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Mapping Religious and Civil Spaces in Traditional and Charismatic Christianities in the Philippines

Jose Mario C. Francisco, S.J.

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Mapping Religious and Civil Spaces in Traditional and Charismatic Christianities in the Philippines

This study of Filipino Christianity focuses on typical constructions of religious space as represented by four constituencies or groups: (a) traditional Catholicism, which defines religious space as enclosed and geographically bound; (b) alternative sects on Mount Banahaw in Southern Luzon, which have moved away from this enclosed space to localize Christianity; (c) Couples for Christ, a Catholic charismatic group, which extends religious space into the household and the wider world; and (d) El Shaddai, a charismatic group founded by Mike Velarde, which incorporates mass media into its religious space. These constructions of religious space shape each group's presence and practice in civil space.

KEYWORDS: CHRISTIANITY · SACRED SPACE · CHRISTIAN SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT · FILIPINO CHARISMATIC GROUPS

Religions and religious groups stake their claims on sites and territories intimately linked to their identity and status. This insight from the pioneering work of Mircea Eliade spawned numerous studies on how sacred space is conceived by particular religious entities and how these conceptions relate to dimensions and issues central to these entities.

Coster and Spicer (2005, 1), editors of a recent anthology on early modern Europe, observe that “there has been a huge body of work on this subject generated by anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, students of architecture, archeologists and even by historians of other eras, stretching from ancient Greece to modern America.” They explain the fundamental significance of sacred space for all the essays in the anthology thus:

The ways in which space was created, and re-created are an obvious means of investigating how change was achieved, or, just as importantly, how limited was its extent. Space is also much more than a physical issue; what is of chief concern to most of the historians currently working in this field is not the purely architectural utilization of space, but what that can tell us about the *mentalité* of the people of Reformation Europe: how it reflected and reinforced their understanding of sanctity, divinity and themselves. (ibid., 3)

Because of its significance, sacred space touches on the wide-ranging issues discussed in the essays; among them are the distinction between “sacred” and “profane,” the architectural requirements for a church, territorial disputes between Catholics and Protestants, and the appropriate location for burials. These essays illustrate how the study of sacred space provides a fruitful path toward a deeper understanding of religion and its attendant dynamics within a particular social context. They also suggest why religious spaces often become sites of contention and negotiation within religions and religious groups.

This article follows a similar path as those in the Coster and Spicer collection by exploring the Philippine religious landscape. On this diverse terrain, one sees the persistence of traditional religion; the dominance of Christianity, especially Roman Catholicism in the lowlands; the influence of Islam in particular regions; the presence of Confucian, Buddhist, and even Hindu practices among certain ethnic groups; and more recently the

emergence of charismatic Christianity. Much interesting and groundbreaking work has been done on different aspects of religion in the Philippines, but none has taken the study of sacred space as its central focus.

This exploratory study of the theme of space in Filipino Christianity presupposes Bourdieu’s (1991) view of sociology as a “social topology.” According to this view, “the social world can be represented in the form of a (multi-dimensional) space”—both a place where “agents and groups of agents are thus defined by their *relative positions*” and “a field of forces, in other words, as a set of objective power relations imposed on all those who enter this field” (ibid., 229–30).

With this as background, the study focuses on constructions of sacred space by particular religious institutions and the implications for their social engagement in “civil space,” the realm where diverse communities, groups, and individuals promote their interests from their respective social locations and seek to forge the common good. The term “sacred/religious space” refers to where these institutions locate their religious practice and identity. Thus its dynamic is *ad intra*, that is, toward their self-understanding. At the same time, this study suggests that an institution’s construction of sacred space shapes how it presents itself *ad extra*, the ways it engages issues in civil space.

In particular, the present article maps typical constructions of religious and civil spaces exemplified by traditional Catholicism, groups on Mount Banahaw, and two recently formed Catholic charismatic groups. Like cartographical representations, these four constructions do not render each location in full detail but are culled from historical developments as well as recent empirical research on Philippine Christianity, especially Kessler and Rüländ’s comprehensive survey on the charismatic movement (Kessler 2006; Kessler and Rüländ 2008).

The first four sections of the essay describe each group’s construction of religious space. The last two sections explore the implications of these different constructions of religious space. The fifth focuses on how traditional Christianity and the three other groups engage social realities and issues on the basis of their construction of sacred space. It shows how their particular social approaches and projects are logical and coherent consequences of their religious self-understanding. The last section discusses emerging issues and points to how this approach contributes to a better understanding of Christianity in the Philippines.

Enclosing Space: Traditional Filipino Catholicism

The first construction of religious space as enclosed is characteristic of traditional Filipino Catholicism. It took root during the long history of Spanish colonization and is institutionalized through the universal practice of defining church jurisdiction in geographical terms. As a defense against Protestant denominations in the 1950s, it propagated the self-identification of traditional Filipino Catholics as *Katoliko sarado* (literally, closed Catholics) and of their nation as “the only Catholic country in Asia” (in spite of East Timor). At present, it continues to be operative in delineating the sharp boundaries that distinguish traditional Catholicism which correspond to what Kessler and Rüland’s 2003 survey refers to separately as “sociocultural religiosity,” that is, “religion as a framework for social relations and societal order,” and “orthodox Catholic religiosity,” consisting of “genuine Catholic content” and characterized by “belief in the intercessory role of the Virgin Mary, the existence of purgatory, receiving confession” (Kessler 2006, 566–68).

This construction of religious space as enclosed is rooted historically in the geographical expansion of Christianity—its recognition by Constantine (c. 313) allowing it to come out in the open and build churches in public places throughout the empire (Pounds 2005, 7). This historical process led to the subsequent establishment of Christendom, continued with the sixteenth-century missionary enterprise to the New World, and brought to the Philippines Spanish colonization as well as late medieval Catholicism, “a religion dependent on a highly complex landscape of the sacred” (Coster and Spice 2005, 4). Throughout this process, native territories—geographical as well as social—were not only occupied but also redefined by colonial and church institutions which, although distinct and at times conflicting, functioned together on the basis of the Patronato Real de las Indias. Some churches coopted sites considered sacred; for instance, the Santa Ana Church in Manila was apparently built over a graveyard or that of Tanay, Rizal, on top of what was considered a holy hill.

To facilitate the accomplishment of converging colonial and missionary aims, native space was occupied and redefined through a series of implementing strategies. Scattered native communities of 30 to 100 families referred to as *barangays* were gathered into towns. This strategy is explained in Gov. Santiago de Vera’s letter in 1585 to Juan de Bustamante, *alcalde mayor* (provincial governor) of Camarines:

Fray Juan de Plascencia, Father Custodian of the Order of Saint Francis, informs me that in that province many of the natives live in scattered settlements far from each other, and that the sacraments cannot be administered to them unless they come together in larger communities to build towns for themselves . . . This having been duly considered, you are hereby ordered . . . to call into consultation Fray Juan de Garrovillas, the Father Guardian of that city, and jointly with him decide what towns are to be formed and what shall be the size and plan of the churches to be built. (Schumacher 1979, 39)

Formed to transplant Spanish Catholicism, these towns were thus created according to the image and likeness of Spanish Catholic settlements.

Towns were established in the *cuadrícula* or grid pattern characteristic of Spanish urbanization. Javellana (2003, 2) describes this pattern, which originated from ancient Roman settlements, with intersecting main streets called the *cardo* and *decumanus*:

In the Spanish tradition, refined by theories and proposals of renaissance minds, the equivalent of the *cardo* and *decumanus* (the Calle Real and another principal street named variously) came together at an open space. The plaza or piazza (Italian) where monumental buildings were erected, namely the church or cathedral, the ayuntamiento or town hall, the *audiencia* or tribunal hall of justice and other important buildings.

This mapping of space was implemented in prominent places like Intramuros; early settlements such as Tagbilaran, Bohol; and barrios like Talogtog, Manila, or Pulo, Bulacan.

As a result of the imposed pattern, religious and social spaces were shaped by traditional Filipino Catholicism according to three related and defining realities. First, local space was henceforth subject to all forms of colonial measure and division: “the ultimate application of the *cuadrícula* or grid was the imposition of the concepts of latitude and longitude”—the same measure employed for navigation, thus placing native territory within a unified colonial system (*ibid.*, 3). The archipelago was divided into ecclesiastical jurisdictions among religious orders in accordance with the 1594 royal directive to the governor-general: “Now I have learned that better results

will be obtained by each order having a district of its own. . . . I therefore command you, together with the bishop of those islands, so to divide the provinces among the religious of the orders for the purpose of conversion and instruction” (Schumacher 1979, 17).

Second, the grid pattern of these colonial settlements institutionalized the conjuncture of colonial and church power in the native landscape. As Rafael (1988, 88–89) writes:

While maintaining the *barangay* as the smallest territorial unit, they [officials and clergy] eventually imposed other territorial divisions that followed a centralized bureaucratic scheme, the *visita*, the *cabecera* (or *poblacion* in later years), the *pueblo*, and the *provincia* . . .

These administrative divisions systematically ascribed a special site for the church. As the symbolic expression of the power of Spain, the church was to be constructed at the center of each *cabecera* and *pueblo* (the smaller *visitas* were so called because each contained a small chapel that the parish priest in the *cabecera* visited periodically).

Church and government buildings were constructed side by side at the center of the grid where the residences of the political and economic elite were located. Thus what Doeppers (1984, 8) says of nineteenth-century Manila may be taken to be similarly applicable to the colonial landscape: “Manila’s predominance, functions, and size developed from its position at the apex of three sets of hierarchically organized activities: commerce, political administration and religion” since “all three activities were imposed or reshaped as integrated systems under Spanish control.”

Third, the territorial divisions imposed by colonial and church authorities created “two kinds of social space—a town center or *poblacion*, whose church, convent, and municipal buildings were surrounded by the dwellings of the Hispanized *principalia* (native elite) and artisans, and a rural hinterland, where peasant producers were typically dispersed across hard-to-access *barrios* and *sitios* (villages and hamlets)” (Lahiri 2005, 36). This redefinition of space exemplified unequal center-periphery relations, as those in each sphere were subject to socially graduated religious, labor, and tribute obligations.

This construction of religious space as enclosed was implemented through the formation of settlements patterned after the *cuadrícula* and symbolic of the conjuncture of colonial and church power. More than just geographical, this process was ideologically supported by a theological justification found in early Tagalog catechetical materials in which Christian identity was linked to being in an enclosed religious space.

One prominent example of these materials is Spanish Franciscan Juan de Oliver’s 1580s catechism (Oliver 1995).¹ Oliver uses the analogy of the king marking his territory in explaining the Sign of the Cross, a short basic Catholic prayer invoking the triune God and traditionally accompanied by ritual gestures of marking small crosses on the forehead, lips, and chest, and a bigger cross encompassing the face and torso. He compares the Christian, whose body is marked with the Sign of the Cross and thereby sealed by Christ himself, to any property with the king’s sign, which is respected and not intruded into by others under pain of punishment (*ibid.*, 3).²

In order to ward off the devil’s intrusion, the vulnerable points of entry into the body must be protected: the forehead for evil and lustful thoughts, the lips for ill speech, and the heart for evil desires (*ibid.*, 1, 2).³ Through the faculties of thought, speech, and desire, the devil intrudes into the territory of the human body, thereby taking possession of the person. The final Sign of the Cross over the head and the torso seals protection against this intrusion. The body of the Christian then must be protected—covered by a shield and armed with weapons (*ibid.*, 1).⁴ This association of Christian belonging to bodily protection through the Sign of the Cross is further extended by Oliver to other crucial spaces such as one’s houses and cultivated fields that need protection against our diabolical enemies (*ibid.*, 3).⁵

Thus the construction of religious space in traditional Filipino Catholicism through the formation of clearly bounded towns following a grid pattern was, as Rafael (1988, 90) points out, far from being just a practical issue:

The relocation of native bodies—or at least the designation of their areas of residence as parts of a larger administrative grid—permitted them to be identified in Spanish political and religious terms. Resettlement and evangelization were consistently denoted by the same term used for translation: *reducir* . . . Bodies were to be “reduced” to centralized localities subject to the letter of the law, just as Tagalog was to be “reduced” to the grammatical terms of Latin in Castilian *artes*.

The conversion and colonization of the local populace necessitated their physical relocation.

Because of this congruence of colonial and religious aims, understanding religious belonging in terms of enclosed space with clear boundaries became entrenched.

This view was further buttressed by a theological belief current in many catechetical materials then, such as the early seventeenth-century sermons of Dominican missionary Francisco Blancas de San Jose (Francisco 1995, 370–93). According to this belief, to be a Christian was to be within space construed as Christian, and those outside had to be brought in through the “power of Christ” with the support of the colonial establishment. Christian salvation involved change from being slaves of the devil to being slaves of God, including the reintegration of those natives who had run away from Christian settlements and therefore their Christian identity.

Here one must note the relevance of the historical rivalry for slaves between the Spanish colonial forces in Christian settlements and the Muslim populace in some parts of the archipelago. Although this rivalry was often occasioned by economic rather than strictly religious factors and therefore accounts for only one thread in the long and complex history of Muslim-Christian relations in the Philippines, it reinforces among both Christians and Muslims the view of religious identity in terms of enclosed and bounded space. Spanish Christian and Muslim forces defended their settlements against the territorial incursions of each other in order to prevent the capture of people who belonged to their settlements (LaRousse 2001).

Not only throughout this history has the construction of religious space as enclosed been prominent. It has been institutionalized also in the church’s structure for governance patterned after the division of the “city of man” into villages, towns, and cities. The church as “the city of God” was similarly divided according to territorial jurisdiction. Through numerous and historic developments in the church and the world, this basic principle of governance has been refined through reforms in church law and practice, and remains operative in the Catholic Church’s present organizational structure based on the parish as basic unit of the diocese or local church. In McCaslin’s (1951, ix) archaic language, “the parish unit has been the chief means by which the Church has reached the souls she has been divinely commissioned to teach and guide.”

Because of its history and institutionalization, the construction of religious space as enclosed continues to be evident in the Philippine landscape, albeit in various forms. Moreno (2006, 5–10) begins his study of church involvement in contemporary civil society by explaining this governance structure and how it affects such involvement. New real estate developments are not tied to the Spanish grid pattern but still reserve a place of prominence for a church. Catholics may no longer instinctively refer to themselves as *Katoliko sarado*, but many would still consider their most sacred space as enclosed—whether this be their parish church or a Blessed Sacrament chapel—and hold their Christian identity to have clear-cut boundaries.

Localizing Christianity: Mount Banahaw Sects

Because the construction of religious space as enclosed remains dominant throughout Philippine history, the desire to move away from the center has been endemic to this history. For instance, according to an Augustinian missionary in the eighteenth century, among the obstacles to evangelization is that “they [the natives] greatly detest the idea of living in the lowlands” (Schumacher 1979, 189) because of the following:

Some are there because they are attracted to the mountains from which they came. Others are fugitives from justice. Many likewise go there to live at their ease and be free from paying tribute and from the fulfillment of the other obligations laid on them. Finally many are there because it is the territory where they were born as pagans. (ibid., 190)

For these reasons, individuals and groups notably referred to as *remontados* (apostates) moved away from the center and sought alternative space: “the presence of thickly forested, hilly, and only nominally administered terrain at the fringes of many pueblos allowed for the emergence of a kind of third space located beyond the moral surveillance of priests and the policing resources of the civil authorities” (Lahiri 2005, 36). But the hinterlands have provided refuge not only for these apostates but also for all those throughout Philippine history who have sought to move from “lowland Filipino society.” As Cannell (1999, 3–4) comments, “the tradition of the *remontados* or ‘those who have gone back to the mountains’, embraces people from the run from Spanish friars, Spanish taxes, Japanese concentration camps, American

suppressions of peasant rebellions, lowland crop failures, local vendettas and the modern Philippine Constabulary.”

A prime example of this alternative sacred space is Mount Banahaw, “located 100 kilometers southeast of Manila,” “rising 7380 feet or 2250 meters . . . among a series of mountains,” and “surrounded by cities and towns of Laguna and Quezon provinces” (Gorospe 1992, 11). One finds on its slopes resident religious groups such as Ciudad Mistica, Tres Persona solo Dios or Bromoki,⁶ and, during Holy Week, thousands of pilgrims from all over the Philippines. This mountain has been regarded as a sacred site and has attracted pilgrims from colonial times.

One seventeenth-century document on idolatry “suggests that Banahaw has geographical contours traditionally regarded as having extraordinary spiritual potency” (Cruz 1992, 12) and narrates how “in 1685, Ana Geronimo, a native of Tanauan but a long-time resident Santo Tomas in the province of Bay, informed the Dominican parish priest Juan Ybañez about pagan practices in her town” and “reported that people met in caves called *simbahan*, where since ancient times they sacrificed pigs and chickens, and lit candles and burned incense to the spirits” (ibid., 13–14). Ybañez subsequently took pains to investigate, first earning the people’s confidence by ministering to them and then visiting these caves, and was subsequently appeased when the people promised not to return to their former ways.

This episode, however, does not tell the complete story of Mount Banahaw and the many religious communities on its slopes, as it simply focuses on their movement away from lowland Christian settlements into native sacred sites in the hinterlands. Just as the earlier “reductions” were not simply geographical moves, so too were those of the *remontados* who redefined these natural sites in Christian terms. I describe this construction in an earlier essay thus:

The geography of Mount Banahaw is mapped out by the events of the Christ story. A rock formation represents the place where Jesus sweat blood in agony. A riverbed bears the footprint of Christ before ascending to heaven. Another side is designated as the place where the elect gathered. In effect, the Holy Land has been relocated on Philippine soil, and this tropical mountain re-discovered as *Bagong Herusalem* [New Jerusalem]. (Francisco 1992, 57)

Pilgrimage to these sites then consists of walking through and performing appropriate rites at each site, and is rightly called *pamumuwesto*, literally, “taking one’s place”:

Periodically kneeling on rocks to make offerings of candles and prayers in the scorching summer sun, they [pilgrims] ascend via a series of lesser shrines to the *puestos* of Kalbaryo (Calvary) and Kinabuhayan (Resurrection). On every side, individuals appear to be engaging in the solemn and sometimes tearful effort of remembering, retracing, and sharing the path of the suffering Christ’s journey towards the crucifixion and resurrection. (Lahiri 2005, 23–24)

Springs, caves, waterfalls, and peaks are thus venerated “as images or simulacra of the scenes of Christ’s suffering, crucifixion and resurrection in the Holy Lands” (ibid., 23). Furthermore, “the social terrain is likewise marked by Christian elements and paraphernalia. Christian representations of the angels and the Trinity appear in Banahaw iconography. Rituals contain parts of the Eucharist and are presided over by priestesses vested in pre-Vatican II regalia, including the maniple and miter” (Francisco 1992, 58).

This construction of geographical as well as imagined space is more than “baptizing these natural sites” and is better characterized as the localization of Christianity. Pesigan (1992, 35), who lived with and patiently researched Ciudad Mistica, states that “despite differences in their beliefs or creed, these religious groups agree on their belief that Banahaw is where the Holy Land has been transferred and where the New Kingdom will be established after Armageddon at the end of the millennium.”⁶ Thus the sites, symbols, and paraphernalia they have appropriated from Christianity not surprisingly “coexist in apparent détente with signs appropriated from other sources, such as the colors of the Philippine flag and figures of national heroes” (Francisco 1992, 58). This coexistence of apparently disparate signs is not syncretistic but integral to their implied conviction that “Yes, Jesus lived in Nazareth but he is alive here and now, transforming this tropical mountain into the new Holy Land. Admittedly, spirit-possession has been part of Christian tradition, but now is vested on women whose role recalls the *babaylanes* [shamans] of native religion and the *beatas* [women living in community] of the 17th century” (ibid.).

This localization of Christianity in Banahaw is explained by Isabel Suarez, *suprema* (supreme leader) of Ciudad Mistica, in relation to current violence in the Middle East:

Even the Holy Site in Palestine is not safe from the Conflict in the Middle East. Thus to prevent the destruction of the Holy Site it was deemed better that God the Father transfer the Holy Land here in the Chosen Land in East Asia and let it remain there until the end of the Final Judgment. . . . It is evident then from these events that the Philippines is the Chosen Land and Mount Banahaw the Promised Land.⁸ (Pesigan 1992, 133)

On the basis of this explanation for the localization of Christianity in Banahaw, Suarez and her group are able to redefine events in Philippine history in Christian terms: “We in Ciudad Mistica believe that Mt. Banahaw is the altar of brave Filipino heroes like Rizal, Bonifacio, Aguinaldo, and del Pilar whose destiny it was to build the Filipino nation” (Pastrano 1995, 9).

This construction of space in terms of localizing Christianity is not, as Lahiri (2005, 32) suggests, a gesture toward a nativist past typical of nineteenth century nationalist discourse. It is a willful expression of native aspirations, as Suarez further insists, “During the time of the Spaniards, Filipinos were made to venerate foreign saints. Why can’t we take pains to honor our own martyrs? . . . What we do not like is the arrogance and decadence that foreign things and people bring with them. I will welcome foreigners to Ciudad Mistica, but I will talk to them only in Filipino” (ibid).

This construction of space beyond the enclosed center and into Mount Banahaw—when “read beside the text of Christianity in the Philippines”—constitutes a deconstruction of the companion text, and “appears as the underside of what Christianity has been—the forgotten silences which are today addressed as the inculturation of the Christ story and the empowerment of the laity, especially women” (Francisco 1992, 58–59).

Transcending Parish Boundaries: Couples for Christ⁹

The construction of space beyond parochial boundaries differs in dynamics from the broad impulse to move away from the center found in the remontados and other “fugitives” in Philippine history. It emerged with the proliferation and popularity of charismatic groups in urban and semi-urban

centers from the 1970s onward. These groups are identified by Kessler and Rüland’s survey as “charismatic religiosity” in contrast to traditional Filipino Christianity. As one of their interviewees remarks: “Yes, our grandma taught us to be like a true Catholic. We are what you call the *Katolikong serado* [Filipino expression for devout Catholic, CK/JR]. I didn’t know that Jesus Christ is Lord until I was renewed in the Charismatic” (Kessler and Rüland 2008, 126).

Although some of these groups began as entities independent from Catholic and mainstream Protestant churches, many have links with these churches, albeit with various levels of institutional formality. Moreover, unlike in Latin America, charismatic Christianity in the Philippines is predominantly Catholic, as “70 percent of all Christians active in the [Charismatic] renewal identify themselves as Roman Catholic” and similarities of charismatic Evangelicals, Catholics, and Pentecostals appear to outweigh their differences (Kessler 2006, 563).

Thus, far from being an escape from the church, these groups aim at “breathing new life” into its communities and members. In order to achieve this goal, many of them use spaces not traditionally associated with the religious. Independent charismatic groups use public and commercial facilities rented for prayer meetings. Larger and more established assemblies eventually have bought or possess long-term leases of old movie houses—most of which, ironically, showed local pornographic films at the peak of their popularity. Even those groups with links to mainstream Christianity do not meet in churches but in other locations.

Among them are groups that construct religious space in ways that transcend the enclosure in traditional Christianity, without subverting the territorial jurisdiction of the Catholic Church. The Couples for Christ (CFC), a Catholic charismatic community formed in 1981, is dedicated to “renewal within the Catholic Church” and “of the whole people of God, irrespective of denomination or Christian affiliation” (CFC 1995a). It identifies itself as transparochial and is thus able to lay claim to the world and the home as religious spaces. It has spread to more than 150 nations for global evangelization and has appropriated the household for the renewal of families (CFC 2006, 50).

Its ability to cross territorial as well as conceptual boundaries comes from its status as a charismatic lay movement and the relative freedom attached to this status. Being charismatic in theology and spirituality, the CFC sees

itself inspired by “the Holy Spirit [who] raises up a variety of movements and groups with their own unique charisms” (CFC 1995d, sec. 5a). It grew out of *Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon* (The Lord’s Joy), the first Catholic charismatic covenant community in the Philippines known for prayer meetings characterized by glosalia, prophecies, and other gifts of the Spirit, and held in the open gymnasium—not the chapel—of Assumption College in Makati, Metro Manila, in the 1970s.

The circumstances around its emergence from the original community had profound impact on the very character of the CFC and its construction of religious space. Victor Gutierrez, one of the founding members of *Ligaya ng Panginoon*, explains the birth of the CFC: “Although CFC officially began in 1981, its beginnings are traced to 1979, when *Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon* Community decided that its two weekly charismatic prayer meetings, although hugely popular (with 600 to 800 participants), were not attracting enough male participants. Nearly 80 % of those attending were women” (Gutierrez 1991, 28f). Moreover, “we realized that to effectively renew society a conversion of families to Christ was necessary. We realized further that to effectively renew families, a conversion of both husband and wife to Christ was necessary. The challenge then was to evangelize couples together” (ibid.). Hence their name as Couples for Christ.

Together with its charismatic nature, the CFC is also characterized by active lay participation from the beginning. According to their own documents, it “is a lay movement/community” and “has been raised up by the Lord to call upon lay people to take their rightful place in the work of the Church” (CFC 1995d, sec. 3a). Being made up of couples, the CFC has a membership that is completely lay.

As a result of this status as a charismatic lay organization in the Catholic Church, the CFC is not confined to one territorial jurisdiction, be it a parish or a diocese, and is thus referred to as transparochial. At the same time, the CFC had to be linked to the church’s governance structure through territories with their corresponding authorities.

In fact, Catholic charismatic groups, linked as many were with international ecumenical communities, had strained relations with local bishops, priests, and lay leaders from the very beginning. This improved only through the work of Fr. Herbert Schneider, S.J., founding member of *Ligaya ng Panginoon* and Bible professor at Loyola School of Theology, with the official church committee on the charismatic movement. The CFC (1995b)

learned from these earlier experiences and codified detailed guidelines regarding relations with local church authorities: “The CFC will be most effective remaining as a lay group with lay leadership, actively submitting to the bishop and relating to the parish priest, but not being run or governed by the clergy.” In the words of another document, “CFC, as one body throughout the world, becomes necessarily a transparochial community. However, CFC in its territorial subdivisions (i.e., chapters) is based in the parishes” (CFC 1995c, sec. 2).

Moreover, in order to avoid conflicts surrounding the CFC’s status—being transparochial and parish-based at the same time—its relations with the parish priest and the bishop, who has jurisdiction over the parish, had to be dealt with. The CFC documents carefully navigate through this issue on theological and practical grounds. Identifying itself “as a parish-based movement,” the CFC speaks of the difference in their ministries: “the parish priest is basically in charge of the sacramental life of Catholics, and exercises pastoral oversight over the life of the parish,” while “lay people should be harnessed in and entrusted with the other aspects of life in the parish” (ibid., #4a). Another document emphasizes the practical benefits of such a division of labor: “the parish priest is freed up to concentrate on the sacramental, liturgical, and pastoral life of the people. It is a synergistic relationship that results in more effective service to the people of God” (CFC 1994, 45). The CFC group within a parish must maintain smooth relations with the parish priest by making him its spiritual adviser, informing him of CFC activities and inviting him socially (CFC 1995f, sec. 5). Similar directives are given with regard to the local bishop (CFC 1995e).

Having defined its place within the church’s governance structure based on territorial jurisdiction and its relations with its corresponding authorities, the CFC has been able to construct religious space beyond parochial boundaries and move into directions linked to the two other areas of its mission—“global evangelization” and “family life renewal” (CFC 1995a, first paragraph). From its inception, the CFC has been envisioned as a worldwide network of committed Christian couples and families: “What God started in the Philippines was not meant to be just for Filipinos, or just for Asia, but was to be an instrument of renewal for the whole world” (CFC 1994, 40). Thus by 1990 Frank Padilla (1991, 5), one of its founding members, could boast that “from the mustard seed of 16 couples planted by the Lord in June of 1981, CFC has grown to become the largest of shrubs, with branches all

over the Philippines and in other countries in the world. CFC now counts over 8,600 active and committed couples, spread out in over 100 parishes, 28 Philippine provinces and 11 countries.”

Besides this analogy from nature, a more telling comparison is found in some other documents. One calls the CFC “a mighty army, a multinational force, doing battle for the Lord and fighting tenaciously to firmly establish His reign on earth” (Padilla 1991, 7). Another states, “God is raising up a global army that will work tenaciously to establish and spread His dominion on earth. Together we are to be families in the Holy Spirit that will renew the face of the earth” (CFC 1994, 24). Such military analogies give its thrust—“to be global, wholistic [*sic*] and Catholic” (ibid., 40)—a tone historically associated with the rise of Christendom.

This expansion of religious space in order to pursue “an evangelization that is global, rapid and massive” is reflected in the role and practice of transparochial prayer assemblies within the CFC (1993, 1). According to directives on this matter, these assemblies provide “time to allow the Lord to speak to us as a body” and “opportunity to fellowship and meet our brethren from other households and units, and thus to develop and strengthen relationships” (CFC 1995g, 1). Moreover, having a uniform way of conducting these assemblies is “a tangible evidence of our unity and our being a part of the one CFC which is a worldwide family” and “enables any CFC member to attend a CFC prayer assembly anywhere in the world and just easily enter into the proceedings” (ibid., 8). Thus the ultimate aim is no less than a unique culture that makes the CFC distinguishable anywhere.

The other spatial direction in which the CFC has expanded lies in the home. This construction of the home as religious space is explicitly articulated in the crucial role of the prayer meeting at home and in the CFC’s organizational structure based on the household. The CFC (1994, 44–45) looks to the Bible for its inspiration regarding both:

Just like the first Christians who met in individual homes for worship and fellowship, CFC couples belong to small cell groups called households, which meet regularly for mutual support in the Christian life. As CFC members worship and meet in homes, they experience the reality of the home as a domestic Church. They are also able to fully consecrate their homes to God, having Christ at the very center of their family life.

The home then has become religious space—making it “a small church” where God’s people can gather to worship God, grow in their faith together, and witness to their family, neighbors, and friends.

These prayer meetings at home are built into the structure of household, since the CFC pastoral structure is “such that every member belongs to a household for personal support, and every member is under the pastoral headship of a CFC leader” (CFC 1996, 1). Each household is composed of five to seven couples including the household head, and the location for prayer meetings is rotated among its members. Most CFC members belong to what is called “led households” in contrast to “fraternal households” composed of leaders. The CFC considers such geographically clustered “led households” as “a working model for Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs)” (CFC 1994, 45).

The CFC has succeeded in moving beyond parochial boundaries without dissociating itself from the governance structure of the Catholic Church. In line with its evangelical aims, it has expanded through the world and into the home, and transformed them into religious space through prayer meetings.

Virtualizing Space: El Shaddai

El Shaddai, another Catholic charismatic group that also began in 1981, grew out of a radio program hosted by Mariano “Mike” Velarde and now counts nine to eleven million followers in the Philippines and abroad (Wiegele 2006, 497). This extensive reach is made possible by its construction of virtual religious space through a unique interplay of mass media and community.

Like the Couples for Christ, El Shaddai has moved beyond parochial borders, but they differ in intent and approach. The Couples for Christ extend religious space throughout the world and into the home because of its evangelical aim to renew families. El Shaddai has also extended its reach into these realms but under different circumstances. For example, although its groups hold local prayer meetings in private homes, these do not bear the same significance that household gatherings have for the CFC, because El Shaddai is not primarily centered on and organizationally structured according to the family.

El Shaddai’s delocalization of religious space and the resulting openness of its borders have come about through its early circumstances and a

decision by Bro. Mike Velarde, its founder and leader who is charismatic in two senses—following charismatic spirituality in general and possessing great personal charisma. His conscious choice, even a strategic maneuver, concerned his initial intention to build worship space (Velarde 1995, back cover). However, he decided otherwise.

This strategic decision must be seen within the dynamics of his relations with the Catholic Church. At the early stages of El Shaddai, American evangelicals like Pat Robertson were the major influences on Velarde. However, as his radio program became more popular, he had to decide whether to identify himself as Protestant or Catholic. In her extensive study of El Shaddai, Wiegele (2005, 19) quotes a Catholic priest known to Velarde at this time: “Well, I saw his leaning . . . He was not really a well-formed Catholic, and so he was leaning . . . more on the Protestant side, so I told him ‘Mike, do you want to deal with the majority of the people or with the minority?’ He said, ‘With the majority, of course.’” Thus he identified himself as Catholic and aligned his fast-expanding circle with the Catholic Church.

Mike Velarde’s decision to align El Shaddai with the Catholic Church proved congruent with the Catholic Church’s attitude toward them. Members of the Catholic hierarchy noted, not without some alarm, the increasing popularity of Velarde and his group. They heard about the massive rallies he leads every weekend in Manila and even met some of their local parishioners avidly committed to El Shaddai. Velarde’s decision not only allayed their apprehensions but also provided a channel for at least some communication with, if not control over, him and through him, El Shaddai. Bishop Teodoro Bacani, who had general, and therefore vague, oversight functions in relation to lay groups in the church, was designated spiritual adviser to the El Shaddai leadership. Moreover, just as Couples for Christ sought to remedy what bishops and priests perceived to be disruptive effects of transparochial groups on the local level, El Shaddai asked its members to have prayer meetings in the parish and to donate some portion of their collection to the parish priest.

All these have proven beneficial to the Catholic Church as well as to El Shaddai. The status of El Shaddai—its religious identity and belonging officially recognized as Catholic without being tied to any enclosure marked “Catholic”—brought about particular advantages:

This position gives El Shaddai a perceived distance from Catholic orthodoxy while allowing it to capitalize on the sense of legitimacy that derives from its Catholic identity. This ambiguity also opens up a space for El Shaddai beliefs and practices that diverge significantly from mainstream Filipino Catholic religiosity—such as El Shaddai’s prosperity theology, its emphasis on financial and material gain through tithing and miracles and its disapproval of mainstream Filipino Catholic mediators. (ibid., 58)

Furthermore, “El Shaddai’s coexistence with the Catholic Church, then, is unproblematic on this level because, from its inception, it has occupied a wholly different religious space” (ibid., 51). Although Velarde often describes church spaces as mere repositories of tradition (ibid.), this mutually beneficial *détente* has cleverly avoided official conflict over space, religious as well as administrative, with the Catholic Church. Describing this in her more recent essay on El Shaddai, Wiegele (2006, 496) writes: “El Shaddai members, while on the one hand ‘walking out’ of old Catholic understandings of ritual, spiritual mediation, suffering, and material attachments (among other things), appear to be simultaneously ‘staying within’ many of the traditional attachments of Catholicism . . .”

But as with any *détente* on the official level, the situation on the ground varies considerably. Wiegele’s study compares El Shaddai chapters recognized and in harmony with parishes with those that are not. Moreover, this *détente* may change as El Shaddai has moved its mass prayer rallies since mid-2007 to its own space at Amvel Business Park where it is building a shrine.¹⁰

Still the most important feature of El Shaddai’s construction of religious space lies in its use of mass media. This unique construction of virtual religious space has been made possible because of the role of radio in popular Filipino culture and El Shaddai’s use of intersecting forms of community. Radio has been the most extensive form of mass media among the lower socioeconomic classes in Philippine society, and has provided not only entertainment but also social commentary for them. Thus El Shaddai’s beginnings as a radio program gave it immediate access to these classes and a wide platform for commentary, religious as well as social. This became the basis for El Shaddai’s unique forms of community—its radio and television

audience, the assemblies at mass rallies, and smaller local prayer groups (Wiegele 2005, 44).

These different forms of community intersect in a way unique to El Shaddai. Wiegele (2005, 48–49) describes how this happens:

The radio and TV broadcasts extend the ritual sphere of the *Gawain* beyond its immediate locale because, before and after the event, radio and TV are played constantly. Since the broadcast is live, one begins experiencing the event even while still at home. Within the PICC grounds, radios serve as links with Brother Mike at the center, focusing attention on Velarde and the events onstage. The mass-mediated community is gradually transformed into the immediate, physical community of the rally.

At the end of the rally, the opposite process takes place: the dispersing crowds remain glued to continuing radio transmissions of El Shaddai programs, and “the mass rally congregation, even today, is in effect an extension or continuation of the radio listening audience, and the borders between the two types of experience are blurred rather than distinct” (Wiegele 2006, 508). Moreover, local gatherings, formal or informal, often use replays of El Shaddai radio and television programs, and recorded voice tapes of Brother Mike circulate among Filipino migrants and overseas workers (ibid., 53).

This dynamic interplay results in a blurring of boundaries between, on the one hand, mass-mediated communications and, on the other, gatherings called *gawain* (literally, undertaking or work) in large public or small local venues, and thus creates an atmosphere participants refer to as “live.” Wiegele narrates a conversation with one such participant: “Josie told me once that she loves going to the *gawain* at PICC [Philippine International Convention Center], as opposed to the smaller *gawain* in her local chapter, ‘because it’s live!’ Were it not for the cameras, the simultaneous broadcast, and the instant playback (after the event is over), this ‘live feeling would not exist’” (ibid., 48). Another woman—forbidden by her husband to attend the mass rally and listening to the radio at home—still felt present in the rally: “I prayed too. Even though the rally was far away, the Lord still blessed me, and I was crying” (ibid., 49).

This “live” atmosphere is in no small measure cultivated by Velarde’s style of talking—“conversational, direct, never losing track of the person who

is listening”—so much so that it “contributes to an image of community that is close and familiar” (ibid., 56). Moreover, it makes radio and TV “channels for blessings and miracles” that reaches even further (ibid., 49). Although this has been done before by radio announcer Johnny Midnight in the 1970s, El Shaddai has eminently expanded the boundaries of ritual space through the airwaves and, in Barry’s (2006, 566) words, “by relying on this medium, its message—and the healing power of the Holy Spirit—is easily transmitted into homes and into the hearts of the eager listeners.”

There is then in El Shaddai an uncanny congruence of the message—the healing power of God El Shaddai (rendered by Velarde as “The One Who Is More Than Enough”)—and the medium—the virtual sacred space created through mass media for people in the rallies and at home. “Brother Mike not only calls followers to a center of sacred power during rallies through radio and TV but establishes the link to this power even before they approach the rally site—thus expanding the ritual center. The loose boundaries demonstrated here between the mass media audience and the actual on-site audience creates a unique ritual space” (Wiegele 2005, 50).

El Shaddai’s construction of “transcendent space, both physical and conceptual, that exists simultaneously within and without the church institution” contrasts with “mainstream Filipino Catholic religious experience—where the priest and the church building itself mediate with God and the religious community” (ibid., 41). For the El Shaddai follower, religious experience takes place in a virtual religious space created through the interplay of mass media and community.

Related Modes of Presence and Involvement in Civil Space

The preceding sections have shown how religious space has been constructed differently within the wider landscape of each group’s total environment and how each construction interacted with other domains in this landscape such as ecclesiastical authorities, political institutions, native aspirations, and family settings. With this ground covered, this section turns to the relations between such differing constructions of religious space and each group’s engagement in civil space.

As mentioned earlier, “civil space” refers to the realm where various stakeholders promote their interests from their respective social locations and thus work for or against the attainment of the common good. It is preferred

over the “profane” or “secular,” as it does not take the “sacred” or “religious” as its point of reference. Moreover, the binary pair of sacred and profane initially articulated by Eliade and commonly understood as completely mutually exclusive categories is seen today to be inadequate on theological and historical grounds. It has been theologically argued that the Christian doctrine of God’s creation of the world is the ultimate ground for “secularity” of the world, that is, the world’s being distinct from the divine. Hence the secular, literally “of the world,” can be distinguished, though not divorced, from the sacred. Furthermore, particular historical studies such as the earlier mentioned *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* have shown a more complex dynamic between the construction of religious space and its place in the social landscape.

This section discusses the dynamics between the four typical constructions of religious space described above and their corresponding engagements in civil space. In particular, these dynamics involve the following elements—each religious construction’s explicit or implicit view of civil space as well as its involvement in addressing specific social needs, like widespread poverty or injustice.

In the first case, traditional Filipino Catholicism construed religious space as enclosed based on the Patronato and the historical conjuncture between evangelization and colonialism. As a result, civil space was subsumed within religious space and, for all practical purposes, these spaces were indistinguishable. Spanish colonial authorities had oversight in certain religious matters, just as clerics took on some official and informal functions of colonial governance. The emergence of civil space distinct from religious space called for the historical dissociation of the church from the Patronato and thus of evangelization from colonization. This dissociation eventually took place during the nineteenth century due to the dynamics between the “Catholic/Spanish” and the “native,” the emergence of liberally-educated native leaders in and outside the church, and the epic influence of the Christ story. As I wrote in an earlier essay,

Christianity played a multifaceted role as church and story in what became the historical trajectory of nineteenth century colonial society, the birth of the Filipino nation. It ‘translated’ the Christ story, thereby transforming the vernacular into a language of liberation and providing

an epic paradigm for leading individual and social lives in terms of solidarity with Jesus. (Francisco 2006, 540)

Because of this influence, the emergence of civil space became possible under the rubric of nationalism: “This story’s many textual incarnations and communal performances created physical space for natives to gather as communities as well as imaginative space for them to envision social bonds other than colonial relations” (ibid.).

This dynamic involving traditional Christianity’s construction of religious space as enclosed and the civil space that emerged out of it continues to be operative after the Spanish colonial period. The governance structure of the church remains based on territorial jurisdiction. In Moreno’s (2006, 6) view, the contemporary church’s social involvement can only be understood in relation to this governance structure and the church as a religious organization since “it follows, fashions, and interacts with ecclesial rules, generates symbols of religious identity, and devises its objectives and strategies.” As a result, the domains of the church and civil society overlap as “its [the church’s] organizations are civil society actors inasmuch as they are relatively autonomous and organized operating within the public sphere, the space between the state and households” (ibid., 9–10).

This overlap of the domains of church and civil society based on constructing religious space as enclosed has made the issue of church-state relations perennially contentious (Schumacher 1976). Both have pushed their own agenda within the constitutional framework of the separation of church and state as well as the guarantee of freedom of religion. As constitutional lawyer Bernas (1991, 22) comments, this

exists for persons, and in this case for the sake of safeguarding the freedom of persons whether natural or juridical . . . The attempt to draw a line between the two is for the sake of protecting one from the other and the people or community from both. And since separation or non-establishment exists for the sake of freedom of persons, it stands to reason that when there is a conflict between freedom and separation, separation must yield.

Despite such safeguards, church and state have waged territorial disputes over particular issues. Among those most debated since the 1946

establishment of the Philippine Republic have been issues of teaching catechism in public schools, including Rizal's novels in the general curriculum, appointing clerics to government office, and the chronic issue of church participation in elections.

However, such disputes arising out of traditional Christianity's construction of an enclosed religious space have not prevented the church's influence in civil space and involvement in social issues. First, this presence and involvement often take the form of establishing church institutions that address specific social needs. Christianity has put up social development institutions such as schools, hospitals, and orphanages. Although legitimate and effective responses to people's needs, given the usual lack of resources from government and other private institutions, they were established as independent church institutions protected from intrusion of other authorities yet operating under civil law and regulation. Thus issues of power and authority between church and state often arise. For instance, the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP 2006) alone counts 1,192 member schools as of 2006, all of which are always wary of government directives.

Second, a more recent form of church presence and involvement in civil space has been engagement with wider social movements for social issues like justice or peace. As Fabros (1988) documents, this engagement from the 1930s onward sought to implement Catholic social teaching and was exemplified through participation in labor and peasant organizations as well as credit and cooperative enterprises. Further strengthened by the Second Vatican Council's vision and impetus, church engagement with social movements has deepened and expanded.

A different rhetoric is born with this more intense engagement. Without rejecting the construction of religious space as enclosed, Christian leaders and members now speak of "establishing the Kingdom of God" or "unjust social structures." Although these expressions do not imply a desire to return to Christendom, they point to the conviction that God's reign should be reflected in all dimensions of human life and society, and hence to the fundamental view that the religious dimension has a rightful place in social spaces or structures. It may even be arguable that some local forms of liberation theology draw from the historical involvement of Christian natives during the Philippine Revolution and thus construe "God's Kingdom" as a society of just social structures the way the early revolutionaries envisioned social bonds different from colonizer-colonized.

Given this rhetoric and its underlying vision referred to as integral evangelization, the church became deeply involved in social development issues such as land or health as well, but in the many forms of basic community organizing like *Kristiyanong Kapitbahayan* (Christian neighborhood community) or BCC-CO (basic Christian community-community organizing). Moreover, since President Marcos's 1972 declaration of martial law, this involvement became increasingly focused on democratization. At the time, Moreno's comprehensive analysis of this period insists that the Philippine church was "far from being a monolithic religious establishment, [and] is characterized by complexities, differences, and at times, conflicts" (Moreno 2006, 66). Nevertheless, the church—from Cardinal Sin to its million members—played a crucial role in ending authoritarianism by appropriating public space—Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) and its environs—in the 1986 People Power Revolution.

For traditional Christianity then, civil space exists "outside" its enclosed religious space. Here Christianity exercises its *ad extra* mission through its social welfare institutions and its engagement in social issues. Because of its vigilance against interference from the other stakeholders in this space, disputes related to territorial jurisdiction between church and state often arise.

The second construction of religious space involving Mount Banahaw sects relate to civil space and social issues on the basis of their rejection of the enclosed space of traditional Christianity. The Christianity brought earlier by foreign missionaries has been localized on native soil, and various elements from this "alien religion" like liturgical vestments have been appropriated.

In keeping with their millenarian characteristics and utopian aspirations, these sects have transformed Mount Banahaw into Bagong Herusalem in preparation for "Armageddon," the definitive arrival of redemption. Almost in imitation of the conflated religious and civil spaces under the Patronato, their communities attempt to establish an isolated environment and a total way of life. Moreover, their leaders such as Amang Ilustrisimo for *Tres Personas solo Dios* govern all aspects of religious and social order within these communities.

However, because of the delay in the arrival of "Armageddon" and of the intrusion of forces from the center, these groups have had to reconnect with the center and thus concede civil space distinct from their localized religious space on Mount Banahaw. What is involved in this reconnection

and its implication for the construction of civil space is clearly illustrated in Lahiri's analysis of the 1998 visit of Cong. Jose de Venecia, Speaker of the House of Representatives and at that time a possible candidate for the Philippine presidency, to Maria Suarez, Ciudad Mistica's supreme leader.

The visit itself lasted no more than a few hours but had the usual dramatic flourish of whirling helicopters, tables of fiesta fare, and guests in formal attire. Symbolic of the reconnection with the center, this meeting between Suarez and de Venecia, Lahiri (2005, 29) says, brought gains for the local community: "As a result of this visit, the Dolores mayor's office has contacted Maria Suarez and promised the upgrading of Dolores-Santa Lucia road as well as a microcredit program and health center."

With such instances of patronage politics, these sects have created space for and granted entry to those outside "the new Jerusalem." As a result, they have received social benefits and reconnected with the center. But, at the same time and more importantly, Suarez's power has been reinforced: "As the repercussions of the Speaker's visit registered, it became clear that the congressman's patronage was being locally cast not as an instance of a powerful politician condescending to local subjects, but instead as a demonstration of the Suprema's potency and ability to tap informally into state-derived resources" (ibid.). This ability to elicit resources from the center has been the way leaders of these alternative communities have increased their local power, as was the case with Suarez's grandfather: "To this day, villagers recount a story of how the savvy Amador convinced the government to build the village a road in the same breath as they narrate tales of his *kapangyarihan*, including occasions when he healed the terminally ill with a touch or multiplied a handful of rice into a feast for a hundred" (ibid., 38).

Lahiri points to the wider meaning of these sects' creation of civil space for forces from the center. This creation has certainly brought social benefits to these alternative communities and strengthened the authority of their leadership. But with this reconnection with outside forces—government and then nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and academe—the location of these sects in history has been reimagined: "the privileged place of the Suprema (and indeed of Mt. Banahaw itself) in the revisionist Filipino national imaginary makes sense only in the context of Filipino colonial history, which has bequeathed metropolitan intellectuals a sometimes contradictory dual fixation upon both precolonial origins and colonial resistance as sources of national identity" (ibid., 42–43).

Like traditional Christianity then, Mount Banahaw sects like Ciudad Mistica established an integrated religious and civil space in their new and alternative Jerusalem. Within this undifferentiated space, religious life as well as social order has been carried out under the auspices of autocratic leadership. But with the inevitable intrusion from the center and the consequent relocation of these sects in history, civil space has been created without any corresponding loss of authority for its religious leaders.

The third and fourth constructions of religious space represented by the charismatic groups, the Couples for Christ and El Shaddai, bring about corresponding views of civil space and social involvements therein. Although often perceived to be socially conservative, these groups do not ignore social needs. As Kessler's survey confirms: "general political items concerning acceptance of public welfare, the main tasks of government (protection of human rights versus economic progress), and attitudes towards democracy do not correlate with Charismatic religiosity or involvement in the Charismatic movement at all" (Kessler and Rüland 2008, 166); they just believe that "the solution for all societal and economic problems is seen in the moral renewal of the political and economic elite, as well as that of the common people" (Kessler 2006, 580).

These charismatic groups go beyond the territorial boundaries of religious space and put the site of religion within the hearts of people. Without rejecting the official territorial jurisdiction of the church's parishes and dioceses, they locate religious space wherever and however human hearts can be reached. No wonder then that the CFC considers its mission global with a special focus on the family household. El Shaddai, although also global in its reach, has created religious space in and through media.

Based on these constructions of religious space, both groups see civil space as the realm where they evangelize "the world" and alleviate social ills in the light of the Gospel. Their common focus on personal sin as the root cause of social ills and on personal salvation in terms of well-being shapes the ways in which they view their place and undertake tasks in civil space.

First, their view of social ills in terms of moral failure is based on how they understand the relation between the spiritual and the social or temporal. A CFC document, for instance, says that "the gospel (good news) of Jesus necessarily includes both the spiritual and social dimensions" and that each member "believes in true freedom as a liberation from the bondage of sin which is the root cause of the devastation of his country" (CFC 1991, 109).

In contrast, Velarde relates spiritual renewal with the “prosperity gospel” in which “the Will of God for us is to remain successful, healthy, strong all the days of our lives here on earth, as well as enjoy Eternal Life in heaven” (Velarde 1993, 5). This “prosperity gospel,” initially borrowed from American evangelicals and much criticized by mainline Christians, is manifested in El Shaddai rituals:

They chanted together, repeating Mike's words: “*I am rich! I am strong! Something good is going to happen to me today!*” When he asked them to raise up their bankbooks, passports, job applications, wallets, water, and prayer requests for blessing, they not only raised up these objects but opened them to the black sky—“so that the spirit can come in,” a young woman told me, “the flow of the spirit, *daluyan*.” (Wiegele 2005, 16)

Although Wiegele justifiably concludes that El Shaddai's rituals and views offer its members a different understanding of their poverty, she tends toward a “materialist” reading of its distinctive features, namely, “belief in the spiritual healing of physical ailments, an emphasis on material prosperity, and the elicitation of miracles through faithful tithing, positive confession, and prayer requests” (ibid., 39–40). However, the discourses of Velarde and other preachers—regardless of their intentions—oscillate between “the material” and “the spiritual” in a complex rhetorical mix of Tagalog and English difficult to translate for the non-Tagalog speaker.¹¹ Thus it resists reduction to Wiegele's purely “materialist” reading which overemphasizes El Shaddai's discontinuity with traditional or “liberationist” versions of Christianity, and thus ignores the strong tradition, not only of healing but, more importantly, of intercession in Filipino Christianity for material needs like those related to employment or health.

Second, both the CFC and El Shaddai see good citizenship as key to the nation's renewal. This implies recognition of and loyalty to the state: according to a CFC document, one's country is a “gift from God” and for Bro. Mike Velarde, “the church and the state emanate from God” (CFC 1991, 109; Moreno 2006, 77). The CFC even offers a profile of the good citizen based on Biblical passages, which incorporates censure on common practices like bribery and tax evasion (CFC 1991, 109–10). The CFC,

however, adds a further nuance to this focus on good citizenship by emphasizing the family as the basic unit of society and therefore a privileged place for evangelization and social mission.

As a further consequence of this common focus on personal integrity, both groups are concerned with the choice of political leaders, either through elections or street rallies, though often on opposite camps. Moreno (2006, 77) notes that, while the CFC among charismatic groups was the “most involved in the anti-Estrada campaign along with civil society actors,” El Shaddai, much to the dismay of church leaders, supported Estrada who declared: “Brother Mike is more influential than Cardinal Sin, that's why I am choosing him as my spiritual adviser and with him around, the country can't go wrong” (ibid., 93).

Third, their involvement in social development projects are similarly aligned with their views on the centrality of personal renewal for social reform. Like many NGOs related to or outside the church, the CFC's social ministries address all major social concerns such as poverty, education, and environment and targets many marginalized sectors like the poor, women, and prisoners (CFC 2006, 172–206). But what distinguishes them from NGOs is their formation program based on charismatic spirituality.

The most comprehensive and popular social involvement of the CFC is GK, or Gawad Kalinga (literally, providing care), which consists of building houses for the poor. Although a few CFC chapters had begun similar undertakings previously, the CFC officially adopted this strategy in 2001, and considered it as the “CFC's integrated, holistic and sustainable work of building communities among the poor” (CFCIC 2006). Since then GK has spread throughout different provinces in the Philippines and involved local government, business corporations, schools, and overseas volunteers composed of Filipinos and other nationalities.

This tremendous success and the energy that brought it about are rooted in the CFC's appropriation of the home and the world as spaces for its evangelical aims. In building houses for poor families, it provides space where these families can be evangelized and formed in their faith. In engaging volunteers from the Philippines and abroad, it has found “a creative way of evangelizing the rich” (ibid., 2). This growth has encouraged the CFC to launch “GK 777” in 2003 with the aim of building 700,000 homes in 7,000 communities in 7 years (CFC 2006, 208–17). At the same time, it

has brought tensions between the CFC and GK—officially incorporated in 2003 as the Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation—and thus necessitated guidelines governing their relations.

However, the CFC and GK parted ways in a bitter dispute in February 2007. Although too lengthy and complex to chronicle here, the dispute relates to the dynamic between religious and civil spaces (Rivera 2008). Padilla and other CFC leaders condemned GK's partnership with non-Christians, like Muslims and Mormons, and with corporations like Pfizer, the manufacturer of medications not approved by the church for prevention of birth. They considered GK to have turned space from religious to civil and thus changed from an evangelical to a social development organization. This dispute involves the issue of the boundary between religious and civil spaces. For the CFC, GK has compromised its commitment to evangelize the household and the world and, therefore, crossed the boundary between religious and civil spaces with its partnership with these non-Christian groups and corporations engaged in unacceptable practices.

This matter did not arise with El Shaddai as its involvement in social development projects is neither systemic nor systematic. El Shaddai provides social services like consumer cooperatives, medical and dental services, legal help, and material assistance for education of the needy or for relief and rehabilitation of natural disaster victims. Aside from these social services, related corporations like El Shaddai Golden Rule Company Inc. have undertaken businesses meant to benefit its poor members such as the retail store Super Bodega (Super Warehouse).

Such efforts, however, do not occupy center stage in El Shaddai and therefore reach a relatively small number of beneficiaries. This may be primarily due to the rather loose membership protocol of El Shaddai itself. Wiegele (2005, 34) reports that 45 percent of those who visited the clinic in 1995 were nonmembers. Although millions attend its prayer rallies, those who have accomplished and submitted its membership forms are much less. This reflects the freedom of the Holy Spirit central to El Shaddai's belief and the consequent open boundaries of its mass-mediated religious space.

The four types discussed here indicate how particular constructions of religious space shape their presence and involvement in civil space. Whether religious communities link religious space to territorial jurisdictions—official or alternative—or whether they locate it in sites—global, familial, or “on the air”—influences how they perceive the social situation and act within it.

Maps as Conceptual Guides in Our Lifeworld

This essay has sketched maps of the Philippine landscape focused on where four different religious constituencies locate their religious space and on how these typical constructions relate to their presence and involvement in the civil arena. Each construction of religious space is used as starting point because it expresses the particular constituency's self-understanding. This coincides with Rivera's (2008, 230) conclusion regarding “the origins of religiously motivated social and political mobilization, in the context of the Catholic Charismatic renewal”—that “the best way to understand participation in such mobilization is to look at the seminal convictions of the religious group in terms of relating to the secular world, a perspective I have designated as the ‘fundamental worldview.’” Furthermore, “this worldview established at the very beginnings of the CFC also has profound organizational influences on the group,” and this interrelationship between worldview and organization “allows the emergence of specific interpretative frames and suborganizational forms in response to various social and political situations” (ibid., 231).

Although certainly less comprehensive than Rivera's study of the CFC, this article has similarly drawn the outlines of the dynamic between each group's self-understanding expressed through its construction of religious space and its social practice in civil space. In effect, it has uncovered some logical threads between the group's self-understanding and social practice. For instance, it is not surprising that traditional Christianity's construction of religious space as enclosed has led to numerous disputes with the state over turf. Such disputes with the civil authorities do not often arise for the CFC and El Shaddai, which construct religious space beyond territorial jurisdiction or into “the airwaves.” Moreover, because of the charismatics' emphasis on personal renewal, they underline integrity in dealing with the state—both on the part of the citizen who should neither bribe nor evade taxes and of the civil official who must be honest.

Even the emergence of GK's enormous program of building close to a million houses for the poor is a logical consequence of the CFC's extension of religious space into the household. Moreover, prescinding from the extraneous factors of personality conflicts and power politics, the split between GK and the CFC involved the core issue of whether GK's social practice has remained consistent with its religious self-understanding. The CFC sought to evangelize the household and root out the social consequences of

human sinfulness in accordance with its construction of religious space and its implications in civil space. In the CFC's view, this original vision-mission was betrayed by GK through its partnership with groups whose views differed from the Catholic Church's. Thus GK was seen to have become a social development organization rather than a faith-based community.

Mapping religious and civil spaces then has a distinct contribution to make in the study of Philippine Christianity. It points to the connections of a religious constituency's self-understanding with its social presence and involvement in civil space. Without such conceptual maps, the social involvement of religious groups could easily be subject to "reductionism" — for example, being attributed solely to "class" or social location.

Furthermore, this approach through mapping demonstrates how fluid the dynamic between religious and civil spaces is, that is, how movable and porous boundaries between them are. As mentioned earlier, these characteristics of mobility and permeability of borders demonstrate the inadequacy of a rigid demarcation between sacred and profane. In Tweed's (2006, 74) words, religions "involve finding one's place and moving through space" and "religious women and men make meaning and negotiate power as they appeal to contested historical traditions of storytelling, object making, and ritual performance in order to make homes (*dwelling*) and cross boundaries (*crossing*).⁷ Thus numerous other studies on religions today deal with hybridity or "in-beyond" marginality (e.g., Schreiter 1997; Lee 1995).

These characteristics of boundaries are illustrated in differences among the four constructions of religious and civil spaces discussed. In traditional Christianity and even the reaction to it from the Mount Banahaw groups, the boundary between religious and civil spaces is practically nonexistent because the civil is subsumed under the religious. Only with the historical dissociation of the Patronato and the constitutional separation of church and state is civil space recognized in its own right. For the charismatic groups, the boundary of religious space has been extended to include the household or the space created by mass media. Moreover, within each construction itself, boundary shifts have occurred when liminal situations arise such as at the EDSA People Power revolutions. In these cases, even though many other complex political forces were at play, public spaces were "consecrated," that is, turned holy ground if only for awhile.

In conclusion, mapping religious and civil spaces appears to be a useful and distinct approach to the study of Filipino Christianity. Employed in

conjunction with other methodologies, it highlights certain features of the local religious landscape that otherwise may be glossed over. Moreover, the use of the metaphor of "space" as a primary conceptual tool suggests the symbolic nature of social reality and facilitates interdisciplinarity in understanding the complex phenomenon of religion. It implicates fundamental issues such as identity, power, or exclusion, and relates to historical and empirical data as well as symbolic expressions in story and ritual. Mapping these spaces reveals how traditional and charismatic Christianities thrive in the complex terrain of Philippine life and how they wrestle with the inherent Christian paradox of a God omnipresent yet incarnated in a particular place.

Notes

- 1 Quotations from this text will be put in these notes.
- 2 "[B]aquit ang sulat sa Hari parala niya sa ybang tauo, cun talaan nang Hari, cun tandaan nang caniyang tanda, salang lapitan, salang bucin, at binibitay pala ang nacabubuca, ay ang tauong Xpt.^{mo}, cun nacapagayarin tanda sa cataoan niya, con quino Cruzan ang noo, ang bibig, at ang dibdib, paran tinalaan pala nang P.D.^a, ay cun gayon, lalapitan pa caya nang Dem.^a taong tauo?" ("A King's letter sent through a messenger is signed by him, sealed with his sign, and whoever takes and opens it is hanged. Given the Christian whose body is marked, his forehead, lips, and chest sealed with the sign of the Cross, as if marked by the Lord God, will the Devil still come near him, this human being?") (Oliver 1995, 3).
- 3 "[C]aya naman doroonan nang Cruz ang noo, ang bibig, sampon ng dibdib, ang siya manding tinatapatan nang Dem.^a nang caniyang pagpana, yaong tatlo pala, pinatitingdan nang Demonio nang caniyang Palaso nang tocso niya"; "ang dilan alaala nang tauo, ybig niyang magalaala ang tauo nang masamat, mahalay na alaala, nang magcasala sa Dios . . ."; "Ang ytinotocso nang Dem.^a sa bibig, ay ang ating uica, ybig niya bagang maguica ang tauo nang masasamang uica, sa capoua niya tauo . . ."; "Ang dibdib nama, ang siyang tapat yaon nang loob nang tauo, pinapanang tocsihin nang Demonio ang loob (at siyang pono ngayon nang tanang Cataoan) . . ." ("The forehead, lips, and chest are marked with the Cross as they are targets of the Devil's arrows, these three which his wives are directed to"; "he wishes one's memory to remember evil, lewd thoughts that offend God . . ."; "What the devil tempts through the lips is our speech, he wants us to speak evil against others . . ."; "And he shoots the arrow of temptation at the chest where lies the human heart, the center of the whole body . . .") (ibid., 1, 2).
- 4 "Ang tauong magpapamooc nagsasandata mona nang dalauang bagay na sandata, sinasandata mona ang ytinataquip sa canyang cataoan, ang calay бага, ang baloti, at ang calasag, yaong lahat, yngat din sa cataoan niya, nang di masugatan, nang di matimoan nang supnit, nang palaso caya nang caniyang caauay, cum matakpan na niya ang caniyang cataoan, bagho homauac nang bosog, nang Gayang, sampun nang yua, siyang ypananalo nang sa caniyang caauay" ("One who prepares to fight protects himself with two kinds of weapons, those that cover his body like a piece of hardwood, an armor, a shield, all those that protect his body so he is not wounded, hit by his

enemy's blowgun or arrow when his body is protected, before he himself takes a bow, spear, and all else with which to frighten and defeat his enemy") (ibid., 1).

- 5 "Caya nga sandatahin na ninyo ang Cruz sa inyong cataoan, sa inyo pang bahay, at sa buquir man, nang di camo maano nang ating caauay na Demonios" ("Therefore use the Cross as weapon for your body, your house, and even your field so that you will not be harmed by Devils, our enemies") (ibid., 3).
- 6 Confer the following, respectively: Pesigan 1992; Marasigan 1985; Alaras 1988.
- 7 "Bagaman nagkakaiba-iba ang kanilang mga paniniwala o kredo, ang mga panrelihiyong grupong ito ay nagkakaisa sa kanilang paniniwala na ang Banahaw ang lugar kung saan inilipat ang Banal na Lupa o Santa Tierra de Promisyon at sa kanilang paniniwala ay nagkaroon ng pagtatayo ng Bagong Kaharian o Bagong Hersalem dito sa Banahaw matapos na maganap ang Armageddon sa katapusan ng milenyum o libong taong ito" (Although their beliefs or creeds differ, these religious groups are one in their belief that Banahaw is the place where the Holy Land or the Sacred Land of Promise has been transferred; moreover, they believe that the New Kingdom or New Jerusalem is established after the occurrence of Armageddon at the end of the millennium or this thousand year period) (Pesigan 1992, 35).
- 8 "Maging ang Banal na Lugar sa Palestina ay hindi maliligtas sa Hidwaan sa Gitnang Silangan. Kaya nga't upang maiwasan ang pagkawasak ng Banal na Lugar ay minabuting ilipat ng Diyos Ama ang Tierra Santa dito sa Lupang Hinirang sa Silangang Asya at panatilihin doon hanggang matapos ang Paghuhukom. . . . Lumalabas nga sa mga pangyayari na ang Pilipinas ang siyang Lupang Hinirang at ang Bundok Banahaw ang Lupang Pangako" ("Even the Holy Land in Palestine has not been spared by the War in the Middle East. Thus to avert the destruction of the Holy Land, God the Father thought it good to transfer the Holy Land to the Chosen Land of East Asia and to maintain it there until Judgment is completed. . . . Events make it appear that the Philippines is the Chosen Land and Mount Banahaw the Promised Land") (ibid., 133).
- 9 Robert Rivera, S.J., who shared materials for this section, has completed his Ph.D. dissertation (Rivera 2008). Most materials are in a CD-Rom format and consist of short documents intended for teaching purposes. As they tend to be repetitious, I only quote from selected texts, and identify the title of the document and the section from where the reference comes.
- 10 I attended one such prayer rally at their Amvel Business Park in Sucat, Parañaque, Metro Manila on 26 June 2007.
- 11 This is indicated by my own experiences of listening to them in media and at rallies such as the 26 June 2007 one I most recently attended.

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Jose Mario C. Francisco, S.J., is president, Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, 1108 Philippines. He has taught at Boston College as Gasson Professor, Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University, and East Asian Pastoral Institute. His teaching and research focus on the interphase between religion, culture, and science especially in East Asian contexts. He has published critical editions of seventeenth-century manuscripts, a Tagalog-Spanish dictionary, and an anthology of Tagalog sermons, and edited *Science, Religion and Culture in the Jesuit Tradition: Perspective from East Asia* (2006) and *Living Theology: The Intersection of Theology, Culture and Spirituality* (2001). His essays have appeared in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, *Nuevos Horizontes para la Misión*, and journals like *Asian Christian Review*, *Forum Mission*, and *Philippine Studies*. <jmcf@admu.edu.ph>