

Paper Proposal

THE HOLINESS REVIVAL OF EARLY PHILIPPINE METHODISM

By Luther Jeremiah Oconer

In the beginning decades of the American occupation in the Philippines, Methodism, as for most observers at that time, was the most evangelical of all Protestant denominations. No wonder, Filipino Methodists quickly rose to outnumber all other Protestants combined. Owed in part to their emotionally charged revival meetings, they were no doubt the most vibrant among all the other churches of that period.

Though such revivalism may have helped account for the success of John Wesley's Filipino followers, such theme in the study of their history is still waiting to be explored. To claim that the measures they utilized were naturally inborn to a denomination whose American forebears were no strangers to a culture of revivalism would have some degree of accuracy in it. However, this calls for some caution. As one looks into recent scholarship on nineteenth century American evangelicalism, the holiness movement comes to the fore. Emerging as a driving force behind American evangelical culture, it would later intersect with a resurgent missionary impulse which saw young volunteers en masse to mission fields, like the newly opened Philippine field, at the onset of the twentieth century.

Hence, I would like to argue that the Methodist missionary enterprise in the Philippines was not lacking in leaders and individuals who were, to a certain extent, influenced by the holiness movement. I would also like to explore how these individuals consciously founded a culture of holiness revivalism in Philippine Methodism which manifests itself in many subtle ways even to this day.

Biographical Sketch

Luther Jeremiah Oconer is an ordained minister of the Pampango Philippine Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and completed his M.Div. at Wesley Divinity School in Cabanatuan City, Philippines. He has pastored churches in the Philippines for five years and is presently working towards his Ph.D. on Wesleyan and Methodist Studies at Drew University. He is married to the former Marion Padang.

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