

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

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Philippine Studies vol. 27, no. 2 (1979) 160–175

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

Social Change and Religion Among the Bukidnon

VINCENT G. CULLEN, S.J.

During the last decade the developing countries of the Third World have been under steadily growing pressure to increase the pace of their economic development in order to survive in a competitive world, where the odds are heavily stacked against them. With the emergence of authoritarian governments throughout the Third World which have adopted national economic development planning programs based on foreign models, and which use their power to force the pace of economic development, the pressure for economic development and for concomitant social change has greatly increased. But forced and rapid social change can prove traumatic to peoples unaccustomed to the pressure and the pace. This is especially true of national cultural minority groups accustomed as they are to an even slower rate of change than the majority of the population. This paper will examine the threat posed by national development planning to certain cultural minorities of the Philippines, and consider to what extent the religion of the minorities, an important facet of their culture, can assist them in adjusting to the pressure for rapid economic and social change.

National development planning and implementation, to speak in general, have long been one of the main threats both to the cultural integrity, and often the actual survival, of cultural minorities throughout the world. National development goals in the United States called for and accomplished the extinction of the Great Plains Indians except for a small remnant packed off to reservations, through the destruction of the buffalo, upon which the Indian way of life was built. At present the national develop-

ment program in Brazil includes the uprooting of large tracts of virgin forest, described by ecologists as the lungs of the world, and with it the destruction of the local fauna, including the indigenous tribes. Nor has the Philippines, sad to say, in the planning and implementation of its national development policy avoided this problem.

We are all familiar with the Chico River Dam project and the Kalinga problem in northern Luzon. In Mindanao there is the Bukidnon Sugar Central (BUSCO) in Paitan, Quezon, Bukidnon, built on Manobo land, with the Manobos packed off to a reservation in Pontian-Dalurong, Kitaotao. There is the Philippine Packing Corporation (PPC) expanding on Pontian Plain, Sumilao, Bukidnon, at the expense, and in some cases against the clear wishes, of the native Bukidnon. There is Presidential Decree 705 on forest development classifying the minorities together with squatters and *kaingeros*, reducing them to the status of interlopers in their own homelands, and requiring them to obtain forest residence permits to live on the land of their ancestors. Even with the permit their area of cultivation is often so restricted that they are left with the option of imprisonment or starvation. On the Pulangi River at barrio Salulong, San Fernando, Bukidnon, a hydroelectric power dam is being planned which when completed will cause the flooding of a large portion of the arable area of the municipality of San Fernando and will cause the displacement both of lowland settlers and native Manobo.

These are facts, and they pose two important questions: First, is the present national development model basically antagonistic to the cultural minorities? Considering the model chosen for national development in the Philippines – corporate industrial and agribusiness in nature, and capital intensive with heavy stress on modern scientific technology – one would be inclined to answer that it is basically antagonistic to the cultural integrity and survival of the cultural minorities. The second question to be examined later is: Is national economic development planning by its very nature always destructive of the culture of the national minorities?

PRESENT NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE MINORITIES

There will certainly be some who deny that the present national development model is basically antagonistic to the cultural minor-

ities' way of life and who will claim that the Chico River Project and the Bukidnon Sugar Central are merely isolated and regrettable instances. But since the two examples mentioned above do not in reality seem to be isolated instances but rather form part of a pattern, it might be helpful at this point to compare the two cultures involved in this unequal conflict: the modern technological culture that has produced the national development planning, and the Bukidnon culture.¹

Modern technological culture might be described as secular, highly technological, rapid in the pace of social change and western in origin. As secular, and by this is meant one that upholds the independence of human endeavor from any religious guidance or restraint, it is departmentalized in that it separates human activity into separate categories, the secular and the religious, and thus tends to fragmentize the perception of reality. Being highly technological in nature, it relies heavily on the natural sciences, on economics and engineering which deal with the measurable, the quantifiable, with the result that it tends to be more interested in objects than in persons. Using modern machines, the computer and the bulldozer, it promotes rapid social change, and, as is suspected by many sociologists, more rapidly than human beings and their institutions can adjust to. When it is exported from its western place of origin, it may enter another culture which has not developed the social antibodies to combat its deleterious effects. The harm done might be likened to the damage caused to the native Hawaiian population by the measles.

Bukidnon culture on the other hand takes a holistic view of reality rather than a secular and fragmented one. Bukidnon animism is not a separate department but an integral part of the Bukidnon world view, closely interwoven in the Bukidnon's daily activity. Secondly, Bukidnon culture with little reliance on, or interest in, advanced technology is highly person-centered rather than object-centered. Thirdly, Bukidnon culture has been slowly changing over a long period of time, even before the arrival of

1. The term "Bukidnon" is the common name in the province of Bukidnon for a subgroup of the Manobo family. Elsewhere, in Misamis Oriental and parts of the Agusan provinces the group is referred to as Higaonon or Manobo. The Bukidnon are taken as an example since they constitute the group with which the author is most familiar.

Islam or Christianity in the Philippines. An interesting linguistic study by Dr. Richard E. Elkins of the Summer Institute of Linguistics on proto-Manobo indicates that Binukid is the closest of the Manobo languages to proto-Manobo and therefore among the oldest.² The rate of change, accelerated since World War II, is still very slow in comparison to the rate of change of modern technological culture. Fourthly, it is homegrown and while it has modified itself through contact with Chinese, Islamic, Spanish, American, and lowland Filipino cultures, at least up until the end of World War II the changes do not seem to have been overly traumatic because the culture developed more or less at its own pace. If we accept as valid the brief description of the two cultures just given, then, it would have to be admitted that they are by their nature antagonistic, with the Bukidnon culture as the weaker antagonist.

What role does religion play — and by religion here is meant the importance given to spiritual values — in these two cultures, in the process of cultural change? Since technological culture is secular and scientific it would seem to give little importance to religion, relegating it to the sphere of the individual. After all, this culture is mainly interested in measurable results.

Before the role played by religion in cultural changes among the Bukidnon can be discussed, a brief description of Bukidnon religion is in order. The religion of the Bukidnon is a form of animism which peoples the unseen world with a host of ruling spirits, *migbaya*, the root *baya* meaning “to will, rule, or own.”³ The *migbaya* are the ruling spirits of places: mountains, cliffs, the junctions of streams; of objects: trees, houses, crops such as corn and rice; of activities: hunting, farming, fishing, blanket-weaving, and blacksmithing; and finally of man. The high god, or supreme spirit is *magbabaya* who lives on the seventh level of heaven and is the ruling spirit of man. Each *migbaya* has his own sphere of influence and must be dealt with by those operating within his domain, through appropriate gifts of rice, betel nut, pigs, or chickens as the occasion requires. Failure to make such

2. Cf. Richard E. Elkins, “A Preliminary Proto-Manobo Word List,” *Oceanic Linguistics* 13 (Summer-Winter 1974): 601–41.

3. For a fuller treatment of Bukidnon animism, see Vincent G. Cullen, *Bukidnon Animism and Christianity*, IPC Papers No. 11 (Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila, 1973).

an offering is a sign of disrespect to the *migbaya'* concerned and will bring down punishment, *habay* or *gaba'* usually in the form of sickness which in turn requires an offering to restore health. In addition there are many other spirits, good and bad, including personal guardian spirits, *tumanod*. This is the basic outline of the Bukidnon belief system. While ritual offering is only occasional, when called for, the belief system is closely interwoven into the everyday life and activity of the Bukidnon.

This belief system provides the Bukidnon with psychological security by providing him with an interpretation of reality and helping him to deal with the forces of nature which from a scientific point of view he does not fully understand. It also validates his social structure through its heavy emphasis on respect, not only for the forces of nature personalized in the *migbaya'* but also for his fellowmen, thus keeping the Bukidnon in harmony both with nature and his fellowmen. When this harmony is disrupted either through sickness, natural disaster, or personal conflict it provides mechanisms in the form of rituals to restore this harmony. For example, the mediation of disputes, *husay*, particularly in the cases involving killing, requires not only payment to the family of the deceased but a sacrificial ritual, *singampo'* to restore the harmonious relationship within the group.

BELIEF SYSTEM AND CHANGE

While such a belief systems helps to preserve harmony and stability within the isolated and slowly changing environment of the mountain forest and grasslands, it is poorly equipped to deal with rapid and massive change. Taboos against the introduction of new items such as hats, pencil and paper, and metal roofing have been in operation among the Bukidnon of the upper Pulangi River valley until recent times and are in some respects still operative. To cite one example from barrio Hagpa, Impasugong, Bukidnon: the construction of a water-wheel cornmill necessitated the construction of a dam: and this was traumatic for the Bukidnon members of the group because the obstruction of the stream was considered an act of disrespect to *bulalakao*, the ruling spirit of streams. Ritual offerings of chickens were made in a ceremony known as *bugowan'* concerning the new, to appease *bulalakao*, yet the old folks attributed sickness in the barrio to *bulalakao*

and the dam. While the cornmill itself functioned well, the earth dam was washed away by flood three times, and after the third time the people were reluctant to rebuild it. This reluctance may have come from the realization that their technology was faulty, or it may have come from their fear of the active displeasure of bulalakao. This fear may have been reinforced by the accidental death in a truck accident of the project organizer, interpreted as *gaba'*, punishment. The cornmill has been idle for two years. On the one hand the people want to rebuild it, as it is the only one in the area, yet on the other they are afraid. A social and engineering compromise in the form of a rock breakwater, *sagob*, like those used by the Bukidnon for fishing, which doesn't completely obstruct the flow of water may be the answer.

While mechanisms such as the bagowan' ceremony do exist to deal with slight intrusions, especially in case of things that the people really want, the belief system has no mechanism for massive and undesired intrusions when the people are caught between their respect for the power of the migbaya' and the pressure of the intrusion. This can occur in dealing with nature, as mentioned above, or in dealing with the power structure, the datuship. The belief system validates the power structure by assigning to the datu a powerful personal guardian spirit, *dumalungdong*, who will punish those who do not show proper respect for the datu. Thus a logging company which hires a datu as concession guard, a common practice, in order to control the cutting of timber, is using an effective but potentially destructive control mechanism. By pressuring the datu, through his salary, to protect the company's rather than the people's interest, the practice not only runs the risk of degrading the notion of datu, as has happened, but places the people in a state of tension due to the belief system which supports the datu.

Because the power structure is supported by the belief system, the Bukidnon in such a situation are powerless to react in a constructive way. Their only alternatives are flight, resignation, or violence. Often when confronted with the seizure of their land by ranchers or logging companies, the Bukidnon have been heard to say: "We will just take poison and die, and then you won't be bothered with us any more." While such a threat might be carried out in the case of individuals, as happened recently when the wife of a young man accused of cattle rustling (actually he had

only bought the meat) poisoned their young child and herself, it is much less likely in a large group. When spoken by a group, what it means is: "We are ready to die," and it can be a signal of impending violence.

The one mechanism which the belief system does provide to deal with such situations of stress is the *baylan* institution. The baylan is a charismatic figure, guided by a powerful personal guardian spirit with whom he can converse and who confers on him preternatural powers. The baylan frequently appears in times of stress. He gathers a group around him and gives them his message, which may include devotion to a specific spirit, or the observance of certain dietary or other taboos. He confers on the members certain preternatural powers through the use of *libretos*, rings, oil, or special clothes. These powers usually include invulnerability to bullets and bolos. The baylan, who because of his special relationship with a powerful spirit, can work within and beyond the boundaries of the belief system and even the power structure, for in his line of work he outranks a datu. Thus he can affect certain types of social change such as communal rather than extended family living patterns, migration to a far away place, and finally war. Thus we have the *colorum* or fanatical sect so frequent in Philippine history.

Among the Bukidnon the indigenous baylan movement or *colorum* group is usually culturally conservative and defensive in nature. Often based on the *libung* myth which concerns the regaining of a lost paradise and immortality, usually within a mountain or cave, the indigenous baylan movements while they can lead to violence, are in general a form of withdrawal from the problem and the resultant tension. Also they tend to be temporary in nature. Once the crisis has passed or the prophecy has for some reason not been fulfilled, the baylan moves on and the movement collapses. This happened in the case of the Dalasaga baylan movement in the Kalabugao area in 1941. About 1,000 persons joined the group and travelled to the top of nearby Mt. Kimangkil, which was supposed to open up and admit them into eternal paradise. After waiting for some time on the mountain, and having several members die of exposure, the group returned home and disbanded. The indigenous baylan institution does not seem to offer a viable way of handling massive social change, for while it can alleviate the tension through flight or

violence, it tends to reinforce the very facets of the belief system that are most resistant to change, namely the oppressive fear of angering the *migbaya'* through the introduction of something new.

OUTSIDE INFLUENCE ON BELIEF SYSTEM

Thus far the mechanisms indigenous to the belief system have been discussed, but since cultures do not exist in isolation but interact through the people who possess them, the next point to be considered is the influence of outside agencies on the belief system when confronted with culture change. A good example is barrio Kalabugao, Impasugong, Bukidnon. In 1963 the author took up residence there. At that time there was a Bukidnon Baptist group, a Bukidnon Catholic group, and an animist group. In the fifteen years that have elapsed, Visayan settlers, mostly Boholanos and Cebuanos, have peacefully entered the area and bought land from the Bukidnon. The Bukidnon Catholic and animist groups within the barrio have disintegrated; the people sold their residential lots and farmland near the barrio, and dispersed to the periphery. Some have become Rizalian, settling in a sitio along the lumber road four kilometers from Kalabugao. This group has maintained its identity as a community. The Baptist community has also maintained itself, for though the people do not live in the barrio during the week, they do gather in the barrio on weekends for church services and have houses in the barrio. All take some part in barrio life, either by sending their children to school or by participating in the community cooperative. The Bukidnon Catholic and animist groups are outside the mainstream of barrio life which has become largely Visayan.

Let us briefly examine why Rizalian and Baptist groups maintained their community identity and the animist and Catholic groups did not. First the Rizalian: while indigenous baylan movements are temporary in nature, the lowland colorum sect, because it is built on an organized base, tends to be permanent. A prime example of the lowland based colorum sect among the Bukidnon is the Caballeros de Rizal. Run by a lowlander from the Province of Surigao del Norte, with headquarters in Maginda, Agusan del Norte where it maintains a farming commune, the Caballeros operates within the Bukidnon belief system. Using a variant of the

libung myth, organizers preach the imminence of some great catastrophe, usually war, at which time only members and especially those living in Maginda will be safe. The sect tends to be syncretistic in doctrine, mixing Christ, saints, and Jose Rizal together with the spirits. For a price the faithful may obtain magic libretos, rings, *lana de guerra*, and special clothing which render them invulnerable to attack; a form of protection needed by members who remain outside Maginda in a hostile world.

The organization does provide the Bukidnon with certain advantages. First of all, as members, the Bukidnon have a sense of social solidarity, which their culture once invaded does not give them; they belong. Secondly, by using the baylan institution and the libung myth, the organizers appeal to the Bukidnon's need for security without violating their sense of respect for the *migbaya'*. Thirdly, by guaranteeing members invulnerability, membership provides a religious validation for a more aggressive stance against hostile forces. However, the cost of these advantages is high. First of all the baylan mechanism is still basically a withdrawal, mentally into the preternatural if not physically to Maginda, from the problems that confront them. Secondly, by emphasizing the baylan mechanism the organization reinforces that aspect of the Bukidnon belief system which makes it so difficult for the Bukidnon to deal with change, that is, the exaggerated fear of displeasing the *migbaya'*. The Rizalian Bukidnon have exchanged the domination of the *migbaya'* for the domination of the Rizalian organizer, who is guided and empowered by the Rizalian leader. This leaves the Rizalian Bukidnon wide open to manipulation and exploitation, which is actually taking place. There is considerable evidence to indicate that the leaders of the sect are more interested in personal power and wealth than in the welfare of the members.⁴ Thirdly, it greatly increases the possibility of violent behavior. Strengthened by their belief in their *anting-anting* (charms) and under the power of the local leader, the Rizalian Bukidnon in times of stress are much more likely to explode into violence than non-Rizalian Bukidnon, and into organized violence at that.

Much of the violence among the Bukidnon in the province in

4. The Caballeros de Rizal denies that it is a religious sect despite the fact that it has religious doctrines, ritual, and a budding priesthood.

the last few years has involved Rizalians of one type or another. In the July-September 1975 Rizalian rebellion in Miarayon, Talakag, there was efficient organization into fighters, support troops with planned logistics, and tactics. Trusting in their anting-anting the Rizalians, armed mostly with bolos, charged the constabulary in the Miarayon area in August 1978, and many died there. The July 1976 firefight between the constabulary and a Bukidnon group in barrio Songko, Lantapan, in which more than twenty people died, was due in part to Rizalian influence. In June 1978 a member of the Caballeros group near Kalabugao, under severe strain due to an unresolved feud, and relying on his anting-anting got into a firefight with the local integrated police. He and his son were killed.

PROBLEM OF PEACE AND ORDER

Such a situation poses a difficult problem for those in charge of peace and order. The easiest control method would seem to be to control the leaders by appealing to their personal interest for power and wealth. In the case of the Caballeros this is what seems to have happened: the leader, though not a member of the cultural minorities, was made a datu in the Higaunon Datus' Association, a cultural minority group sponsored by the constabulary. This method of control is not always effective as events have proved. Furthermore it tends to bestow the government's blessing on fanatic groups in general, which in fact are proliferating and constitute a real threat to peace and order. In addition Rizalian organizers who carry identification cards signed by military commanders have been known to use their IDs to coerce membership both in the Kalabugao area and elsewhere. Finally, control can easily change to co-option. There is the danger, and a real one, that a government-controlled organization will be co-opted into pushing among the cultural minorities the very development plans which are causing the problem. This is turning the baylan mechanism against the people, and while it may succeed for a while, it is a very dangerous thing to do. The very mechanism which should operate to release tensions is being used to heighten them. With the safety valve screwed down tight, increased pressure from the implementation of national development plans could cause a chain of irrational and violent explosions.

While touching on the subject of government agencies and the dangers of co-option a few words concerning the Presidential Assistance on National Minorities (PANAMIN) program are in order. While PANAMIN does not enter directly into the belief system of the minorities, apart from encouraging animistic worship, it is involved in culture and culture change, and does therefore touch on the belief system. PANAMIN as a government agency constantly runs the risk of co-option by the national development planners at the expense of the minorities. There is considerable evidence that both in the Chico River Project and in the construction of the Bukidnon Sugar Central it was co-opted to further national development goals at the expense of the welfare of the minorities. In addition PANAMIN's isolationist and fixed cultural approach hampers its program for reasonable and positive cultural change. While there is a lot to be said for reservations in order to protect the land of the minorities from lowland and corporation encroachment, and from the propensity of the minorities to sell their lands, yet control over the land of the minorities exposes the agency to the temptation of overcontrolling the inhabitants, and there has been considerable overcontrol on PANAMIN reservations. Secondly, a static concept of culture has led PANAMIN personnel to put excessive emphasis on certain externals such as tribal type dwellings, and the unsullied preservation of the animistic religion without consulting the wishes of the people. This has led to the curtailment of the residents' freedom of religion, many of whom are baptized Catholics or Protestants. In September 1978 the Catholic Bukidnon of the PANAMIN reservation in Freedom, Malaybalay, Bukidnon pulled down their chapel because they claimed that if it were seen by PANAMIN upper echelon personnel they would get no more help, as they would not be considered true Bukidnon.

The second Bukidnon group in Kalabugao which has maintained itself since the Visayan intrusion began in 1965 is the Bukidnon Baptist group. The Baptists who have had a community there since the 1950s maintain a strong-in-group spirit through their bible-based Christianity. They call themselves the *tumotuo* (the true believers), a spirit which gives them considerable solidarity, but which separates them from other groups, the Catholics and animists, who according to the Baptists will not be saved anyway. This, plus the strict regulations against participating in animistic

rituals has cut them off to some extent from the mainstream of Bukidnon life, especially from the tribal power structure, the *datuship*, which requires the *datu* to officiate at certain sacrificial ceremonies connected with his office. To compensate for this loss in the power structure the Baptists emphasize participation in civil government, being careful and able to elect a Baptist *barrio* captain regularly. This policy has in some other areas led to a kind of theocracy, but in Kalabugao has merely led to non-cooperation among the different religious groups. The Baptists would not help renovate a building to be used temporarily as the *barrio* health center because the building belonged to the Catholic Church. In addition the heavy emphasis on salvation through faith alone and the belief that the law of the government is *ipso facto* the law of God renders easy their co-option by government in the implementation of programs, such as the implementation of P.D. 705, which work to the disadvantage of the people. At present the Baptist *barrio* captain of Kalabugao is also an Anakan Lumber Company security guard, which makes the co-option complete. Thus the fundamentalist Christian approach, while maintaining group solidarity and freeing the people to some extent from the numbing fear of the *migbaya'* has failed to operate as an effective force in positive cultural change because it is so easily co-opted by the opposition, in this case the proponents of the national development plans.

The traditional Catholic approach with its heavy emphasis on liturgy not well understood, its devotion to the saints and occasional ceremonies such as fiestas, baptisms and marriages, was readily accepted by the Bukidnon who then promptly interpreted Catholic Christianity to fit their own belief system. The result was a syncretistic two-level system of Catholic devotions and animistic rituals which, while it may have been culturally acceptable, failed to solve the problem posed by pressure for cultural change. It did not remove the fear of the *migbaya'* but merely added fear of the saints, nor, being occasional in practice, did it provide the group solidarity needed. Thus the mere presence of Visayan Catholic settlers, with better clothing, better housing, better education, and more church-going know-how was enough to disperse the Bukidnon Catholic community.

NEW APPROACH BEGUN

Since the Kalabugao phenomenon was common throughout Mindanao it was evident that a new approach was needed. This new approach has been elaborated over the past five years here in Mindanao and elsewhere within a decidedly more anthropological framework. Basically it is an attempt to assist the minorities, faced with massive forced social change, to make their own cultural synthesis. This requires first that the helpers learn from the minorities their problems, aspirations, and tentative solutions to their problems. In this process of reflection the minorities clarify for themselves both the problems and their aspirations. A second step is to facilitate dialogue among minorities from different areas whereby they can build up a sense of solidarity and intergroup cooperation in the search for the solution of common problems. Thirdly, once the problems are clearly perceived, and the obstacles both external and internal pinpointed, such assistance is offered as the minorities feel they need to help them solve the problems. Where the obstacles are external such as a logging company, an agribusiness corporation, or a government agency such as the Bureau of Forest Development, church related personnel, if possible themselves members of the minority group, try to facilitate dialogue with, or exert pressure upon, the agencies concerned. The church personnel act only as a support group. Where the obstacles to the solution of problems are internal, stemming from the culture under stress, the work is more delicate, requiring great respect for the culture and the wishes of the people. Where indigenous religious values are involved, the work becomes even more delicate because, while the aim of the Church is not proselytism, yet church personnel being Christians possess certain truths derived from the gospel which they believe have universal application, such as the inherent dignity of man, the inviolability of basic human rights, and the right of all men to participate in decisions affecting their lives in accordance with their traditional cultural beliefs and practices. Such truths, they believe, can help the minority peoples in dealing with culture change to work toward the solution of social and economic problems without disrupting their culture. Such an approach might be described as

culture change from within. Unfortunately such efforts are viewed in some quarters as subversive and a number of church personnel working with the minorities have spent time in jail.

The World View Seminar held in Davao City in November 1977 tended to support the validity of this approach. Fifty participants from fifteen minority groups throughout Mindanao met for five days to discuss their problems, their aspirations, and their tentative solutions to their problems. They consisted of less acculturated minority members assisted by more acculturated interlocutors. The church-related personnel attended mainly as observers. The minority participants showed considerable skill in analyzing their problems, voicing their aspirations, and suggesting tentative solutions to their problems. As a group they indicated that they were not against change but wanted it at their own pace and above all that they wanted to remain themselves. In matters of religion the group varied from Christian-oriented to very conservative followers of the old belief system, as in the case of the Bukidnon. While most agencies, public and private, which deal with the minorities, got low marks, schools both public and private and the Christian churches did better. The participants indicated that they wanted education adapted to their needs. The churches involved got fair marks not so much for efficiency but for the interest in the genuine welfare of the minorities and, at least of late, willingness to assist the minorities in finding their own solutions rather than imposing solutions on them.⁵

NECESSARY ANTAGONISM?

Granting, though some may not, that the present type of national development is by its very nature antagonistic to the culture and survival of the minorities there remains the second question: does planned national development have to be antagonistic to the cultural integrity and survival of the minorities? The answer to this question will depend on two presuppositions. 1. It is the cultural minorities who must make all the adjustments. If one sticks to isolated cases such as the Kalinga versus the Chico River Dam project or the Manobo versus BUSCO, there are many

5. For a full report on the seminar see *World View* (Mindanao Sulu Pastoral Conference [MSPC] Publications, January 1978).

who would claim that for the greater good, the small group must make all the adjustment. But even here many would not agree. However when one takes into account the whole development program of dams, agribusiness projects, forestry development projects, and mining ventures, one can perceive that a very large group of perhaps two million Filipinos are being threatened. This would lead one to reject this presupposition and wonder whether more flexibility is not required from the national development program.

2. The welfare of the minority, even two million must if necessary be sacrificed on the altar of national progress. But this depends on one's definition of national welfare and progress. If we are willing to accept the definition proposed by the adherents of modern technological culture and that in terms of gross national product, we might be forced to agree. But even here there is a growing amount of evidence to show that the benefits will not reach the poor, who are the vast majority of the population, for a long time to come, if ever. Here it is a question of values. Do we want to accept this definition of national welfare and progress? At a time when the people of the United States are energetically searching for their cultural roots in the past as some kind of an anchor in an ever more rapidly changing world, do we in the Philippines want to bulldoze away the surviving link with part of our cultural roots in the name of national development? While Filipino engineers and construction workers are helping in the restoration of an ancient temple in Indonesia do we here in the Philippines want to destroy a more precious part of our cultural heritage, our cultural minorities? Where the countries of the West must look for their cultural roots mainly in books and museums, we here in the Philippines and elsewhere in the Third World can meet them in the forests, living according to a culture similar to that of our distant ancestors. Once this treasure is destroyed it will be lost for good.

However this is more than a matter of preserving a national treasure, it is a question of people, brother Filipinos who can teach us something about ourselves, about our roots, about our country. Threatened by modern technological culture ourselves there is much we can learn from them: respect for nature, or ecological balance if you will; respect for our fellowmen which is essential for our self-respect as a people and a nation. Furthermore our

Christian faith teaches us that they are people with rights and dignity that we must respect. It is at this point that our Christian faith could and should act as a balancing force against the pressures of modern secular technological development. Thus the basic question is not whether the religion of the cultural minorities can successfully assist the minorities to adjust to the present type of national development, but rather whether the religion of the Christian majority including the planners and expeditors can sanction such a stereotype of national development planning. It would be a real tragedy if the only Christian nation in Southeast Asia accomplished the destruction of the culture of its minorities in the name of national development because it would be destroying an integral part of its own integrity, the integrity of the culture of the Filipino people.