trained, and transformed the lives of his first twelve disciples and other people he served. The disciples who were transformed became agents of transformation.

Maggay (2004) talked about the church in the world serving as leaven, permeating and transforming the social order. She believed that both evangelism and social action are an intrinsic part of the Kingdom witness, of proclaiming the Gospel in word and deeds. Fabella (2005) discussed Christology, with Jesus revealing the deepest truths about God that is, God's will for all humans to live life to the fullest, to experience life in its fullness, and to experience holistic salvation here and now and after this life.

The Bible gave emphasis on justice and peace as significant values of the Kingdom of God. Rauschenbausch (1945) presented his theology on the social gospel that is, the doctrine of the Kingdom of God, which is itself the social gospel. As pointed out by Shiver in the introductory part of the book, Rauschenbausch's master principle of theology is summarized: "If there was to be Good News for the poor, it had to be socially contexted and society-transforming toward justice and love for society's victims" (p. xiv). Crossan and Reed (2001) described poverty and justice in which "luxury increases at one end of society by making poverty increase at the other" (p. 91) thus, making the rich richer and the poor poorer. For them, righteous justice is not just individual, personal, and retributive, but also structural, systemic, and distributive.

However, God's vision and intention of a better quality of life for all seems to be elusive for many Filipino people. While the Philippines is considered the fifth richest country in the world in mineral deposits, the poor majority of the Filipino people have been experiencing abject poverty (NCCP, 2005). This severe and widespread destitution in the country is attributed to unjust distribution of natural resources, exploitation of human and natural resources by foreign multinational corporations, landlessness and neo-liberal economic thinking expressed in globalization (NCCP, 2005).

Globalization, referred to as empire, ensures that the political, economic, and military is power vested in one center (NCCP, 2005), which adversely affect the socio-economic-political-cultural structures specifically of Two-Third World countries like the

Philippines (NCCP, 2005). Usually, in areas in the Philippines which are rich in natural resources such as mineral deposits, abundant marine resources, and rich agricultural lands and forests, the Filipino people who live there do not feel safe and their source of livelihood is greatly affected, especially when these areas are subject to the economic investments of transnational corporations, with the support of the local elite (NCCP, 2005). Consequently, rampant human rights violations have been happening when the poor people, together with church and civil groups, resist exploitation of rich natural resources and defend and struggle for life giving economy (NCCP, 2005).

Many Filipinos struggle to make ends meet. Based on the 2003 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 46.4% of the Philippine population falls below the income poverty line of \$2.00 per day (Taguiwalo, 2004). Asedillo (1989) talked about the deepening economic and political crisis and intensifying militarization happening in the Philippines, and the human face of poverty being experienced by 70% of the Filipino people. She defined "poor" as being

...unable to obtain three square meals a day, or adequate nutrition; that they do not have access to basic health care and education, to adequate housing or an adequate income. Neither do they have access to land, which is needed in order to survive in an agricultural economy (pp. 132-133).

Sobrinio (2001) described poverty as the situation in which some three billion human beings, based on the 1996 report of the UNDP, find themselves, and their numbers are growing. He argued that the deepest roots of poverty are historical, and lie in structural injustice. He perceived poverty as the most lasting form of violence that is committed with the greatest impunity. Hence, poverty is not God-ordained, but human-made.

The grinding poverty being experienced by the poor majority, the exploitation of human and natural resources, and human rights violations happening in the country run contrary to God's intention of bringing the fullness of life for all as lived out and promised by Jesus. The root causes of poverty and conflict have to be addressed substantially so that all people, including those in the margins of the Philippine society, may experience a better quality of life.

Given the socio-economic-political-cultural situation in the Philippines, which denies the poor majority of the Filipino from experiencing the wholeness and fullness of life as God intended and desired for all humans, the communities of faith are facing a great challenge to engage in holistic and transforming ministry. Therefore, the ministerial role and servant leadership of Filipino United Methodist pastors and deaconesses, I think and believe, are critical in the ongoing nurture and empowerment of the people of God to faithfully live out their faith and to actively take part in these ministries.

Theological Field Education

Field education is a “supervised training programs” (Egan, 1987) being provided to students who are being educated, trained and prepared for ministry as pastors and deaconesses. It is an integral part of theological education, which helps in raising the general level of theological education in most Protestant seminaries in a practical manner (Egan, 1987). It seeks to serve as a formative foundation for lifelong transformation, learning, effectiveness and faithful discipleship in spiritual leadership and ministry in the church (G-ETS, 2005-2007). It is understood as an action-reflection-based learning process that assumes three levels of vocational development: 1) introduction to church and community ministries, 2) supervised practice of ministry, and 3) improvement of ministerial practice throughout one’s career (IST, 2004). Field education and contextual education serve as the crossing point of academics and the real world of pastoral ministry, whereby integration of theory and practice occurs (SU-STM, 2004).

The researcher views field education as an indispensable component and as one of the various areas in theological education, having the potential and possible significant contribution in the ministerial formation, education, skills development and empowerment of Filipino pastors and deaconesses for holistic and socially-transforming ministries, as well as the ministries of justice and peace-making in Philippine society.

Based on the *Reports of Proceedings of the Association for Theological Field Education* (ATFE), several major studies that were undertaken focused on the history, state and status of theological field education (Bloede, 1989; Egan, 1987), not on personal and social transformation and justice and peace-making. This is also true with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), and more so with the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA). However, there were limited resources -- articles, keynote addresses and seminar-workshop topics -- which dealt with the ministries of justice and peace and personal and social transformation as recorded in the ATFE journals in the late 1960s due to the civil rights movement going on in the United States until the late 1980s (Egan, 1987; Bonthius, 1970; Bergland, 1977; Rhodes, 1979; Rhodes, 1981; Conlon, 1983; Kennedy, 1987) and ATS journals and some articles in *The Asia Journal of Education* by ATESEA (Lovett, 1987; Elwood, 1987; Abesamis, 1987; Robinson, 1990). There was only one major commissioned research on field education that was done by Fullerton for ATESEA. It focused on a comprehensive study on the field education programs of its member-seminaries for the purpose of disseminating information about field education programs throughout the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology (SEAGST) (Fullerton, 1987).

So far, this research could be considered a maiden major study on theological field education focusing on holistic and transformative ministry, especially on the ministries of justice and peace-making. As such, this research will serve as a major contribution to field education and hopefully, would be beneficial to theological schools connected with ATESEA, ATFE and ATS. This study may also be useful to United Methodist-related seminaries and colleges in the Philippines and to other theological schools here and abroad as they assess and further enrich and strengthen their field

education program. More importantly, this research presents challenges to United Methodist-related theological seminaries in the Philippines as they consider giving central emphasis to the ministries of personal and social transformation and justice and peace in their field education program, which is necessary for the promotion of a better quality of life for all and for the realization of the values of the reign of God, especially in the Philippine context.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study answered the following questions:

1. What are your primary commitments to God's ministry in the church and the wider society? How has field education contributed to help you effectively and faithfully carry out those ministries?
2. What are the primary commitments of your congregation or church-related agencies to God's ministry in the society and the world? How are they enabled and empowered to engage in such ministries?
3. What resources from faith and life do you and your congregation/church-related agency use as you and your constituents engage in God's ministry in the church and the world?

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative research, using grounded theory as primary approach. It is a way to understand the ministry experiences of research participants, which was shaped and influenced by theological education and field education they have undergone. It also serves as a means to develop concepts and categories pertinent to the study. Likewise, this research utilized naturalistic ethnography, appreciative inquiry, and narrative approach. In doing naturalistic ethnography, the researcher conducted unstructured interviews, both individual and focus groups, with research participants in their chosen sites. Open coding and microanalysis were used to analyze and interpret data, to discover and develop categories, and to generate major recurring themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Appreciative inquiry (Hammond, 1998) was employed to highlight the strengths of the three theological schools related to the UMC in the Philippines and to underscore areas in theological education, especially in field education, that worked well in the process of ministerial formation of pastors and deaconesses for holistic and transformative ministry and the ministries of justice and peace-making. Narrative approach (Neuger, 2001) was utilized to honor and give voice to research participants about their thoughts and perspectives on theological education, especially on field education.

Research Participants

The participants to this study were selected Filipino United Methodist pastors and deaconesses who graduated from UMC-related institutions of higher learning in the country. There were twenty-one (21) research participants in this study; ten (10) pastors (9 males and one female) and eleven (11) deaconesses. They were chosen by the researcher, with the help of trusted informants, based on their faithfulness in living out the ministries of personal and social transformation and justice and peace-making.

Several factors were considered in the distribution of selection of research participants, namely: Episcopal areas; different annual conferences; size of the church -- ranging from small, medium, and large churches; theological schools they graduated; gender; age; ministry placements; and years in full time ministry. All respondents were currently under episcopal appointments either in local churches, in particular leadership positions in the hierarchy of the UMC, or on special appointments in church-related agencies or educational institutions.

Procedure in Gathering, Analyzing, and Interpreting Data

The researcher conducted unstructured interviews, both individual and focus groups, to collect data at the place agreed upon by the participants. To gather data, the following questions were asked:

1. What are your primary commitments to God's ministry in the church and the wider society? How has field education contributed to help you effectively and faithfully carry out those ministries?
2. What are the primary commitments of your congregation or church-related agencies to God's ministry in the society and the world? How are they enabled and empowered to engage in such ministries?
3. What resources from faith and life do you and your congregation/church-related agency use as you and your constituents engage in God's ministry in the church and the world?

After all ethnographic interviews were done, the researcher transcribed twenty-one (21) individual and six (6) focus groups taped interviews for four (4) months. While transcribing, the researcher noticed initial major recurring themes in each of the interviews. These were highlighted for easy and quick reference during the process of analysis.

Open coding and microanalysis were used in analyzing and interpreting data using raw texts in finding and identifying major themes. Ryan and Bernard (2003) viewed coding as analysis. They considered coding as the heart and soul of whole-text analysis. The researcher went through six (6) phases in analyzing and interpreting data using printed transcripts.

Phase 1: For the first transcript, the researcher went through the text line by line, word, phrase, and sentence in order to name concepts. Using pencil, she jotted down several concepts labeled on the right hand side of each of the printed text from page one to the last page.

Phase 2: Doing intensive memos. For the second time, the researcher went through the first transcript line by line, word, phrase, sentence and paragraph so as to discover and develop categories, identify major recurring themes, and write provisional analysis for each of the research questions. The researchers asked questions and made theoretical comparisons, leading to theoretical sampling. These are two basic operations and analytic tools in developing grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). "Sensitizing questions" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) were written on the back side of each page of the transcript using pencil for easy modification. Sensitizing questions were used to keep the researcher grounded on what the data might be indicating (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). While going through each page of the transcript, and finding theoretical samples, the researcher turned to written questions and wrote phrases and page numbers for quick reference.

Phase 3: Color-coding major recurring themes using colored post-it notes. Color coding was used as tags to identify themes, concepts, or categories and find ways how such are connected with each other in a theoretical model. It helped visualize the frequency each theme was mentioned in each page of the transcript, as well as salient points relevant to research questions. The researcher jotted down a summary of major recurring themes using color-coding on an index card for the first five transcripts that were analyzed and interpreted. For the rest of the transcripts, the researcher made use of computer-aided boldface, bold print, italics, and underlined as means for identifying major themes and significant ideas.

Phase 4: Encoding of intensive memos on the computer, including dates and processes done. Memos are written records of analysis that may vary in type and form (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Memos are more analytical and conceptual, keeping the researcher and the research grounded. (Strauss & Corbin). Keeping and updating memos was quite beneficial when doing further analysis and interpretation of data. More importantly, the printed memos done were very useful and helpful in writing and summarizing the findings of this study. "In vivo codes" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was used to refer to names or labels given by research participants. This system was used throughout the analysis and interpretation of all transcripts, and presented in bold italics form in the findings.

Phase 5: Summarizing, sorting out, and encoding all major recurring themes according to research questions on the computer.

Phase 6: Encoding the final summary of memos consisted of the following: central idea/main category, subcategories, major themes, and salient points for each of the research questions.

FINDINGS

The following findings about pastors and deaconesses and congregations of the UMC are presented in response to the three research questions drawn from the analysis and interpretation of data from transcribed interviews, both individual and focus groups.

This section contains three parts.

- A. Major recurring themes, reflecting the theology and practice of socially transforming ministry in the Philippine context
- B. The congregations and/or constituents, concerning their involvement in holistic ministry
- C. Field education and theological education from the vantage point of research participants

A. Theology and Practice of Socially-transforming Ministry

There were eight (8) major recurring themes identified that illustrated the theology and practice of socially-transforming ministry of pastors and deaconesses and their congregations, based on the participants' understanding and personal experience of ministry. These major themes reflected the primary commitments of research participants and their congregations to God's ministry in the church, society and the world. Most of them have developed such commitment during their field education and summer internship placements as part of their theological studies in UMC-related seminaries and college in the Philippines.

A.1. Holistic and transformative social ministry

A pastor-participant talked about his primary commitment to God's ministry as holistic, which concerns about the well-being and the wholeness of life of a person. He said, "the **whole sense of the Gospel is wholeness of life -- the well being** of the person, that *shalom* which is made available to the young people" (*David – Focus Group*).

Another pastor-participant shared the holistic ministry being carried out by his congregation catering to indigent hospital patients, indigenous people, inmates, fisher folks, and peasants such as feeding program, livelihood programs, leadership development, hospital and jail visitations, bible study, preaching and teaching ministry. These holistic ministries are tangible expressions of the outreach ministry of the church. Consequently, a few lives were transformed and the quality of living conditions of these people has improved. Among the positive results are: better benefits and profits as a result of livelihood programs, which support their subsistence living; spirit of cooperation; people empowerment; sense of responsibility and sense of stewardship of

life and of God's creation; and vision for a better life and a brighter future, especially for the children (*Andrew – Individual Interview*).

A.2. Promotion of the values of God's Kingdom and abundant life for all

A pastor-participant viewed the reign of God as having emphasis on the here and now. He understood abundant life as God's intention for everybody, which focuses on life after birth, not only after death. He said, "***I am concerned of...abundant life after birth, not only after death*** (*Peter – Focus Group*).

A deaconess-respondent claimed that her primary commitment to God's ministry is that of promoting the fullness of life.

*Our call is to make life in its fullness...Jesus said that people would experience heaven, not in the future, but now and here...The concept of heaven taught to us, especially in **fieldwork** where I was trained, is to live with people or help people, **empower** people to experience this [fullness] of life (*Shiprah-Focus Group*).*

Another pastor-participant talked about his fundamental commitment to God's ministry, which centers on the shaping of God's Kingdom on earth. The church serves as frontline in making the values of God's reign of love, justice, order, equality and abundant life a concrete reality in the lives of people through the ministry being done by his congregation as a result of his continuous teaching and training of leaders and members of the church.

*Part of the shaping of the Kingdom of God on earth...God uses the church. The church serves as frontline to advance God's Kingdom...for people to have a way of life where there is order, love, equality, justice...The church must be the one to **manifest** these values...must be an example that the reign of God happens in our society if they experience it first at church (*James – Individual Interview*).*

The Kingdom of God and abundant life become the central emphasis of holistic and transforming ministries through the church. Pastors and deaconesses played an important role in nurturing, equipping, and empowering their constituents to do this kind of ministry.

A.3. Personal and Social Holiness/Transformation

In doing holistic and socially-transforming ministry, emphasis is placed on both personal and social holiness. This is how a pastor-participant viewed his ministry.

Social holiness and personal holiness go hand in hand. And they reinforce and strengthen each other. And the ministry that we do to other people should build and help our own faith and our own holiness. So the growth that we have in our holiness that people see should complement also the growth that we have deep inside. While we feed others on the Word of God, we should also be fed on the Word of God (*Thaddaeus – Individual Interview*).

A deaconess-participant affirmed the significance of personal and societal transformation as her important commitment to God's ministry in the church and the wider society as a result of her studies in a UMC-related institution of higher learning.

*[Jesus Christ] addressed the **cultural, economic, and political situation** during his time, **for him to sustain and uphold life**. The church should do the same. John Wesley said, "**There is no social holiness but social holiness. There is no religion, but social religion. Piety of heart** must be demonstrated in society. That is what Christ did. That is what we must do. **That is my primary commitment** (Esther – Focus Group).*

Personal holiness and social holiness are inseparable. Personal transformation leads to social transformation. Changed lives are catalysts of social change.

A.4. Ministries of Justice and Peace

The ministries of justice and peace are intrinsic part of the values of the reign of God. Those who are poor, oftentimes, become victims of injustices. A deaconess-participant presented a human face of injustice as she shared her experience in her field education placement with the indigent hospital patients and inmates.

When it comes to jail [ministry], you would witness the different faces of people...There was a case when an inmate was acquitted and yet, he already served for [in prison]...When the case was done, it was found out that he did not commit any wrongdoing. There are some cases, because they did not have money to pay for the lawyer, they lost their cases...It is an issue of justice (Esther – Individual Interview).

A pastor-participant talked about his primary commitment as the proclamation of the Word of God centered on the Kingdom of God where there is peace, justice, and harmony at all times. He believes that violation of human rights is not the will of God.

***My primary commitment in doing ministry...is the central proclamation of the Word of God [that is], the Kingdom of God...There is peace, justice, harmony – present at all time...There [are people] who violate the rights of humans – this is not the will of the Lord** (John – Focus Group).*

Justice and peace are essential values of the Kingdom of God, and are indispensable for the promotion of abundant life for all. The ministries of peace and justice making are necessary for holistic and socially transforming ministry.

A.5. Self-emptying, self-giving, self-denying ministry

To engage in holistic and transformative ministry is costly. It calls for self-emptying and self-denying ministry. A deaconess-participant mentioned the risk and

sacrifice involved in engaging in transforming and holistic ministries. She shared how her field education experience has helped her developed and become empowered to engage in self-giving ministry.

...in our fieldwork, we are empowered, we are inspired, but still risk and sacrifice [are] there...If you are really committed to do such task, we need to prepare ourselves, to really give ourselves. Nothing more...The risk is always there. Sacrifice is always here. But the price is right after you die (Mary – Focus Group).

What is worth noting, even grassroots people engage in self-emptying ministry. A deaconess-participant narrated a touching story of the immense commitment of the indigenous people to self-giving ministry for the common good of all.

The commitment of the... community, is to make the community better...The chieftain led the prayer... He said, "Lord, we will fight against illegal logging. We know it is risky. We would die. But we are ready if only to save [mother] nature, which is our only treasure and legacy that we could leave to our children...May you give us strength." He was almost crying while praying (Ruth – Individual Interview).

These deaconesses, together with the indigenous people being served, exemplified a self-giving service as inspired by Jesus' own life and self-emptying ministry. They were willing to put the interest of other people above the needs and interest of their own family.

A.6. Prophetic and incarnational ministry

Prophetic ministry is a critical part of holistic and transforming ministry, specifically the ministries of justice and peace. A pastor-participant declared that one of his roles as pastor is serving as prophet in the present time. He said, "*I believe I am one of the prophets of our time. One of our commitment... is for us to continue working [for holistic and abundant life] until death. That's the only essence of our ministry, of our service to the Lord (Peter – Individual Interview).*

Another pastor-participant told about the importance of incarnating God's word in the lives of indigent families his congregation has been doing through simple ministry.

After hospital visitation, [some patients] became our contact for doing ministry because of the sharing of the Gospel. Three families attend our church. They said they experienced real love and care through our church -- through simple prayers, and a few pieces of biscuits and visitation with them (Andrew – Individual Interview).

Gospel incarnate! This poverty –stricken people experienced the Gospel in concrete terms through the lives of some of God’s people. The Gospel was made flesh through tangible holistic ministries done by the congregations with the leadership of pastors and deaconesses. Gospel means a few pieces of biscuits and simple prayers for poor, troubled, and hungry people.

A.7. Ministry with marginalized people

Jesus serves as role model in serving the marginalized people. A pastor-participant took Jesus Christ as his role model for doing holistic and socially-transforming ministry, together with his congregation. He said, *“The life of Jesus Christ is a very clear model on how we ought to act...[He] served the poor, the marginalized. Jesus Christ gave his life, and his love for the whole world. That was a very good model that we use in our congregation (David – Individual Interview).*

A deaconess-participant saw herself continuing the diverse ministries Jesus had begun as her commitment to God’s holistic ministry. This same kind of ministry is being done by her congregation as a result of her ongoing Christian nurture and equipping of her congregation.

...the ministry started by Christ is so broad -- healing the sick, feeding the hungry, liberating those who are oppressively chained...I do Christian education work. I equip the church people to become part in expanding Jesus’ ministry...Christ reached out to all sectors of society (Lydia – Focus Group).

God’s holistic ministry is intended for all, including those who are marginalized. This is the kind of ministry being done by the pastors and deaconesses and their congregations.

A.8. Pastoral ministry; representative ministry

While doing holistic and transformative ministries with the less-privileged people, these pastor-participants continue doing their basic ministries of preaching and administering the sacraments, while deaconess-participants lead in the teaching and music ministries of the church. A pastor-participant told of his primary commitment to serve God as pastor. He said, *“Primarily, I believe I am called to be a pastor...committed to preach the Word, to give meaning to the sacraments..., and to make the Gospel relevant to the people (Thaddaeus – Individual Interview).*

A deaconess-participant spoke of the importance of Christian education in the life and ministry of the church. She believed that church workers and lay members are partners in doing Christian education. She said, *“Christian education...is for all, especially for parents...Education and learning of every member is a partnership between the lay and [church] workers so that growth [in Christian faith] would become quick (Naomi – Focus Group).*

God’s holistic ministry goes beyond the four corners of the church. It extends to the community and the wider society, making a difference in the lives of the less-fortunate people, young and old alike.

B. Findings about Congregations/Constituents

What follows are additional specific findings about the congregations concerning holistic and socially-transforming ministry, specifically the ministries of peace and justice, based on the perception and understanding of pastors and deaconesses who served as research participants. There were congregations who believed, supported, and engaged in holistic and transformative ministries for and with the poor and marginalized people in the community and wider society.

Below were some factors that contributed to such commitment, which also served as strategies and resources for doing socially-transforming ministries.

B.1. Education/nurture in the Christian faith

A pastor-participant served as primary teacher of his congregation through preaching, with Jesus as model for doing ministry.

“As much as possible, my sermon is about showing...the life of our Lord Jesus Christ...To whom did Jesus focus his eyes/attention. Who did Jesus serve. Which places did he go. We, as followers of Christ, these are the things that we must do. These must be the places where we should go (David – Focus Group).

A pastor-participant told of the importance of teaching the Social Principles of the UMC to help his congregation expand their perspective and practice of ministry. He said, *“Through Christian education, teaching **Social Principles**, we would have more **church workers and church leaders** who could **expand the ministry** not only to their family, but also to the world (Andrew – Individual Interview).* Intentional and ongoing nurture of God’s people in the Christian faith is needed to equip and empower the congregations in doing socially-transforming ministry.

B.2. Theological reflections and people’s experiences

A deaconess-participant told about a story of a child of an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) testifying about the latter’s personal experience of God during a theological consultation as part of church ministry with them.

It is only now that I understand my mother, the struggles of my mother. Being an OFW is really hard. Now I have a better understanding of the issue of OFWs because it is not only [discussed] in this seminar. I, myself, am a child of an OFW. I could say God really is alive because there are people who help her [my mother]. And it is the church that has ministry for us (Esther – Individual Interview).

Doing theological reflections on people’s daily experiences in light of the Christian faith enable persons to acquire new truth and meaning for faithful daily living (Killen & de Beer, 1994). It facilitates the disclosure of God working in the lives of some

Filipino people through human agents. It helps people to discern how God works and moves in their lives through the church and its ministry.

B.3. Leadership development and support

A deaconess-participant shared how she intentionally identify, develop, challenge, and mobilize the members of her church for holistic ministry with the different sectors of society.

*Actually, they will **commit** [to ministry] if they understood, if explained to them what-ever they possess [skills, talents, professions] that you need in the ministry. [They can serve] whichever sector in **society**...It is always mentioned in **Sunday school**, in **sermons**. We encourage them...to demonstrate in their lives...between a Christian peasant and other peasants who don't have faith (Lydia – Focus Group).*

Intentional leadership trainings, providing opportunities for ministries, and giving support are important factors in equipping and mobilizing church people to use their professions and God-given gifts in the various ministries of the church.

B.4. Collaborative ministry and credible leadership

A pastor-participant related the active involvement of his congregation in the social ministries of the church. He intentionally nurtured and provided exposure opportunities to his congregation that enabled them to engage in transforming ministry.

***Church workers and lay** continue to commit to the ministry **beyond** those being done inside the church -- worship, **prayer**, **bible studies**, **Sunday school**. Studying and learning, especially the **Social Principles**, and exposure of lay in mission **work** like **hospital visitation**, **jail visitation**, **visitation** and **feeding** [indigenous] people, **exposure** to the condition of the **farmers** and **fishermen** are a great help...The **focus of ministry** of the **constituents**, of the **local church was expanded**...many [church workers and members] join in the broader ministry of the **church** (Andrew – Focus Group).*

Developing and promoting collaborative ministry between pastors and deaconesses and church members; demonstrating credible leadership and personal qualities -- integrity, being open, honest, and transparent -- and consistent manifestation of passion and commitment of these pastors and deaconesses are important in empowering their congregations to take part in holistic ministry.

B.5. Networking, linkages, and partnership

Some congregations were able to do more meaningful social ministries when their church workers established linkages, networks, and promoted partnership with

church-related agencies, non-government organizations, local government officials, people-oriented groups, ecumenical circles, and concerned individuals who were committed to promote the common good of all.

C. Findings about Field Education and Theological Education

Below are additional findings on how the research participants have been transformed and developed in their passion and commitment to socially-transforming ministry, especially the ministries of justice and peace-making through their field education and theological education.

C.1. On Field Education

C.1.a. Education for transformation and empowerment: A pastor-participant shared about the transformation of his perspective and motivation for ministry as a result of field education exposure through engagement in Muslim-Christian dialogue.

*Field education has done a lot for me...Before, my motivation in coming to the seminary was for me to be assigned to big churches...But when I had my exposure, my mentality was **totally transformed**. My exposure was in **Muslim-Christian Dialogue**. Before, my view of the Muslims was bad. When I immersed with them, they were not. They were kind. Their struggle is not just about killings, but about land. Land is life. Really, my mental attitude was changed. My previous perspective and orientation was transformed because of **field education** (John – Focus Group).*

A deaconess-participant related how field education facilitated her transformation, and empowered her to engage in holistic ministry with the different sectors of society.

*In field education, [I was helped] to **commit** [myself] to the **ministry**...First and foremost, **service**. **Jesus** did not come to be served but to serve...I had **field education** with the indigenous people. We also went to the town and **integrated** with the different **sectors**, in the government...I learned to **adjust** myself with whatever resources they have.. That's why **field education** has done a lot for me in my ministry in the church and in serving the community (Deborah – Focus Group).*

Field education served as a powerful means in effecting the transformation of perspectives and in empowering these pastors and deaconesses on their theology and practice of holistic ministry. This speaks of Mezirow's concept of learning as transformation of one's perspectives of meaning and Daloz's idea of transformative learning as both personal and social transformation for the common good of all (2000). Such transformative field education is never neutral (Hope & Timmel, 1984). It is transformative and empowering of people's lives.

C.1.b. "Context as text" (Gorman, 2005) and content for ministry

A pastor-participant told about his experience in doing Clinical Pastoral Education as part of his field education experience. He learned and internalized the meaning and essence of empathy as he ministered with indigent hospital patients.

*My **field exposure** in the seminary was...Clinical Pastoral Education...in a hospital...I strongly felt empathy. I did not only feel their situation, but I was there present with them...My commitment was deepened on how to make the **church** a bridge in order for the **marginalized** and the **victims** to reach the reign of God (Peter – Focus Group).*

The context of ministry in field education and summer exposure programs of these pastors and deaconesses served as text and content for doing transforming ministry.

C.1.c. Importance of field education supervision and ministry placements

A deaconess-participant recounted her positive experience with her field education supervisor during her concurrent week-end church appointment. She learned the importance of being prepared with teaching plans or program plans in her church ministry. She said, "In my **field education**, I was under the supervision [of two supervisors]...[we] were **oriented** to prepare plans for whatever we need to do...[it] helped and molded me. When I was assigned in my [full time] church assignment, I was ready...That's how important **field education** was for me (Salome – Focus Group).

Another deaconess-participant told about the positive effects of field education in her life and ministry. She was able to develop self-discipline and the spirit of service in her full time ministry. She said, "I have **internalized** service and **discipline**...I work even without other people observing me because there is someone who sees [God]. As a deaconess my **faith** was deepened. There was none other who supervises, but God only...[Our] **field education** has helped me in my work (Ruth – Focus Group).

A deaconess-participant shared about the great impact of serving the urban poor people in her life and ministry. Her field practicum experience helped her learned to value and shared the little resources that she had with poor people in her ministry placement. She experienced the difficulty of being poor, and understood how it is to be poor economically.

*My first exposure really penetrated me. My **field practicum** was in [urban poor community] on week-ends. I lived [with a family living] in small shanty. That was the first time I experienced – the restroom is already there, then you will urinate...and underneath...are green leafy vegetables growing...[which they harvest] for meals. We shred the one canned food we brought with the whole*

family. You would really see their poverty, their difficulty surviving (Martha – Individual Interview).

Supervision is a vital part of the field education process, and field education supervisors were instrumental in helping these deaconesses become better prepared in their ministry. The ministry placements have a powerful impact on the formation and empowerment of these deaconesses in doing holistic ministry in the church and society.

C.2. On Theological education/Theological schools

What follows are additional strengths and significant contributions of theological education to the formation and preparation of pastors and deaconesses for socially-transforming ministry.

C.2.a. Theological education facilitated the development of positive traits of some of these pastors and deaconesses such as self-esteem, self-discipline, and sense of responsibility. They were also helped in developing their prayer life, the spirit of sacrifice, and the spirit of service to God and people.

A deaconess-participant expressed her deep gratitude to her Alma Mater, which helped her develop some of these positive traits. She said, “At [my school], my self-esteem was developed. My prayer life was developed. The spirit of service...and the spirit of sacrifice [were developed]...**Without that [field education] program...I won’t have this kind of character...All of those I learned from [our school]** (Mary – Focus Group).

C.2.b. Another significant contribution of theological education was enabling these pastors and deaconesses to learn from various theories through discussion in the classroom and putting these into practice through the field education ministry placements. A pastor-participant shared his personal experience on this.

This is the outcome of the field education program of the seminary to put into practice theories [learned from classroom] into broader ministry with the Filipino people. I’m deeply thankful for the field education program of our [theological] institutions, especially the [seminary I attended] (Andrew – Focus Group).

The strengths mentioned above may provide inspiration and may serve as a driving force for the ongoing strengthening of theological curriculum and the field education program of these schools as they engage in the ministerial formation, personality and skills development, and empowerment of future pastors and deaconesses for holistic and transforming ministry.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed how theological education, especially field education, have contributed and have been successful in their ministerial formation, education, skills development and empowerment to do such ministry, together with their congregations.

There were three important factors that contributed to this success, namely: field education ministry placement, both concurrent week-end church appointments and summer exposure programs; doing theological reflections, and field education supervision. The research participants' rich and varied hands-on experiences ministering with people inside and outside the church, particularly those who are in the margins of society have significantly helped them in different ways. Their perspective on theology and practice of ministry were transformed and broadened as a result of doing theological reflections on the daily experiences of the people they served in their different ministry placements. Their Christian faith was deepened and strengthened. They have learned, internalized, and practiced a self-emptying and self-giving ministry. More importantly, their passion and commitment to holistic ministry, especially with the marginalized people, were developed and deepened. They were empowered to engage in socially-transforming ministry despite high risk.

The field education program facilitated a kind of education that is transformative and empowering of the lives of these pastors and deaconesses. Through field education supervision, the research participants benefited a lot in the development of their personality, sense of responsibility, self-discipline, positive traits, the spirit of sacrifice, and the spirit of service as they worked in the varied contexts of ministry with the people in the church and the different sectors of society. Their congregations were able to do holistic and socially-transforming through their credible leadership and collaborative ministry, intentional and ongoing nurture in the Christian faith, providing opportunities for exposures, doing theological reflections, leadership development and support, and networking. These also served as their resources for doing such ministries.

Theological schools may benefit from the findings of this study as they continue reviewing and enhancing their curriculum, especially their field education program, by taking into consideration the three factors mentioned above. These factors may help to better prepare and empower future pastors and deaconesses for holistic and transforming ministry.

REFERENCES

- Abesamis, . H. (1987). The mission of Jesus and good news to the poor: Exegetico-pastoral considerations for a church in the Third World. In *The Asia journal of Theology: Vol. 1 (2)*, 429-459.
- Asedillo, R. C. (1989). When did we see you, Lord? In R. C. Asedillo & B. D. Williams (Eds.), *Rice in the storm: Faith in struggle in the Philippines* (pp. 132-148). New York: Friendship Press.
- Bergland, J. W. (1977). Field education, social responsibility and Third World pedagogies. In *Report of Proceedings of Fourteenth Biennial Consultation of the Association for Theological Field Education (ATFE): Jan. 19-22*, 131-134.
- Bloede, L. W. (1989). An outline of the history of Association for Theological Field Education. In *Report of Proceedings of Twentieth Biennial Consultation of ATFE: Jan. 11-14*, 170-175.

- Bonthius, R. H. (1970). Action training: One more technology for the seminaries – or a new life-style? In *Theological Education: Vol. 6, (2)*, 145-151.
- Book of discipline of the United Methodist Church*. (2008). Nashville, Tennessee: The United Methodist Publishing House.
- Conlon, J. (1983). Theological reflection and social analysis. In *Report of Proceedings of Sixteenth Biennial Consultation of ATFE: Jan. 6-10*, 116-119a.
- Crossan, J. D. & Reed, J. L. (2001). *Excavating Jesus: beneath the stones, behind the texts*. New York: Harper San Francisco.
- Daloz, L. A. P. (2000). Transformative learning for the common good. In J. Mezirow & Associates (Authors), *Learning as transformation* (pp. 103-123). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Egan, M. (1987). The history of ATFE: A struggle for identity. In *Report of Proceedings of Nineteenth Biennial Consultation of ATFE: Jan. 14-17*, 130-145.
- Elwood, D. J. (1987). Social analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral planning. In *The Asia Journal of Theology, Vol. 1 (1)*, 130-143.
- Fabella, V. (1993). Christology from an Asian woman's perspective. In R.S. Sugirtharajah (Ed.), *Asian faces of Jesus* (2005, 8th Printing, pp. 211-222). Faith and Culture Series. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.
- Fullerton, L. D. (1987). Field education in South East Asia in the eighties. In *The Asia Journal of Theology: Vol. 1 (1)*, 145-188.
- Fullerton, L. D. (1987). Field education in South East Asia in the eighties. In *The Asia Journal of Theology: Vol. 1 (2)*, 392-428.
- Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (G-ETS). (2004). In *Field Education Handbook*. Evanston, Illinois: Author.
- Hammond, S. A. (1998). *The thin book of appreciative inquiry* (2nd ed.). Bend, Oregon: Author.
- Holy Bible, Contemporary English Version*. (1995). New York: American Bible Society.
- Hope, A. & Timmel, S. (1984). *Training for transformation: A handbook for community workers*. Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press.
- Iliff School of Theology (IST). (2004, Oct. 10). About Iliff – Tour Iliff: Accreditation and mission. Retrieved from http://www.iliff.edu/about_iliff/tour_iliff.htm.
- Kennedy, D. (1987). Social analysis and field education. In *Report of Proceedings of the Nineteenth Biennial Consultation of ATFE: Jan. 14-19*, 163-177.
- Killen, P. O. & de Beer, J. (1994). *The art of theological reflection*. New York: Crossroad.
- Lovett, B. (1987). Religion and popular religiosity in the Philippines. In *The Asia Journal of Theology: Vol. 1 (2)*, 477-485.
- Maggay, M. P. (2004). *Transforming society: Reflections on the kingdom and politics* (2nd Phils. ed.). Quezon City, Philippines: Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture.
- Mezirow, J. & Associates. (2000). *Learning as Transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) (2005, July). Report of the pastoral ecumenical delegation visit to Eastern Visayas. Report released by NCCP via internet, pp. 3-4.

- Neuger, C. C. (2001). *Counseling women: A narrative, pastoral approach*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- O' Gorman, R. (2005, January). Context as text in field education [Speech]. Biennial Consultation of the Association for Theological Field Education held in Toronto, Canada.
- Rauschenbausch, W. (1945). *A theology for the social gospel* [With an Intro. By Donald W. Shiver, Jr.]. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press.
- Rhodes, L. (1979). *Social change: A field education dilemma*. In *Report of Proceedings of Fifteenth Biennial Consultation of ATFE*: Jan. 1-13, 130-131.
- Rhodes, L. (1981). Relationship of field education and clinical based and social change programs In *Report of Proceedings of Sixteenth Biennial Consultation of ATFE*: Jan. 6-10, 47-49.
- Robinson, G. (1990). Theological education in the Third World. In *The Asia Journal of Theology: Vol. 4 (1)*, 279-291.
- Ryan, G. W. & Bernard, H. R. (2003). Data management and analysis methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 259-309). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Seattle University – School of Theology and Ministry (SU-STM). (2004, Oct. 28). Contextual education: Formation/field education. Retrieved from <http://www.seattleu.edu/theomin/Fielded/fielded.asp>.
- Sobrinho, J. (2001). *Christ the liberator: A view from the victims*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Author.
- Taguiwalo, J. M. (2004, Jan.). *The debt trap vis-à-vis the state of social services*. Paper presented at the Workshop Concern on Understanding the Fiscal Crisis: Impact, Roots, and Alternatives during the Church People's Conference on the Current Economic Situation held at the College of Social Work and Community Development of the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, pp. 1-8.