

The Challenges Faced by Christian Missionaries and Maranao Muslims in Lanao del Sur, Marawi City: a Scientific Study

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ARTICLE INFO

Key words: Prelature Sisters in Marawi City, Parish in Balabagan, Malabang Preface

Received : 07, Oktober
Revised : 13, Oktober
Accepted: 23, Oktober

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ABSTRACT

This paper utilized a content study to clarify the several challenges faced by Maranao Muslims in the Province of Lanao del Sur, Marawi city. The study focuses on the following activities conducted by Prelature Sisters in Marawi city, Parish in Balabagan, and in Malabang mentioning their challenges both Maranao Muslims and Christian missionaries. The tendency of giving priority of this study is to discuss the challenges faced by Christian Missionaries and Maranao Muslims in Lanao del Sur, Marawi city, to clarify the hidden reality of their challenges. To address this limitation, an analytical study is conceived to foreground the challenges of Christianization in the Province of Lanao del Sur. Descriptive Analysis used in this paper in order to describe the challenges faced by Christian Missionaries and Maranao Muslims, contextualizing and examining the factors that shaped challenges, synthesizing and understanding/confirming/clarifying the reality of challenges. One of the most important result of the study; the Filipino Muslims knew that the main purpose of existing of the Christian missionaries and Christian settlers in their areas through the Philippine Government is to Christianize them. The challenges faced by Maranao Muslims taught them to wake-up each other, and taught them to unite in order to stop the Christianization in the province of Lanao del Sur, and the Christianization program never succeeds in Marawi City until now.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of the Maranao Muslims in the province of Lanao del Sur, Marawi city; they faced several challenges in their respected places. So one of the most difficult challenges faced by Maranao Muslims until now is the challenges of Christianization through several Christian missionaries such as the activities of Prelature Sisters in Marawi city, the challenges Christianization through Parish in Balabagan and the Municipality of Malabang. These organizations tried to Christianize the Maranao Muslims in Lanao del Sur, Marawi City through education, and showing to them their good character, attitude, and helping the native people in the name of Jesus as their Lord, Marohomsalic 2001 & Alonto 1976). All these organizations attempt to Christianize the Maranao those who residing at Lake Lanao, Disomimba (2018); Marohomsalic 2001 & Alonto 1976). Unfortunately, not only the Muslims faced challenges or difficult situation but the Christian missionaries faced same problem because some Christians converted to Islam and another problems faced both of them is kidnapping, ransoming and killing through unknown-able group carrying guns. Actually a lot of Maranao Muslims killed, ransomed and kidnapped by unknown-able group compare to Christians in general or Christian Missionaries. This is difficult problem faced by both side without disputation between them and Philippine Government.

METHODOLOGY

Documents analysis has been employed as the main methodology in this qualitative research in order to examine the materials related to the Christianization faced by Maranao Muslims in the Province of Lanao del sur, Marawi city, and the Islmization faced by Christian missionaries. Disomimba (2018). The method of data collection deeply focuses on written data such as books, journals, academic thesis, websites, newspapers, and news reports which related

to this study. Written documents are used for data analytics as these materials are significant in the qualitative research method, contextualizing and examining, synthesizing and understanding/confirming/clarifying the reality of difficult situations faced by both of Maranao Muslims and Christian missionaries, summarizing, quoting/citing the statements of scholar's views on the challenges faced by both of them. It is believed that this method of analysis can provide useful insights to interpret and place relevant research themes accordingly. Hence, the researcher extract some of the themes that are dominant related to the study, Disomimba (2018).

RESULTS

The study of challenges faced by Maranao Muslims and Christian missionaries in Marawi has a good and bad impacts towards Maranao Muslims and Christian missionaries in Marawi city. So one of the most important results of the study; the Maranao Muslims knew the main purposes of existence of these Christian organization is to Christianize them through guiding them in learning education without fighting and ask them to participate in dialogue of education and life, dialogue of peace, dialogue of human rights and dialogue of

rapprochement. And bad impact towards Christianity; some Christian converted to Islamic religion through Maranao preachers and both Muslims and Christians because some of them were kidnapped, ransomed and killed by unknown-able group . The existence of Christian missionaries in Islamic City of Marawi taught Maranao Muslims to set-up their Islamic coherent, strengthening their brotherhood, wake-up each other in order to challenge these activities conducted by Prelature Sisters in Marawi city, Parish in Balabagan, Malabang and Christian missionaries. Based on Maranao Muslims' solidarity, Islamic unity, the activities of Christian missionaries has no impacts towards Maranao Muslim communities until now. The Islamic City of Marawi still dominated by Maranao Muslims and never conquered and never Christianized by the Philippine Government with Christian missionaries.

DISCUSSIONS

Prelature Sisters in Marawi City

The Prelature Sisters in Islamic city of Marawi is one of the most active and important Christian organizations which tried to carry out its mission and vision throughout Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte. But unfortunately, they faced several challenges during their mission in Lanao del Sur, Marawi city as Maranao Muslims faced several challenges. One of the difficult challenges faced by both side is kidnaping, ransoming and killing through unknown-able organization and some of them were kidnapped or ransomed but they never killed by the kidnappers because the kidnappers just want to take some money from their family (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.; & Mercado,1996-1998)..

The challenges of Christian Missionary Sisters is very difficult, *based on the report by the Prelature of St. Mary in Islamic City of Marawi, it was said that the first time they came to Islamic City of Marawi, all the Sister has to undergo a baptism of fire which is through kidnapping them by unknown-able group. The prelature of St. Mary in Islamic city of Marawi said that most of them have been kidnapped starting with Sr. Delia, in 1978. Some of the Sisters had just arrived in Islamic city of Marawi when the next day they were all kidnapped Even our Carmelite nuns, when they were still here, were all kidnapped beginning with the Prioress down to the aspirants Sr. Angnie Donado, O. Carm. Assigned in Karomatan had a grenade thrown in the room where she was having a meeting with the Social action group. Fortunately, the grenade did not explode in that meeting* (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.).

In my view, it is very difficult challenges faced by Christian missionaries in Lanao del Sur. As for me as one of academician in the field of education, we should know who is the kidnappers! And after we knew we should give him/her the punishment based on his/her criminality he/she did it. And for your information, not all Maranao Muslims communities involve in this matters, same goes to Christian majority in Manila or other part of the Philippines, if one of the Christian missionaries was kidnapped by unknown-able group all the Christian organizations and the Philippine Government think that all Maranao Muslims involved in this case (Disomimba, 2018). I believe that not all Maranao Muslims are involve in kidnaping, same goes to the Christian majority in Manila for instance, if one of the Maranao Muslims was

kidnapped in their respective place; and I believe that not all Christian are kidnappers or killers but among them a kidnaper or killer and same goes to Maranao Muslims; among them were killers or kidnappers; it means there is a bad Maranao Muslims and there is a bad Christians so we cannot generalize it and we cannot generalized (Disomimba, 2018).

In my view, this is not the right way to stop Christianization towards Maranao Muslims by kidnapping or ransoming the Christian missionaries in any part of the Philippine Islands. As we are Muslims, if we read our Holy Qur'an, we will trace up that the Qur'an teaches us to deal with non-Muslims by in any possible good way or approach and wisdom, so the Holy Qur'an did not teach us to kidnap any human-being in this universe specifically Christian those who residing at Lanao del Sur, Marawi city and same goes to the Holy Bible, if we read it, we will trace that the Holy Bible teaches us to deal non-Christian to deal and communicate them through good communication (Disomimba, 2018).

It was said by the Prelature of St. Mary in Islamic city of Marawi, *'in the beginning, as soon as the Prelature was created, several Sisters in Iligan were meeting aspiring to serve in Islamic city of Marawi. Mother Anglina, Sr. Rustica and Sr. Miriam Jhon. Actually not one of them came because Mother Anglina was appointed as Regional Supervisor of Luzon and would be based in Manila, while the other two get other assignments. Sr. Lilian Curaming who took the place of Sr. Rustica, did not also come because she was sent to Rome for Arabic Studies and when she came back she was assigned to Siasi. There were eight Sisters who came together in 1977, Sr. Ma. Delia Coronel, Sr. Mamerta Pagente, Sr. Fidela Nasol, Sr. Gertrude Fermin, Sr. Constancia Gomez, Sr. Cesaria Alia and two aspirants: Fidela Cabatuan and Bernadette Suico'* (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.).

In my humble opinion, these Christian missionaries did not come to Islamic city of Marawi because they afraid of kidnapping or ransoming them by unknown-able group and that is the accurate way in order to avoid any problems will be happened in their futures. The Christian missionaries were assigned in Islamic city of Marawi were very talented to communicate with the Maranao Muslims in Lanao del Sur because they never harm anyone among the Maranao Muslims during their mission (Disomimba, 2018).

The Prelature in Islamic city of Marawi searching a safety place for the sake of the Christian missionaries in Lanao del Sur and they found a house in Islamic city of Marawi through the kindness of *'Msgr. Tudu rented the Benitez house on the highway going to Sogod. This was a two story house with several rooms and a big hall. However, only the sisters and Sr. Mamerta lived there because the Sisters lived in Pumping while Sr. Delia has a cottage in MSU where she had applied to teach and with the Dr. Mamitua Saber (Maranao Muslim) a former classmate, was given a cottage. Earlier, Sr. Fidela and Sr. Constance stayed at the International House (IH) in MSU where Sr. Fidela taught Math while Sr. Constance was enrolled in the Community Development course. Now they moved out to stay in Marawi and take their lunch with Sr. Delia in MSU. All the Sisters came together for a monthly recollection and for Prelature assembly meetings'* (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.).

This sentences mentioned above is indicating that the Maranao Muslims residing in Islamic city of Marawi helping and protecting their beloved Christian friends and they have a good communication and understanding with the Christian missionaries were assign in Islamic city of Marawi because if they are not good with them, so they cannot rent any houses in that city. And it indicating that the Maranao Muslim Communities in Islamic city of Marawi did not involve in any activities such as kidnapping, ransoming and killing the Christian missionaries. Unfortunately, the Christian Nation in the Philippine Government did not believe for what I mentioned just a moment, if you did not believe, I will tell you the truth, what is going on in Islamic city of Marawi, during the time of this Christian Missionaries until our current time; a lot of Maranao Muslims were kidnapped and killed by unknown-able person and until now we don't know who kidnapped and killed these innocent peoples, so even us, as we are Maranao blood, and native people of that area, we are very afraid to walk alone in Islamic city of Marawi because of kidnapping, ransoming and killing (Disomimba, 2018). So I believe that the Christian missionaries were braved to come in Islamic city of Marawi even they faced several challenges in their time and they were highly committed to convey and spread-out their religion towards non-Christian communities in Islamic city of Marawi.

When the Christian Missionaries came to the Islamic city of Marawi and knew about the challenges they faced; some of them willing to leave directly or after few month. For instance, Sr. Mertz could not stand the tension in Islamic city of Marawi because of kidnapping and ransoming and becoming sick from it had to leave. but Sr. Miriam John then replace her, but she opted to be assigned later in Malabang. Tuddud has a good heart and was a person who never gave difficult assignments to his colleagues because of the difficult situation in Lanao del Sur. *Tuddud's approaches towards his colleagues; anyone who wanted to work in the Prelature and asked him what work he/she had in mind for invariably got an answer: "come and see". Msgr. Tuddud would look at the situation every time of Marawi, choose the place and what to do so that there were places in the Prelature with two or three priests and some without any. He only gave appointed Fr. Sean Nolan and Sr. Mamerta Pagente as vocation promoters and Sr. Delia Superintendent of the two Prelature schools (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.).*

I believe that this paragraph mentioned above indicated that the Christian missionaries has a mutual understanding between them and specifically with their head of mission msgr. Tuddud. The difficult challenges faced by Christian missionaries is same with the difficult challenges faced by Maranao Muslims in Islamic city of Marawi, but even though the situation is very difficult the Christian Missionaries tried to convey their message towards Muslim communities because they believe that not only them has a difficulty situations but with the Maranao Muslim communities has a difficulty situation of several unknown-able group who conducting kidnapping, ransoming and killing of some people in Islamic city of Marawi (Disomimba, 2018).

Unfortunately, it was mentioned that some Christian missionaries did not stand in situation they faced it every day and leave the Islamic city of Marawi. *The first cluster in Marawi soon moved out and the first went to Malabang where the people had been praying for. Sisters and others came: Sr. Mariam John, Sr. Socorro Largo, and Sr. Ma. Elina Benigra and they served both Malabang and Balabagan. After they left, some of them took over in Malabang in 1984 where they also left in 1988 (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.).*

The sisters had to leave suddenly because of a rebel-returnee student of Sr. Fidela who failed in Math and was going to revenge by kidnapping her. She made a dramatic escape by wearing a dress, removing her veil and with a group of sisters took the boat for Manila in Cagayan de Oro. What was her surprise when as she went up the boat she met her former students riding on the same boat to go to Manila: he did not recognize her, however, and arrived safely in Manila. The scholarship for a PhD in Math at the Ateneo had to be given up and today. Sr. Fidela is in Africa. Since to make a community, they have to be three Sisters and only two were left as no one wanted to join them, in 1980th most of Christian missionaries moved to Malabang because of the situation (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.). In my view, the dialogue discussion in this time is very difficult to conduct it due to the climate because even the teacher and his/her student lack of understanding. for instance, if the student failed in specific subject we should approach him/her through education or dialogue and instead of giving failed its better to give him/her in-complete or re-taking final exam in order to avoid any inhuman activities in the future. I'm not blaming any teacher those who failed his/her student but every matter has a solution and the best solution of this matter is to balance the situation between teacher and the student through wisdom and dialogue discussion (Disomimba, 2018). The Christian Missionaries want to continue their dialogue communication with the Maranao Muslims in the Province of Lanao del Sur, Islamic city of Marawi. So to confirm and make the dialogue of Life and Faith complete, a praying segment has to be presented and the Prelature was happy to welcome a group of Carmelite nuns from Carmel in Zamboanga (Ledesma and others 1986; & A Publication of the Bishops-Ulama Conference, 2003).

. They were: Mother Madeline, Sr. Bernard, Sr. Taret, Sr. Divina and Sr. Ann. They were later joined by several aspirants to make their number ten. The Sisters first stayed across the street from the Bishop's house and built a little convent. However, the location was not according to monastic and property high up in the hills was bought and the sisters settled there where they were all kidnapped, from the Prioress to the latest postulant. Two Sisters left after the incident but their number remained 9 until they left the Prelature in 2001 (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.).

This is the difficult situation that the Christian Missionaries faced it in Islamic city of Marawi through unknown-able groups and not only them but the Maranao Muslims residing in that Province faced same problem. In view, if somebody want to stay at Islamic city of Marawi, it is obligatory for him/her to make sure that the place is safety and it is not advisable to stay at isolated area (Disomimba, 2018 & Alonto, 1976).

One of the Tuftud's approaches to strengthening their mission and convey his message towards Maranao Muslims in Lanao del Sur is inviting his colleagues, Nuns and Priests. *One of the active order of the Carmelites, also came to serve in the Prelature in 1984 in Islamic city of Marawi. After coming to see, as invited by Bishop Tuftud, the sisters chose Karomatan (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.)* may be because of difficult situation in Islamic city of Marawi. They were Sr. Angela Donado, O. Carm who took care of the Social Action work plus the Justice and Peace Ministry; she was helped in the pastoral work by Sr. Monica Teves and later on by Sr. Rosa Fulleros. Later these last two got sick and had to leave Karomatan, only Sr. Angie is left although she took a Sabbatical in that time. Very rare Christian missionaries to accept for assigning him/her to Islamic city of Marawi because of the difficult situations and most of them choose to assign in other part of the Philippine Islands because the situations there is more comfortable and safety for their lives (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d; Magdalena, 2002 & A Publication of the Bishops-Ulama Conference, 2003).

I believe, one of the causes that Islamic city of Marawi became undeveloped city in the Philippines because of this situation; the Maranao Muslims cannot move easily from place to place, cannot do their business properly, and the children became illiterate, even the formers they cannot go to their form unknown-able group conducting inhuman activities. So the Maranao Muslims suffering long time ago since the coming of Christian colonizers until our current time (Disomimba, 2018).

It was mentioned by the Prelature of Marawi city that when *the sisters first came in 1977 since it was a newly-founded congregation by Msgr. Frederick Kriekenbeck, no one was as yet a professed sister. The first one was Sr. Cesaria Alia who already wore their green and cream tailored dress habit and together with two aspirants Fedila Cabatuan and Bernardette Suico, they went to live in a house they rented in Pumping by the lake in Islamic city of Marawi. After a while the two had begun their novitiate and had to go back to Cebu. Other Sisters who later came were Sr. Mafel, Velies first in Islamic city of Marawi and Sr. Antonia, later in Malabang with Sr. Carol, Sr. Luz, Sr. Carmela and it was here in Malabang that they were taken back by their Supervisor General in 1980 (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.).* So it is very difficult to convey any message either Islamic or Christian message to any isolated areas and undeveloped provinces because the Government cannot control some small groups in that areas and the government suffering from this problem and the Maranao Muslims more suffering compare to Christianity. So I believe, it is the duty of Philippine Government to control and eradicate any group which against the Christians and Muslims communities in Islamic city of Marawi (Disomimba, 2018).

I believe that if the Philippine Government has mutual understanding with the Maranao Muslims, Christian communities, New People Army and with other Christian private organizations in Lanao del Sur; then the communities will stay together side by side without anxiety and fear each other. If the Philippine Government practice what I said; the Province of Lanao del Sur will became one of the developing city in the Philippines in terms of education, economic, politic and the people living in peaceful completely (Disomimba, 2018; Alonto, 1976; & Macarandas, 2009).

The Christian religion sent several Christian missionaries to Mindanao Islands but without mutual understanding. In my view, before sending any organizations to any isolated area; we should contact someone among that communities in order to guide us how to communicate with them. For instance, the Christian missionaries were assign in Lanao del Sur, some of them was assign in Islamic city of Marawi, and some of them was assign in Karomatan, Balabagan, Malababang, Balo-I and other part of Lanao del Sur, Islamic city of Marawi (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d). So the Christian programmed in Islamic city of Marawi is not success such as dialogue discussion, dialogue in life, dialogue in peace because they were lacking of approaches and methods to deal with the native communities. In my view, we should communicate first their head, I mean the head of Maranao Muslims in that area due to their lacking of communication with other tribes in the Philippines (Disomimba, 2018).

Two congregations who had promised to join the Prelature were the little Sisters of the Poor and others are welcome. They were represented in the preparatory meetings but up to the present never sent any sister. In 1993, the Missionaries of the Assumption in Davao finally arrived in the Prelature. Both, Sr. Letty and Sr. Cres choose to work in the MSU Chaplaincy, Several others who later took over were Sr. Dome, Sr. Zeny and Sr. Auring (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.).

Another difficult challenges faced by Christian missionaries in the Province of Lanao del Sur; *in the year 1994, the Prelature got a Columban Sister who has good experience in conveying Christian message towards any non-Christian community, Sr. Gloria Santos who had come from South America and wanted to work in another environment. She had a traumatic experience because when Lydia Macas was killed by a shrapnel from the Grenade launcher thrown on the roof of the Bishop's House, when they tried to rush her to the hospital, it was Sr. Gloria who helped her and died in her arms. She could not recover from the frightful incident and after a time, she left the Prelature* (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.). So we strongly condemn the killer of Lydia Macas because it is not the solution to kill any Christian or any Muslim around. it is very sad to hear that one of our brother/sister was killed by unknown-able group and unfortunately, the Philippine Government and some Christian organizations accused the Maranao Muslim communities in Lanao del Sur, but in fact, the Muslim communities never practiced kidnapping, ransoming and killing Christian in Islamic city of Marawi. In my view, same goes to any Muslim were killed in Luzun and Visayas; the Christian communities in Luzun and Visayas never practice kidnapping, never practice ransoming and never practice killing their Muslim brother, this in-human activities and it is prohibited in the Holy Bible and in the Holy Quran. So I hope

that the Maranao Muslims community never accused again and again by the Christian and the Philippine Government (Disomimba, 2018).

Based on the record of Prelature in Islamic city of Marawi, it was mentioned that in 2001, the Carmelites left the Prelature and the Prelature having lost its praying arm, has been weakened. And in that time there are only three sisters left in the Prelature in Islamic city of Marawi. Two M.A. Sr. Zeny, due to be transferred in March and Sr. Auring who takes care of Finacial matters, and other still in MSU and is celebrating the silverjubilee years of her presence in Islamic city of Marawi. Tudtud never despair about his mission and vision and never surrender even though the situation is very dangerous, he mentioned that there are several sisters who have expressed their dream of coming to work in the Prelature in Islamic city of Marawi and in our current time, a lot of Christian missionaries came to Lanao del Sur, Islamic city of Marawi because the Muslim leaders help the Philippine Government to tackle and crush any unknow-able groups those who practice the in-human activities (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.). Currently, the situation in Islamic city of Marawi is very calm and safety not like before due to the starting mutual understanding between the Philippine Government and the Maranao Muslim community. So after we discussed the Prelature Sisters in Marawi City with the several challenges faced by Maranao Muslims and the Christian Missionaries, we will move to discuss the Parish in Balabagan as one of the important municipalities before became a city (Disomimba, 2018).

Parish in Balabagan

Balabagan is one of the most important Municipalities of Province Lanao del Sur before became important city in Mindanao, Philippine. In 1949, the Balabagan was covered by the Parish of Malabang and masses began in the barangays. When the Balabagan has development in term of population, education ,economic and political strategies it became a city. In 1960 and the Balabagan parish Christianization council association was formed in that time and it has strong role to convey it's message towards Maranao Muslims in several part of Lanao del Sur, Mindanao not only in Balabagan. So any the Christian Priests were assigned in Balabagan city and it is very clear that they tried to spread and conveyed their mission and vision through education, economic, helping poor or needy people and etc (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.).

One of the powerful approaches of Christian missionaries to communicate with the Maranao Muslims is to establish educational institutions because they knew that the Maranao students will come to their institution and learn about the education. For instance, *in 1965, San Isidro High School was built at Balabagan City and under the management of Colombian priest missionaries* (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.). This is the one of the approaches to educate Maranao Muslims and Christianize them step by step through education without fighting and without asking them to enter in Christian religion. In my humble view, it is not prohibited to learn the Christian education but learning education is the way to communicate with the Christian and it is the way to understand each other, it is the way to make mutual understanding between

them (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.). As we are Maranao Muslims from Lanao del Sur, we should learn western education in order to build a excellent understanding between us. I'm not saying that seeking or learning western education is obligatory it is optional to learn it, but it's better to learn it in order to convey our Islamic message towards Christian as they convey their message towards us and learning western education will lead you to understand their mission deeply and lead you to be a good Muslim and politician. For instance, in that time, a lot of Maranao Muslim students enrolled in that school and they never became a Christian but they became good Muslim politician and serving both Christian and Muslim communities in that area. So learning Christian education is the tools to reach towards dialogue between Muslim and Christian communities in Mindanao and not only in Mindanao all over the Philippine Islands (Disomimba, 2018).

It was mentioned by the Prelature in Marawi city that the Christian missionaries in the Balabagan city encounter a very difficult challenges in conveying Christian message towards Maranao Muslim communities. a lot of priests and several groups sent to Balabagan in order to Christianize that area but unfortunately some of them was kidnapped, ransomed and killed by student. For instance, *Father martin Dempsey was the first parish priest assigned in that place but unfortunately he was killed by a student in 1972* (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.). This case we never traced the causes of killing Father Martin Dempsey by that student. In my humble view, may be the student was failed by Father Martin Dempsey in any subject as we mentioned previously that one of the student was failed in math and try to kidnap his teacher but he/she did not do anything to harm his/her teacher (Victor Aguilan, 2017). As for me, I strongly condemn the killer of Father Martin Dempsey and this is not the right solution. This student did not educate through Holy Quran and the Holy Bible, because if he learned or read these two Holy Books, he will not do this in-human activities, so let the Christian missionaries convey their religion towards us and let the Maranao Muslim convey their message towards Christian communities in the Philippines because both of them still claiming that they were commanded by the Creator to convey their message. But we should deal all human-being around the world by wisdom not kidnapping, not ransoming and killing, so the Christian has their religion and the Muslim has their religion and let both of them make a dialogue between them in order to find the true religion which revealed by the Oneness of Creator. (Disomimba, 2018).

Based on the record of Prelature in Islamic city of Marawi, it was mentioned that *in the year 1972-1974 the challenges between Christians and Muslims was very bad due to the Christian missionaries tried to occupied the Balabagan City through establishing several western education and Church institutions in order to convey their Christian message towards Maranao Muslims* (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.). The fighting began that many people died both Muslims and Christians. This is the true challenges between two religions in Lanao del Sur, so in my humble opinion, it is advisable towards Muslims to communicate with the Christians in that areas and establish their dialogue of life through education, dialogue of revelation through comparing the Holy Bible and Holy Quran and

dialogue of peace through wisdom (Magdalena, 2002 & A Publication of the Bishops-Ulama Conference, 2003).

It was written in the history of Lanao del Sur that the strong earthquake hit Balabagan, in August 17, 1977 strong earthquake and tidal wave occurred at Balabagan City (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.). The earthquake was one of the causes to unite both Muslim and Christian religious leaders and the Christian and Muslim organizations try to help the victims communities in that area. So the Christian missionaries and Muslim religious leaders tried to take opportunity to help the communities in Balabagan. A social action program was formed which helped the fishermen a lot, Farmers, businessmen and those who affected because of that earthquake. Later on many movement were established in order to solve the communities' problem (Magdalena, 2002 & A Publication of the Bishops-Ulama Conference, 2003).

For instance, in 1978 the economic movement was formed which consisted of Christians missionaries and communities, Sabbatarians, Protestants and Muslim religious. So the earthquake was the main causes to work together it means the Muslim religious leaders with the Christian missionaries. In that time, they started dialogue discussion to solve the current problem faced by communities both Muslims and Christians. I believe, if the Christian and Muslim communities try to continue their dialogue of life, dialogue of helping each other and dialogue of peace between them; it will decrease their misunderstanding between them (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d & Magdalena, 2002).

In 1978, the Ramadān also began and the Maranao Muslims celebrating their fasting during the month of fasting and the Christian missionaries still continuing their mission which is to convey their message towards Maranao Muslims those who residing in Balabagan City through several approaches (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d). For instance, in the 1979 Father Alfin Villamor was a surgeon doctor who was the parish priest in Balabagan City, he is very concern to convey his message towards Maranao Muslims and he invented to build his clinic in that City in order to help and communicate with the Maranao Muslims and guided them to Western education and other knowledge. So it is very clear the Christian missionaries tried to show their good character as a good model through helping the needy Maranao Muslims, through giving Medicine, education, rice, sugar, salt, fish, and so on and these approaches has strong impact to the native people in Balabagan city (Ledesma, Antonio and others, 1986; Elias. 2009; Disomimba, 2018; Magdalena, 2002 & A Publication of the Bishops-Ulama Conference (2003).

In my opinion, the Christian missionaries were assigned in Lanao del Sur are very brave because they knew the situation and came to that place even they were lacking of security. As for me as one of the Maranao from Lanao del Sur I'm very afraid to come to that place because lacking of peace and order; some unknown-able group will come suddenly and they do what they want to do. The Christian missionaries showed to Maranao Muslims that they have good intention to communicate with other non-Christian through showing their good character as model in religious, model in teaching, model in education

and model in helping the needy peoples through the commandment of Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior. So as a result of their hardworking, some of Maranao Muslims communicate with them and they make strong friendship in their worldly life and they live side by side without fighting (Disomimba, 2018).

The Christian missionaries never despair to convey their message to Christian community with Maranao Muslims and other tribes in Balabagan city even though they faced difficult situation. For instance, one of their important activities in Balabagan city is to do pre-can and pre-bapt. In the year 1981 pre-cana¹ and pre-bapt were started. The Christian missionaries or priests were assigned in that area in order to solve any problem faced by Christian communities in Balabagan City and Marano Muslims. So the Bishop Bienvenido Tudtud with father Edwin dela peña were assigned in Balabagan in 1982. In 1983-1993, there was many program began under the leadership of Mariama diaz with father kevin Mchugh as the parish priest, (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d). The marriage encounter also took place between the couples. There was a seminar with the people and it will lead the community improved their mutual understanding and the population gradually increased because there was silence through dialogue between Christians and Muslims. So since the Muslim politicians work together with the Christian missionaries the situation became very calm and they planted mutual understanding between them. In the year 1993 the disciple group was formed which leaked into the parish operation (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d; & Victor Aguilan, 2017)..

In November 1999, Mindanao week of peace took place. In 2000, clashes broke out between the MILF and Estrada administrations and many civilians fled. Many soldiers and MILFs died. The growth of Christianity in the city of Balabagan has not been easy and some of Christian and Muslim communities leave that city because of fighting between Government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). So the Christian missionaries and Muslim communities took a lesson during the fighting between MILF and Philippine Government that the fighting cannot solve any problem, cannot help in education, cannot help in economic, and dialogue of peace. So we strongly suggest to stop fighting and focus on the development of education, economic, business and other improvement of the communities in order to eradicate misunderstanding between Christian and Maranao Muslim in the Philippine Government (Ledesma, Antonio and others, 1986; Elias. 2009; Disomimba, 2018).

It was recorded by the Prelature of Marawi that the construction of the first Parish and until its ratification with the people and '*SAN ISIDRO HIGH SCHOOL became the center of DIALOGUE between Christians and Muslims. The city was divided by the barrier to make it easier to walk. Various groups were formed in the city to help and organize the city of Balabagan. So in my humble opinion, we will re-try to do dialogue between the communities in order to help the current administration in Lanao del Sur, Islamic city of Marawi and we will try to convince the students both Christians and Muslims to conduct a dialogue in order to make it as model in our current time and forget the misunderstanding in the history of the Philippines. So after*

we discussed about the Parish of Balabagan with mentioning some difficulties faced by Christian missionaries and Maranao Muslims in that area, we will move to the Malabang because Malabang is one of the most important city in Lanao del Sur in our current time' (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.)

The Challenges of Muslim Filipinos at Malabang

Malabang is one of the important municipality of province of Lanao del Sur. The town of Malabang is located on the Southernmost rim of the province of Lanao del Sur along the famous Illana Bay, between two natural barriers, the verdant plateau of Unayan and the bluish sea of Moro Gulf. Its location makes it a cross-road of the provinces of Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Zamboanga del Sur and the entire provinces of Cotabato. As of now approximately 60,000 of the population more if less, 90% of which are Muslims and 10% are Christians and Catholics. Being a cross-road the town becomes an important trade and commercial, center in the South (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.). Its nearness to the sea and richness of the soil are great factors that contribute to the welfare of the people. Fishing and farming are its important industries. Its shortest navigable river in the world come from the million crystal clear sorings from western and southern facades of the Spanish Fort Corcuerra, now known as the fort of Jose Abad Santos. The soil around the town in one of the riches fishing grounds in the Philippines the Illana Bay (Ledesma, Antonio and others, 1986; Marohomsalic, 2021; Macarandas, 2009 & Disomimba, 2018).

It was mentioned by the Prelature of Marawi that the challenges of Christian Missionaries and the Maranao Muslims in the municipality of Malabang has a long history in order to establish safety place for them. For instance, the parish of mother of life and good leave was actually created after the second war on November 1, 1949 and the first parish choir was father Thomas Holohan a Colombian priest and it was still part of the God of Cagayan de Oro. On January 27, 1951 Pope P10 XII through a Papa bull "Supremium Nobis" established the "Prelature Nullius" in Misamis comprising the province of Misamis Occidental and Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte. But still under the leadership of Arzobispo James Hayes of Cagayan de Oro until Father Patrick H. Cronin was elected first administrator on March 5 1952 and was later made bishop in 1955. Pope Paulo VI dropped a "bull" dubbed "Qui in Apostiloco" on those covering the province of Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte. On May 17 of that year bishop Bienvenido S. Ttudud was transferred from the diocese of Dumaguete to become the first bishop of the Iligan (Ledesma, Antonio and others, 1986; Marohomsalic, 2021 & Macarandas, 2009).

The history of the parish of Malabang is a long story that made it a member of Santa Maria in Marawi. *'On its construction on December 8, 1976 and it will appear in the chain of priests that follows: Fr. Thomas Holohan 1949-1955, Fr, Kenneth Koster, 1955-1958, Fr, James Flyn, 1958-1962, Fr, Richard Martin, 1962-1964, Fr, Daniel Baragry, 1964-1968, Fr, Frank, 1963, Fr, Patrick Fakey, 1965-1967, Fr Shawn O' Donnel, 1968-1971, Fr, Anthony McCartky, 1971-1973, Fr, TERRENCE Twohig, 1973, Fr, Lawrence Ryan 1973-1977, Fr, Kevin Mc Hugh, 1977-*

1981, Fr, Paul Cooney, 1985-1988, Fr, Rufus Halley 1990-2001, Fr, David Cribbin, 1998-2000, Fr, Flordelito Nazareno, 2000' (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d.).

An important part of this history was the foundation of our lady of peace high school in 1954 with the efforts of padre Thomas Holohan, also established various ministries such as Catholic Youth apostolate, Social action apostolate, grameen banking, family life apostolate, health program, dialogue movement and some devotions such as holy name society. Also remember that with us on our journey were the LGC (living Gospel Community) nuns in 1984-1988. One of the most painful parts of our history after martial law was the death of our beloved Kora Fr. Popong Halley on August 28 2001. Amidst the bitter and happy experience, we continue to sail towards a dream of a harmonious Muslim and Christian people amidst different cultures, traditions and religions. Nowadays, the history of several churches in the Province of Lanao del Sur, Islamic city of Marawi has disseminated around the province and became strong after the siege of Islamic city of Marawi during the time of President Duterte (Coronel & Schoenstein, n.d; A Publication of the Bishops-Ulama Conference, 2003 & Macarandas, 2009). To be continued in the coming article.

CONCLUSION

The challenges faced by Christian Missionaries through Prelature Sisters in Marawi city, Parish in Balabagan, Malabang and Maranao Muslims in Lanao del Sur, Marawi City was very difficult because both of them faced same problem like kidnapping, ransoming and killing and both of them residing in same place. But the good results of their hard working together with Muslim religious leaders is very appreciated by the communities such as conducting seminars, dialogue, helping needy people both Christians, Muslims and other tribes. The Balabagan city became very calm because of their mutual understanding and excellent activities.

RECOMMENDATION

The article recommended to both Christians and Maranao Muslims to set-up dialogue between Maranao Muslims and Christian missionaries or communities. Both Christians and Muslims should focus on the development of mutual understanding, friendship, development of education, economic and etc. Finally, let the Christians convey their message towards non-Christians and let the Maranao Muslims convey their message to non-Muslims in several part of the Philippine Islands and forgot the cancerous problems between them in order to live side by side without fighting.

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