

Fire in the Philippines



by
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FOREWORD

Eight years is a long time. It is time enough for things to become stale. It is time enough for the excitement of past events to fade away.

Yet the reflective first and last chapters of the first U.S. edition of this book do not indicate a dampened enthusiasm. Between these two chapters is the account of the author's original research and analysis of the Foursquare Church's burgeoning mission outreach in the Philippines.

This part of the Church relied neither on foreign missionary personnel nor on foreign funds for its success; it relied conspicuously on the Holy Spirit. Therefore the lessons which Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals alike can learn from the Foursquare Church are still viable.

This is why the present edition of this book should be no less exciting than was the first edition published in the Philippines nearly eight years ago.

--The Publishers

PART ONE

THE FIRE

REFLECTIONS

Let's get some things straight from the beginning. I am a missionary and a pragmatist. A born-again, Bible-believing, theologically conservative pragmatist, but still a pragmatist.

And what I'm most pragmatic about is world evangelization. It might be surprising, then, to learn that this book is "charismatic."

But I believe "charismatic" is a term frequently misunderstood and misused today. The charismata are simply God's special gifts to His people. If a believer has the gift of helps, he has a charismatic gift. If God has specially empowered one of His children to be a pastor-teacher, he is a charismatic. Many of these charismatics have been programmed to reject some of the gifts--speaking in tongues, divine healing, visions or prophesying.

That's where I was in the fall of 1964 when for one term attended the Institute of Church Growth in Eugene, Oregon (now the Fuller Seminary School of World Mission). The Institute did not make a Pentecostal of me; I'm a member of an interdenominational mission and I like it that way. I went to the Institute as a missionary pragmatist and left as one. I got some pragmatic teaching -some of it quite exciting- about how we can win more people to Jesus Christ than we ever imagined. The Institute's approach included statistical research, anthropological and cultural studies, and carefully planned strategies lifted from the Word, mission experience, and history.

I learned of some quite unbelievable things going on in the Philippines. About halfway through the research adventure I will relate in this book, it occurred to me to compare the number of communicant members of six major Pentecostal denominations in the Philippines with six other evangelistically oriented evangelical groups. All the groups had come to the country at about the same time, but the Pentecostal groups showed thirty-six times as many communicant members per foreign missionary involved as did the others.

As a missionary in the Philippines, the personal responsibility to see this nation disciplined for Jesus Christ weighs heavily on me. I would gladly die if my death would result in a vital, New Testament congregation in each of the 50,000 barrios of the Philippines.

What if the many non-Pentecostal missionaries were as effective as the few Pentecostal missionaries? The job could be done, and maybe my martyrdom wouldn't be necessary. Here my pragmatism and the charismatic nature of this book converge.

My investigation of the Foursquare Church-- for reasons I'll explain later seemed to pull aside a veil so I could enter a different world.

I had always intellectually believed that Christianity was a supernatural religion. But in my research I encountered the supernatural in a way I had only read about, primarily in the pages of the New Testament--dramatic conversions, churches spawning new churches, miracles of healing, speaking in unlearned languages, visions. I actually talked with participants in these remarkable events.

Were these things genuine? I had to find out, and for the next two and a half years I devoted a good share of my time to that search.

As I write this, eight years have passed. I've had a lot of time to reflect on that exciting period of my life. I've shared the material with hundreds of people inside and outside missions.

This "cooling off" period has been good for me, but it hasn't changed the essentials of the drama that unfolded before me. As you relive it with me in the following pages, you too may discover that God is still God, that the Jesus of 2,000 years ago is the Jesus who lives today, that we don't have to settle for a token church in each nation of the world, that the Great Commission can be literally accomplished in our time.

For that, I'd gladly be labeled either a pragmatist or a charismatic.
Or both.

IN SEARCH OF AN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

What I found in the Foursquare Church seemed, at times, so improbable and so remote from my own Christian experience that I sometimes had to ask myself what I had gotten into. There was the day I had a talk with a missionary colleague and also received a letter from a pastor friend. The

missionary expressed his doubts about the wisdom of studying just one denomination, especially one held suspect by a large segment of the churches we wanted to minister to. He reminded me that the well-known Bible school he had graduated from had placed the Foursquare Church in the same category with all the "other" religious cults.

The pastor's warning was no less pointed. I should be careful of any practice that didn't have a firm and broad foundation in the Word of God. "Some churches," he reminded me, "have a tendency to build their doctrine upon experiences in the church rather than on the Word of God."

I heard other disquieting things as the months rolled by: rumors of what happened in this place or that place, rumors of what this convert did or that minister didn't do. Almost everyone I talked with outside Pentecostal circles had some unsavory incidents to report. If the incidents were typical of the denomination -the implication frequently was that they were- the whole movement could be discredited.

To top it off, I myself had gathered a few stories over the years that led me to mentally shrug off the Pentecostals. They had healing meetings; years ago I had been to some, but left unconvinced. They emphasized speaking in tongues; in school days a friend's zeal to win people to Christ had diminished at about the same time he experienced this manifestation. The group had sprung up from the ministry of Aimee Semple McPherson, who was known in my circles for her sensationalism and for an alleged scandal in the later years of her life. And then, of course, there were the noisy services.

My general attitude toward the Pentecostals, until I studied at the Institute in 1964, could probably be summed up in one experience I had while still in high school. A gang of us had skipped the regular Sunday night service at our Baptist church to check out a well-advertised family appearing at the nearby Foursquare church. The main attraction was, as I remember, 263 sleighbells upon which special numbers were played. (The bells were of different sizes and attached to long, graduated leather strips hung from a wooden frame. Melody and even harmony could be achieved by pulling the straps.) For years after this experience, the thought of Pentecostals brought to my mind the picture of a short, countrified barnstormer puffing up and down the platform and milking his 263 strands of sleighbells.

All these disquieting images hopped about my mind during my early research. Again and again I had to remind myself of the reason why I had chosen to study the Foursquare Church. The logic of my choice had been

clear and simple, and it was a long time before the miraculous element entered the picture.

I had just returned to the Philippines from our first furlough, which had included three months of intensive study at the Institute of Church Growth. This study had burned off much of the fog clouding my insights on missionary and evangelistic strategy. As an Overseas Crusades missionary, I was eager to carry out our ministry of stimulating and leading existing churches into the greatest possible effort in evangelism and church planting. I was itching to prove my own growing conviction that great segments of the Philippine Church drowsed blissfully in the midst of a ripened grain field, and that those not drowsing were using methods that could reap only a fraction of the grain.

I could prove that point by studying and reporting on a rapidly growing denomination. If one group was expanding dramatically, wouldn't this indicate it was possible for all groups to grow?

I found what I was looking for as I scrambled through my graphs on church growth in the Philippines, compiled from printed sources under the direction of Dr. Donald McGavran at the Institute. *The World Handbook on Christian Mission* had listed communicant membership statistics for 1952 and 1962. The total growth of all Philippine evangelical churches reported in the *Handbook* was almost fifty percent for that ten-year period. This, I had learned, could easily be accounted for by the addition of growing children to the rolls. Some denominations were doing better than average slightly below or slightly above 100 percent for the ten-year growth period. But three denominations stood out like towering pines on a burned-over hill. They had together grown by a phenomenal 539 percent.

Two of these groups were Pentecostal; one was Baptist. An early plan to study all three was abandoned when I saw how much work and time would be required. I hated to sacrifice the advantages of comparative study, but I consoled myself with the logic that a study of one growing denomination would certainly demonstrate that rapid growth was possible.

Which one to choose? A quick check revealed that one of the three had experienced its tremendous growth with only a minimum of foreign missionaries and foreign funds. These factors seemed to emphasize that growth with local leadership and local money was possible.

It was with this innocent and statistical approach that the Foursquare

Church was settled upon.

The first few weeks of research gave me a clue to the significance of their growth. In Mindanao, I learned, one missionary family had started "from scratch" in January 1956. I visited the area in January 1966, and found seventy-two organized churches, seventy-five established meeting places, an active membership of 5,000 and a report of tens of thousands of other converts. The missionary family had already gone home.

So in less than ten years the work was completely indigenous and under the leadership of a national. A self-supporting Bible school was turning out a dozen or so trained ministers each year. All churches were putting up and paying for their own buildings, supporting their own pastors and carrying on an active missionary program which was resulting in hundreds of converts among tribal people. And the work was expanding rapidly. The first year after the missionaries left, two additional churches were planted. The next year eleven were added, and the following year seventeen.

Here, I thought, was a denomination worthy of study. If such things were possible in one denomination in the Philippines, what would happen if several dozen groups caught the vision and followed the pattern? What if 400,000 evangelical church members worked as zealously and as effectively? A first glance clearly indicated that sweeping revival and successful evangelism were very real possibilities.

I wanted to know, of course, a lot more about the missionaries, the churches and the converts. Was everyone who came forward to accept Christ in an emotion-packed evangelistic service counted as a member? Was each home where a remnant of the converts gathered for worship counted as a church? Did the Foursquare growth reflect all Pentecostal growth in the Philippines?

I could get an answer to the last question by digging again into the statistics I had compiled. The somewhat startling discovery moved the possible significance of the Pentecostals up another rung. I already knew that two of the three fastest-growing denominations were Pentecostal, but I had not seen that there were four other Pentecostal groups of some size. I had not plotted the percentages of their growth because they had not even appeared in the *Handbook*. At the end of 1966, these six groups totaled more than 53,000 members and were, by and large, post-World War II products. (I left out the Southern Baptists who were the one non-Pentecostal group with

a skyrocketing rate of growth. They deserve a study in themselves.)

I compared the six Pentecostal groups with six other groups who had come to the Philippines since the war and were generally conservative, evangelistically oriented, church-planting denominations. In contrast to the Pentecostal groups, the non-Pentecostal groups listed about 4,500 members. Even more striking was a comparison of the missionary forces of the two groups. In the 1966 *Philippine Missionary Directory*, the six Pentecostal groups listed a total of fifty-eight foreign missionaries and the non-Pentecostal groups listed a whopping 155. If the statistics could be taken at face value, they indicated that the Pentecostals, with one-third the missionary force, were growing twelve times as fast as the non-Pentecostals. One Pentecostal missionary was accomplishing as much as thirty-six non-Pentecostal missionaries.

I tried another tack. The United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), a union of several old, large denominations, was by far the largest church. How did the Pentecostal churches compare with this mature giant? In one generation, they had grown from a handful of believers in 1945 to about one-third the size of the UCCP. And if the UCCP continued at its rate of growth, and the Pentecostals continued at about half their rate of growth, the two groups would be of equal size in another generation. (Further study seemed to indicate that the attendance at all Pentecostal churches and outstations on a given Sunday exceeded that of the UCCP.) The significance of the Pentecostals in the Philippines was underscored again, if their statistics meant what they said.

One other group intrigued me. The Iglesia ni Cristo was a mushrooming group considered to be a cult by evangelicals because it rejected the deity of Christ. In reply to my letter from the Institute of Church Growth, Erano G. Manalo, son of the founder, wrote:

As of this writing, I could tell you with conservative estimate that we have gone far, far beyond the million mark. But I cannot possibly be accurate because every weekend baptism is held in different parts of the country, and monthly, not only hundreds but thousands are added to the fold.

Whatever its theology or real growth, the group was significant from at least one view: that great numbers of people in the Philippines were ready for

change.

The Pentecostals, who believe in all the fundamental doctrines of historic Christianity, in some ways paralleled the growth of the Iglesia. The first few checks on Foursquare statistics showed that each year they listed about ten times as many converts as they did new members. A convert, the missionaries and pastors explained to me, was counted when a person made a definite commitment to Christ, was counseled with personally, showed evidence of a changed life, and attended church at least a few times. Thousands more, I was told, made some public profession of Christ, but didn't meet the other specifications.

Furthermore, the Foursquare Church each year reported almost as many outstations as they did organized churches. In most cases, more people attended the outstations than attended the organized churches, but the annual denominational statistics did not include these--not as members or converts or even as decisions for Christ.

I checked to see if all the Pentecostal groups followed a similar pattern and found that most of them did. It was quite possible, then, that in addition to the 50,000 members, there were 500,000 converts of the organized churches. The number of converts in the outstations would double this figure --a total of one million. Then there were perhaps hundreds of thousands more who had raised a hand in public meetings or given some indication of personal commitment to Christ.

The significance of the Pentecostals, then, who had been in the Philippines twenty to thirty years, in some respects was as great as that of the Iglesia ni Cristo which had been in the Philippines for more than fifty years.

I had already visited my goal of fifteen Foursquare churches and interviewed 217 of their members when the book, *New Patterns of Church Growth in Brazil* arrived on my desk. The book was the final result of a church growth research project carried out by William Read under the direction of Dr. Donald McGavran of the Institute of Church Growth. It gave a picture of the development of the United Presbyterian Church in Brazil, and included an account of the fantastic growth of the Pentecostal churches. In fifty years they had grown from one convert to a communicant membership of 1.6 million, so that by 1965, three out of every four Christians in Brazil were Pentecostal.

I took off on a new trail of investigation. I was becoming aware that the growth of Pentecostals in the Philippines was just a small part of what apparently was a much broader phenomenon. As I read and gathered statistics, I found that Pentecostals were mushrooming in much of Latin America, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, Indonesia, the United States and in other parts of the world.

It was all quite intriguing. In the years following my research, I took my own plunge into the church renewal movement. I tried to keep abreast of the many books and reports that rolled from the world evangelical press. Before recounting my own experiences in a book, I wanted to know what other non-Pentecostal writers had found and reported. Had more sophisticated scholarship discredited them? I couldn't afford to be fooled.

Or was Apostolic Christianity being restored to the Church today? The Foursquare Church in the Philippines, of course, was just one small part of this movement. But one doesn't have to eat a whole cake to know how it tastes.

To analyze this cake, I spent portions of six months (beginning in January 1966) in major sections of the Philippine Islands, visiting churches and interviewing people. With the missionaries I traced the Foursquare Church's history, strategy, "inner dynamic." I interviewed fifty -fully one-fourth- of its ministers. I similarly interviewed 167 other church members, representing a cross-section of age, language group, size of church, geography, education, occupation and Christian experience. These 217 interviewees also sketched for me the religious history of their family members. By the time I finished, I had information on 2,124 Foursquare Church members, or about twenty percent of the total communicant membership at the time of research. The 167 laymen were members of fifteen churches I visited, and the ministers were in another thirty or so churches.

As I traveled and interviewed, I also observed and participated in worship services, prayer meetings, evangelistic meetings, outstation meetings, area conferences, youth camps, national conventions and Sunday school conventions. I even taught a journalism course in their Bible school in Manila. I prayed with them; I gave invitations from their pulpits. I dug into their record files, which they readily made available.

Since this book represents the Foursquare Church's viewpoint and is

written largely from what its members told me, I will not encumber the pages with quote marks around words that have special meaning to them. Words such as "baptized with the Spirit" or "healed," for example, will be left standing on their own feet. The term "evangelical" will be used as it is in the Philippines where it is equated with "Protestant" unless otherwise qualified.

With all this background information out of the way, then, let's get on with the story which began on the mysterious, exotic island of Bohol and ended in the beautiful vacationland of mile-high Baguio City. The geographical area traveled was small, but the inner voyage was to span two thousand years and the infinite distance between the natural and the supernatural.

THE GREAT DEBATE

The research began with an hour-long trial run at the Luzon District Annual Convention of the Foursquare Church three days of meetings centered primarily on how to evangelize the Philippines. I passed out mimeographed questionnaires, which I hoped would give me some insight into the growth and dynamic of the denomination.

The trial run flopped. The answers to the questions came back trite and pat. If I wanted to learn of the Foursquare people in the Philippines, I was going to have to talk with dozens of them personally. I would have to dig and probe and question face-to-face. But the trip was worthwhile because I had found the right approach.

It was also worthwhile because of one small incident that went unnoticed except for another man and myself. It happened on the last morning of the convention. In the meeting just before lunch, the ministers and lay people who had gathered from all over Luzon felt a united burden to pray. Everyone knelt and began to pray aloud. The idea of group prayer was still very new to me, but I joined them and began to pray quietly. I soon realized that my prayer was still quite private; everyone was lost in his own communion with God.

The benches of the crowded church were jammed much too closely together for my gangly legs, so I knelt at the end of a pew, my legs protruding into the aisle. A few moments later I felt a slight pressure on my

head. Someone had quietly slipped behind me and placed his hands on me. Quite simply he said that he felt the Lord wanted him to pray that I would have wisdom in determining what lay behind the growth of the Foursquare Church. I was warmed and encouraged as I realized that God was interested enough in what I was doing to send someone to pray for me. To understand the church and to effectively communicate this understanding was going to take all the wisdom I could get.

In January 1966, I flew to Cebu City for the first series of personal interviews. In Cebu City were the headquarters for the East Visayas District of the Foursquare Church in the Philippines. Rev. Al Chaves, the American-educated Foursquare missionary in the district, briefed me one afternoon on the fascinating history of the church in that area.

Later, he and I took the midnight inter-island steamer to Bohol. After two and a half sleepless hours on the crowded wooden ship, we were greeted at the dock in Tubigon by an array of buses ready to take us into the interior. In these uncomfortable vehicles filled to overflowing with passengers, we bumped and bounced our way up the dusty, pitted, stone and dirt road to Batuan. Batuan was a community resting among the strange and unexplained gumdrop-shaped hills unique to the island of Bohol.

It was six-thirty when Rev. Tranquilino Mahusay met us at the outskirts of Batuan. A ten-minute walk down a bamboo-shaded lane brought us to a little cluster of *nipa* huts. In the center was a gleaming white church building, beautifully set off with flowers and well-manicured hedges. Mahusay -bright, enthusiastic, bubbling proudly showed me around the building, the second one for this young church. The first building had been put up by the original converts who had donated the wood, bamboo and labor. This was their church home for nineteen months until they had felt led to place the church in a more central location. Land for the new site had been donated by one of the members, and many people, including non-Christians (several later accepted Christ), took time to cut and haul timber from the jungle. Now, three years later, they were in the midst of an expansion program and Mahusay, with his great optimism, anticipated another expansion as the church evangelized the community.

Before the interviews began, I walked with Mahusay and Chaves to the spot where this brave, thriving, sometimes persecuted church had had its dramatic birth. The church began, Mahusay told me, when he was legally forced to a debate with the Roman Catholic defender for the area. The

principals of the debate had stood in the same rotunda we were visiting, and with them on the platform had been the police chief, the mayor and the principal teachers of the town. In the crowd had been mayors of other towns, priests from nearby parishes, thousands of Roman Catholics, dozens of guards and a handful of Protestants.

Tranquilino Mahusay, age twenty-four, had stood alone -on God's side-and a church was born.

The debate had taken place four years before my visit, and the story of how it came about is a long one.

Only three years before the debate, Mahusay had had his first contact with evangelicals. An evangelical had come to his parents' house in Tabogon, Cebu City, and handed him a tract when he answered the door. The tract's message was God's judgment on graven images. Mahusay was a devout Roman Catholic, but the Scripture passages in the tract pierced his heart and he was forced to admit that his religion was not true to the Bible. Later he confided to a friend that he was looking for a church that taught the truth. His friend told him about the new Cebu Bible Institute, the Foursquare school for the Visayas. Mahusay enrolled immediately in the two-year course. Six months passed before Tranquilino was fully assured of his salvation, and later he was baptized with the Spirit and called to the ministry.

At Cebu he met and married one of the attractive Bible school coeds and in November 1959, the young couple headed for their first assignment--the notorious Roman Catholic town of Carmen, Bohol. For nine months they were alternately persecuted, threatened and ignored. It was predicted that Carmen would never be open enough to build a Protestant church. But four families--husbands, wives, children accepted Christ and began a weekly worship service.

On an afternoon in August 1960, while most of the town was still enjoying its afternoon siesta, Mahusay heard a persistent "voice" telling him to go to Batuan some eight kilometers down the road. The last of his fifteen-peso monthly salary had already been spent, leaving not even forty centavos for the ride to Batuan. He began walking.

"Suddenly I felt the Lord come upon me," he told me. "I couldn't keep from shouting and praising the Lord. I was so embarrassed lest someone come along and see me that I went off the road into some bushes. For some time I stayed, shouting and praising the Lord in tongues. When I got up to leave I felt a new confidence that the Lord was with me in going to Batuan."

How does one start a church in a strong Roman Catholic town with no money, no contacts and no interest by the people? Mahusay had no medicine or agricultural knowledge with which to serve the people and gain their favor. He had no sound tracks, no gospel singers, no films -none of the familiar trappings of the traditional missionary outreach.

But he knew God wanted him in Batnan and he had a message burning within him. He went to the marketplace and with his good but untrained voice began to sing gospel songs. When a few people stopped to listen, he began to speak "with the anointing of the Spirit."

As the days passed, the daily service in the marketplace gained regular attenders. Mahusay rented an apartment two kilometers from town.

The first direct opposition came near the end of his first month in Batuan. His landlord, a devout Roman Catholic, reported to his priest that Mahusay was a Foursquare preacher. With the priest's encouragement, the landlord asked him to leave the house and the town. Mahusay said he couldn't because God had led him there to preach the gospel.

Several weeks later the priest himself, brandishing a pistol, asked him to leave town. "The people here are already Christian," he said.

Mahusay replied, "If they are Christians, they must separate from sin."

"If you don't get out," the priest threatened, "something will happen."

The next Sunday the priest returned with the Roman Catholic defender in tow. The defender in turn was accompanied by two policemen who made it known that if anything happened to Mahusay, it was not their responsibility. The defender threatened him and told him to leave. Mahusay repeated what he had told the priest, "I can't leave. God has called me here to preach the Bible."

The priest then grabbed Mahusay and forced him to a nearby hill. He called the public defender to come stand by him. To the crowd that had quickly gathered the defender shouted, "Don't believe this man. He does not belong to the true religion."

Mahusay boldly answered, "You warn the people, but God will show you how He is going to save the people here." He continued with a presentation of the Foursquare message of Jesus the Savior, Healer, Baptizer and coming King.

But the crowd was decidedly against him. Many of the leading townspeople were shouting for Mahusay to be driven out of town. Others were dancing and mocking. Only the few people who faithfully attended the

market meetings showed sympathy. Some of them were quietly crying.

A group of men edged toward Mahusay, one of them brandishing a huge stick. The policemen, apparently wanting to avoid any violence, urged the crowd to go home. But as the policemen left, one of them shouted to Mahusay, "We are coming next Sunday. If you are not gone, you will see what will happen."

True to their promise, the policemen, the priest, and the defender returned the next Sunday morning. One of the policemen stepped forward with a subpoena in his hand. It ordered the defender and Mahusay to appear in public the following Sunday at 2:00 P.M. to debate the subject: "Jesus Christ is the only Savior."

On the platform that third Sunday afternoon of September 1960, the secretary of the mayor introduced Mahusay to the noisy, jostling crowd that had streamed in from the surrounding *barrios*. Mahusay prayed and then gave a simple presentation of how Christ came as the Savior to cleanse from all sin, how He came to bring spiritual and physical healing, how He sent the Holy Spirit to baptize and dwell in the believer and how He was coming again in a cloud of glory.

The crowd continued its chatter. The defender heckled Mahusay, saying that Mahusay was a disciple of the devil, that he was preaching a false doctrine, that his religion was not known in the government, that he was there to lead the people astray.

Mahusay says he suddenly felt the power of God come upon him. He turned to the defender and exclaimed, "You are speaking words against God. In the name of Jesus, I rebuke you and command you to silence." The defender worked his jaw as if to give an answer, but only froth and bubbles came from his mouth. The gospel would be heard that day after all.

When the defender again got up to speak, he turned on the Catholic Church. "What this young man said is true," he said. "We have plenty of graven images in our churches, and the priests are mistaken when they say we are not worshipping them."

Even Mahusay was shocked when the defender went on to say, "The Foursquare Church is the true Roman Catholic Church."

But in the defender's first rebuttal, he changed his position. "This man's name is Mahusay (meaning "peace" in Cebuano)," he thundered. "He is not peace, but trouble. He is not sent from God, but our priest is sent from the Pope."

In Mahusay's final rebuttal he exhorted, "If I am from the devil I will have to speak like the devil. I will have to curse. But you have seen that it is this man that curses, not me. I do not use curse words. You can now tell who we are. The religion of Christ is a group of people separated unto Christ and separated from the world. They are not partakers of sin anymore. We are the religion of Christ. Believe Christ and separate from the world."

The crowd seemed generally favorable to Mahusay after the contradictory, cursing, impolite manner of the defender. Many stayed to shake his hand and to offer food and drinks -the traditional Filipino indication of good will. Nearly twenty invited him to their homes to further explain the gospel.

The first invitations he accepted after the debate, I learned, were from three families in Poblacion Bize, just two kilometers from the center of town. Before a month elapsed, the members of all three families had made personal professions of faith in Christ. Two cousins, their wives and children, and an older couple made up this first "congregation." They quickly built a church building.

While this church was taking its first baby steps, Mahusay continued to contact others who had invited him to their homes. Within four months after the debate, members of four other families husbands, wives, and children made professions of faith in Christ and began to meet regularly in a home on Sundays. In a year and a half, the two groups came together to put up the present church building.

Twenty-one families and children from seven other families made up the congregation of over 100 when I was there in 1966. Their zeal for evangelism, and the dozens of infants and small children in the families already reached, promised a continual growth of the congregation.

A debate had given birth to a church.

MYSTERIOUS BOHOL GIVES UP SOME SECRETS

Dozens of questions fought for priority in my mind as I prepared to interview the converts and church members who lived in Batuan. I wanted to find out about the sociological, economic, and cultural conditions that might have contributed to the growth of the church. I wanted to confirm the

testimony of what had happened in the debate. I wanted to know who was responding to the gospel and why. I wanted to learn how the Pentecostal distinctives affected the conversions and what kind of Christians these Pentecostals became.

I plunged into the interviews; Al Chaves, with his birthright of Cebuano and his "naturalized" English, acted as my interpreter.

Talking with these unsophisticated, but intelligent and friendly people was pure pleasure. As the day wore on, a meaningful profile of the church emerged. All sixteen converts I talked with were born and reared in the immediate vicinity of Batuan. All of them had been brought up as Roman Catholics, and most of them had been very active in the Catholic Church. Some of them had joined a Protestant church in Batuan, but they did not feel they had really accepted the Lord as their Savior in this church. "In 1939," one man explained, "I left idol worship and went to the Protestant church. But there was still no satisfaction for my soul."

Most of the converts I talked with were adults who had accepted Christ in their thirties or forties. They came to Him in families, each member making a personal, public confession of Christ. The man who told me he had been the first convert in the church was followed by his wife and two children in believer's baptism. Nineteen other members of his family and eleven members of his wife's family also became believers. One conversion resulted in the gospel sweeping through seven families and touching thirty-four lives.

Persecution came. Most of the Batuan families were tenant farmers with little cash income, and some of them lost their land when they turned to Christ. The church meetings were frequently disturbed by boys outside the church mocking the minister. Dances with unbearably loud music were held just across the road at the time of church services. Young people were ridiculed for their commitment to Christ.

But the sincerity of their Christian conviction was evident. They had turned from habits such as smoking, gambling and cursing. They attended church regularly several times a week, sacrificed to build a church with their own funds and to support a full-time minister.

Most members had participated in the experiences that are the distinguishing marks of Pentecostalism. Ten of the sixteen had been baptized with the Spirit and spoken in other tongues, and all sixteen told of illnesses that had been healed through prayer and divine intervention. They spoke of

these experiences naturally, as if all true Christians enjoyed them.

Every stroke of this Batvano profile showed encouraging church growth. In this very conservative Roman Catholic area of the Philippines, whole families were risking the censure of lifetime neighbors to turn to a vital, thriving evangelical church. If this were happening here, should not the people in less conservative areas also respond to the gospel?

I was eager to see these Batvano folks in their service that night. It was the regular Thursday night Bible study. (Prayer meeting was held on Tuesday evenings, and services were conducted twice on Sunday. Their monthly schedule was rounded out with 4:00 AM prayer meetings once a week, one entire night of prayer once a month, days of fasting and the whole schedule of youth camps, missionary conferences, women's societies, etc.) The little building was nearly full fifteen minutes before the service was scheduled to begin, but the congregation was not given to a time of gossip. A small orchestra played hymn after hymn for their edification. I was fascinated by it. The leader expertly played a small handmade bamboo flute -the sweetness of the flute music touched me. He was joined by a guitarist, a bass guitarist, and a violinist. The orchestra also accompanied the spirited congregational singing at the opening of the service.

As Chaves, the minister, and I made our way to the platform, I was told that Mahusay would interpret for me -this was the first I knew that I was to speak. The result was that my observations of the rest of the service were a little clouded by my frantic efforts to develop a message appropriate for the evening.

I do remember, though, the worship. The minister raised his arms and suggested we praise the Lord. A chorus of praises and hallelujahs and prayings rose at once from the lips of these sincere folk. There may be a little "culture shock" the first time a staid middle-class American missionary hears this, but I had to admit to myself that night I was not offended by the communal praying. At least everyone was participating in worship instead of sitting idle, becoming professional listeners.

I spoke that night on a favorite Old Testament character -Nehemiah. He was burdened with a job that needed to be done, but he accomplished that task. Similarly, I said, we were challenged with the great task of evangelizing the Philippines, and Nehemiah's principles for accomplishing the task were applicable to us. I felt I was communicating to these eager believers.

When I finished my sermon it was past nine o'clock. I was exhausted from almost forty sleepless hours, but the meeting was really just beginning. Chaves invited those who wished to pray further about evangelizing their neighbors to come forward. Almost immediately the altar was swarmed with believers, with arms and contorted faces raised heavenward, pouring their hearts out to God.

The Thursday night prayer meeting finally broke up some time after ten o'clock. Somewhat numb with fatigue, I made my way to the parsonage--a *nipa* hut just on the other side of the hedge by the church--and to the private room graciously provided by the pastor. It was large enough for a single bed and a place for my suitcase. A wind-blown curtain hanging in the doorway gave me some privacy. I lay down on the frame bed, its woven bamboo-skin surface hard and unyielding and covered only with a sheet. Some of our supporters in the States would have thought this was one of the hardships of missionary life. But to me, on this night, a room at a Conrad Hilton could not have seemed more luxurious.

I heard small groups of church members still conversing and singing together. The pastor had told me that on Friday was the weekly morning prayer meeting. Since the beginning, the church had gathered once a week at 4:00 AM to pray together until dawn. My last thought before falling asleep was to wonder if anyone would make it.

My mental alarm awakened me four and a half hours later, my body crying out for more sleep. It took the half-hour before the prayer meeting to come fully awake, and at 4:00 A.M. I stumbled through the darkness to the church. I almost expected it to be empty. It was.

But just as I began to compose some silent lines about one of their weaknesses, I saw the erratic movement of flashlight beams. In twos and threes the congregation was gathering. In fifteen minutes, the dozen or so gathered began singing and praying, more subdued than they had been the night before. Not a bad turnout, I thought. As the prayer burden was passed from one to another, others quietly shuffled into the chapel. By five o'clock, the stark benches were filled with almost as many adults as had been there the night before. Most of the prayer was in Cebuano, which I did not understand, but I heard sincere, believing, and peaceful prayers. The meeting lasted until sunup at six o'clock.

After a breakfast of fish and rice, Chaves and I were ready to leave. As I stood on the porch of the parsonage, I saw a young Filipino "tough" with a

long evil-looking machete hanging at his side. This is the hardened, unrepentant, quick-to-fight Filipino, I thought. Then I recognized him -he was the gifted musician who had played the homemade bamboo flute the night before. He smiled, waved goodbye and was off to represent Christ in his corner of the great "harvest field" of the world.

Was my hasty judgment symbolic I wondered? Could missionaries, pastors and even Filipino Christians be mistaken about the responsiveness of the population as I had mistaken the identity of a Christian musician? Were we tilling and planting when we should be harvesting'?

In Batuan I got my first full look at a Foursquare Church in the Philippines. Had the pure adventure of the exotic island distorted my vision? Was I over-impressed with the experiences of the Pentecostal believers?

Time, I hoped, would bring a right perspective.

FILIPINO SAILORS START IT OFF

My country-bumpkin-263-sleighbell image of the Pentecostals faded from my mind when I met Don McGregor, the Foursquare field director, at a Monday morning prayer fellowship. I complimented him on being associated with the fastest growing denomination in the Philippines.

"I had no idea we were growing faster than others," he said. "We're just a little outfit ourselves and I thought that with all these other missionaries, many must be ahead of us."

His apparently genuine humility impressed me. In fact, I was impressed with him in general. He stood tall and erect; he kept a genuine and warm smile flashing. I found him personable, outgoing and approachable. Later I would see him in every possible circumstance - from sleeping on the floor of a jungle hut to dining in one of the swankiest hotels in the Philippines, from praying for the sick to playing practical jokes on the Filipino pastors. Never would I find him to be anything less than what he seemed to be at the missionary prayer fellowship. I would find him to be an excellent speaker, splashing his messages with phrases in the dialects of his audiences. He spoke with humor and used illustrations from the everyday experiences of his listeners. His messages were sixty- to ninety-minute exegetical feasts on which his church members dined with enthusiasm.

In our first formal interview I laid it on the line. If I were to do a research

of the Foursquare Church in the Philippines would he open every avenue of investigation to me? Could I look through all records and files? Could I interview anyone I wanted to and ask whatever I pleased? Could I attend any meeting I chose and report exactly what I saw?

His answer was that he was not interested in a book to promote his denomination. But if I felt that such a research project would be helpful to the cause of Christ and evangelism in the Philippines, he would open every door to me.

From these sessions and later conversations with the pioneers and early converts, I was able to draw an outline of the history and structure of the Foursquare Church and gain some insights into their program and procedures, beliefs and practices.

The beginning of the present Foursquare work in the Philippines goes all the way back to 1931. After the Spanish-American War, many of the Philippines' subjects made their way to the United States. Inevitably, some of these came into contact with evangelical Christianity and took their new experience back home with them. This migration was especially true of the hard-working and energetic Ilocano people who were hard-pressed for land in the lowland areas of northern Luzon. McGregor told me he had come into contact with many little independent Pentecostal churches in the Ilocano area. They had been started by men who became Christians in the States and returned to begin a church among their family members and later among other *barrio* people.

Vicente Defante was one of these men. He had been a cook in the U.S. Navy and had wandered into Angelus Temple, the original Foursquare church in Los Angeles. He accepted Christ and after his conversion he attended the L.I.F.E. (Foursquare) Bible College. In 1931, he was sent as a missionary to the Philippines.

In Iloilo City, he and his wife began house-to-house visitation and street meetings and organized the first church in the space below their traditional built-on-stilts Filipino home. In 1937, they bought property in the city and built the church that is still in use today.

I talked with one of the early converts in this first church. "My sister took me to one of the Foursquare outstations," she told me. "I was surprised at the way they spoke. It was wonderful to hear the way they spoke about heaven and seeing God. In my own religion they did not speak that way. I really

liked the service. The singing was like in heaven. The pastor spoke holy words. It was like I was floating on air."

Defante pastored this church in Iliolo City until he was replaced by a young Filipino Bible School graduate in 1963.

In 1936, a second Filipino returned home to plant churches which would later merge with the Foursquare church. Silverio M. Diaz, district superintendent of the Romblon-Mindoro Foursquare churches, arrived in Texas in 1903 as a sailor in the U.S. Navy. In 1935, in Port Arthur, he was persuaded to attend an evangelistic meeting being held by Harry Hodge, a great evangelist in the South. Diaz had been an active Roman Catholic, but he accepted Christ that night.

In 1936, Diaz was ordained and sent to the Philippines as an American missionary by the United Gospel Tabernacles, an independent church which was Pentecostal in nature. He arrived on the island of Romblon six weeks before his aged mother died. He led her to Christ, and then saw the gospel spread to the remaining members of his family. The church begun among his family members did not continue, but during the next seven years led Diaz to neighboring islands and *barrios* to plant churches. Until 1948 Diaz was the only leader among these churches scattered on the islands of Tablas and Mindoro.

Also in the 1930s, David Abrojena, a native of the Ilocano area of the Philippines, returned from the States to Cabittauran, Ilocos Norte. He led his family members to Christ and began a church. By 1959, when McGregor visited the church, it was reported that all but four of the sixty or seventy families in the *barrio* were Foursquare.

In 1937, Miss Grace Williams, a Foursquare missionary supported by personal friends, arrived in this Ilocano area. The first Western missionary from a Foursquare church to come to the Philippines, she planted the church in Laoag, the capitol of Ilocos Norte Province.

Francisco Pascual made a personal commitment to Christ at one of Miss Williams' street meetings. Then he continued what had already been quite familiar to him - street and house meetings in neighboring *barrios*. As a child and youth, he had followed his mother from *barrio* to *barrio* as she peddled thread and other wares to make a living. Whenever she rested, it was her custom to take out her Bible and read. Many times interested bystanders would ask Francisco to preach. He loved it -he even willingly accepted invitations to preach in other *barrios*. After his commitment to

Christ, these opportunities became meaningful.

While selling eggs house-to-house in the *barrio* of Baay, thirteen kilometers from Laoag, he encouraged his customers to meet for religious services. Most of those who came also attended the Roman Catholic chapel each night to say their prayers. Finally a group of men invited Francisco to attend with them. They argued, "We attend your services, you ought to come to ours." He protested, but agreed when they insisted.

About seventy were there. When they finished their rosaries, they asked him to preach. They devoured the simple gospel message he gave them, and thus was born a Foursquare church.

For five months this new church met in the Roman Catholic chapel. When there were about twenty-five converts, they left the chapel and built their own meeting place. When the Philippines entered World War II several months later, about sixty people were attending regularly. The services were closed by the Japanese during the war, but the church opened again in 1945.

After the war, a member of the church in Laoag asked Francisco to go to his relatives in the *barrio* of Bacsil. Within two or three years, there were about 100 converts, and an average church attendance of about thirty in the morning and fifty in the evening. Francisco left this church in 1949, and in the next ten years pioneered five more churches.

In 1949, when the first Western missionaries were sent to the Philippines by the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, there were thirteen congregations which eventually became official Foursquare churches: one in Iloilo, seven in the Romblon-Mindoro area, four in the Ilocano area of northern Luzon, and one in the Tagalog area near Manila. Though there are no accurate statistics from this period, my conversations with these pioneering pastors and missionaries led me to believe that about 650 converts could have been considered as communicant members in these thirteen churches.

A HANDFUL OF MISSIONARIES

When Vincente Defante was sent back to his homeland to be a missionary to his own people, it was the intention of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel to send no other workers. But as little congregations sprang up in scattered parts of the Philippines, it became

evident that someone should be sent to organize and administer the work.

In the early part of 1949, Rev. and Mrs. Everette Denison arrived in Manila, and immediately headed south for the church in Malagasang, Cavite. But Denison realized he would never make a significant contribution in the Philippines if he spent himself in a small, insignificant *barrio*. The Lord spoke to him about returning to Manila, the center of population and education.

The Denisons rented a house on the edge of Manila, not far from the present national headquarters for the Foursquare Church. The church was born in the *sala* (living room) of their house as converts began trickling into Sunday services. By the end of the Denison's six-year term in 1955, the records show there was an average attendance of eighty-three at the Sunday morning worship services. The congregation had saved 5,000 pesos toward buying nearby property where they could build a church and Bible school. By this time Denison had also established three mission stations that were fast turning into churches. He had traveled to other parts of the Philippines, preaching and encouraging the national workers.

This first term of this first foreign missionary couple was not especially dramatic, but it established the basic strategy and pattern for future growth.

"Since Denison first came back to Manila we have always sent our missionaries to centers where they do evangelistic work, develop a large central church, begin a Bible school, and instill in the students the burden to go out and pioneer churches," Don McGregor said to me. "Other than that, we did not come with any predetermined strategy, we had no outlined program of evangelism. The Foursquare Church simply spread over the islands. The home mission board told us how to get there, said they would support us as missionaries, said we ought to start a Bible school. We were told we couldn't expect a single major appropriation from the home office for the first five years not even for an automobile or desk or filing cabinet."

The idea behind this, McGregor explained, was that a new missionary had to prove himself. With the leading of the Lord, he was to develop his own program of evangelism and church planting and of training workers. If he succeeded, the home board would back the project during his second term.

This original strategy would be followed, but it remained for the next wave of missionaries to fan its spark into a blaze. At about the time the Denisons left for furlough, the Reverends Arthur and Evelyn Thompson

arrived on the scene. After the first meeting there was no doubt about who was the dynamic evangelist of the family--the petite, refined, English-bred Evelyn Thompson. She had been reared in the genteel atmosphere of a well-to-do English home in the eastern United States an unlikely background for the person some say was "most like Aimee Semple McPherson." Mr. Thompson was a spiritual, sound-thinking man on whom she leaned heavily.

Mrs. Thompson quickly turned the already solid, growing, witnessing church in Manila into a throbbing center of evangelism. Lights and banners, advertising the evangelistic meetings held on the Manila property, nightly attracted crowds of up to 2,000. Crusades held in the other established mission stations resulted in hundreds of converts, in new outstations and churches, and in students for the Bible school about to open its doors.

After a year of ministry and orientation in Manila, the Thompsons left for the island of Mindanao, the anchor of the Philippine archipelago. They had no contacts; their work would be pioneering work in its purest form.

After one month in Zamboanga, the leading city of Mindanao, they felt the urging of the Spirit to go to the bustling frontier town of Davao City.

In January 1956, they rented a storefront and upstairs apartment in the jammed market area of Davao City. Knowing hardly a word of a Philippine dialect, Mrs. Thompson began preaching the gospel from the storefront. The street meeting ran nightly for six months, attracting huge crowds of curious Filipinos. The hundreds of converts, the many miracles, the manifestations of the Holy Spirit were almost beyond believing in the Los Angeles home office. Within six months a Bible school was started with about twenty students. In the months that followed, the ripples of the revival spread throughout much of Mindanao.

Six churches were established that first year. By 1960, there were forty-five churches, 3,200 members, and 27,400 converts. By 1967, twelve years after the Thompsons arrived in Mindanao, there were ninety-two established churches with 6,400 members and nearly 50,000 converts.

The spectacular ministry of this lone, older missionary couple in Mindanao was the most significant factor in the growth of the Foursquare Church. More than half of all churches, converts, and communicant members in 1967 were found in this one Foursquare area. (Other factors that contributed to this great growth in Mindanao are examined in Chapter 15).

The Thompsons also made a great contribution to the Manila church. My interviews indicated that many of the converts in other parts of the

Philippines date their conversions to the time Mrs. Thompson visited and preached in their area.

The outpouring of God's Spirit in Mindanao inevitably had repercussions in other parts of the Philippines.

Al Chaves, a Cebuano-speaking Filipino, went to the United States at the age of seventeen to visit an uncle. He accepted Christ while in the States, married Molly, and became a naturalized U.S. citizen. Al returned to his native land in 1949 to set up an export business.

His spiritual experience was shallow, but he and Molly began helping the Denisons in the Sunday school. The exposure transformed his life. He gave up his business, and went back to Los Angeles to attend the L.I.F.E. Bible College at Angelus Temple. He graduated in June 1955, and returned to the Philippines as a missionary.

Chaves' first assignment was the deteriorating Iloilo church. During June and July, he and Molly repaired the church building, and by August they were ready for a one-week evangelistic campaign. It was the rainy season, but people flocked to the church. On the Sunday after the campaign ended, more than 200 people packed the building for Sunday School and morning worship.

During the campaign, a woman with an advanced case of tuberculosis had been healed -she later became the Sunday School superintendent. Another new Christian memorized the entire Gospel of John. She later went to Bible school and became a minister.

The Iloilo crusade gave birth to a church on the nearby island of Jintotolo. A group of Iloilo young people made a four-day trip to the island, and after preaching all over the island, they baptized four members of one family. The father donated land and put up a building. In 1965, the Jintotolo church was a thriving congregation.

The Chaves' spent only three months in Iloilo before they were recalled to Manila to replace the Thompsons. They studied the geographical spread of the Foursquare Church, and decided that the commercial city of Cebu and the surrounding islands were in great need. When they arrived in Cebu in 1957, the Chaves' intended to begin a church immediately.

But Cebu resisted.

They had no contacts in the city and no money for a hotel room, so the Chaves' left their belongings on the ship and went house hunting.

After making arrangements, they moved from the boat that day. The next morning a neighbor brought breakfast to them. "We'll give you three months and you will be gone," she said. "You are Protestants in a Roman Catholic neighborhood. You will achieve nothing."

But the Chaves' were not discouraged. They spent the next six weeks scrubbing, waxing, painting and polishing their house. They made benches and a platform from the crates of their household goods; they ordered a pulpit and pews.

On the first Sunday of March 1957, they opened the church. The day before they had distributed leaflets all over the town, inviting people to come to their new church. Previous experience taught them that they would probably have a full house on Sunday, but only seven were there -Mr. and Mrs. Chaves, their son, their niece, their house girl, the skeptical neighbor and her little girl. No one had responded to the handbills.

Neither the neighbor nor the daughter were likely candidates for a Bible school, but Chaves, undaunted, wrote to headquarters for permission to start one.

Where would the students come from? While Chaves was pastoring his little flock and waiting for an answer from headquarters, he received an invitation to visit the town of Tara on Negros Island. Chaves, with his wife and son, went there in April.

"We had no idea what to expect," Chaves told me. "When we got there we found Pentecost in its virgin aspect. A group of about seventy had gathered. Adults and children alike were praying in tongues. They did not know what to do. They wanted to be taught about the ministry of the Spirit.

"We preached that night, and the next day Molly and I baptized 172 in a nearby river. In the meantime we learned the background of the invitation and subsequent events. A group of young people heard mention of the baptism of the Holy Spirit through someone who had passed through that area. They knew nothing about it, but determined to gather and pray until they also were filled with the Spirit. They gathered almost every day for many months, but nothing happened. When they heard of a Bible school in Davao that taught the baptism of the Spirit, one of the young men, Librado, went there. Under the ministry of Mrs. Thompson, he was filled with the Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

Librado stayed at the school for two or three months, and then came back to teach his friends. Together they spent a night in prayer. Pentecost came

early in the morning. This was the explanation for what we found when we got there.

"After our return to Cebu we received a letter saying that the pastor of their church would not let them worship in that way. I did not want to take them out of their church, so I wrote that we could not accept them without the moderator's approval. Later there was no choice. The people had clearly experienced the filling of the Spirit and could not refrain from expressing it, so they began their own worship.

"We had gone there in April. In May, five of these young people volunteered for Bible school. I visited Leyte again in May and three volunteered for school. Two came from Cebu and more students from other towns. We opened school in June, and after weeks our student body boiled down to twelve. Our work in East Visayas sprang from the eleven who eventually took our two-year course (it is now three years) and from that spontaneous revival in Tara."

From the beginning the students evangelized while they studied. The city was divided into sections, and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons the students held extension classes wherever they were invited. Converts from these classes trickled into the central church until new churches were started in places too distant for easy transportation.

That first year -1957- Chaves and his students planted four churches. In 1967, they reported thirty organized churches with 1,203 communicant members from a cumulative total of 8,216 converts, and thirty-three outstations.

In 1958, the Foursquare Church in the Philippines was organized into four districts. Each district (except for Iloilo until 1963) was under a missionary supervisor; district divisions were under the direction of national superintendents. In 1966, Veronico Suan in Davao became the first national to take over as supervisor of a district.

The Ilocano work in northern Luzon and the Tagalog churches around Manila became the Luzon District; the Thompson's work spreading out from Davao became the Mindanao District; Chaves' churches planted in Negros Oriental, Cebu, Bohol, Leyte and Samar became the East Visayas District, and the work around Iloilo City became the West Visayas district.

In 1960, the Romblon-Mindoro District was added when the churches planted by Diaz and Jack Richey merged with the Foursquare Church in the

Philippines. Richey had arrived in Tablas in March 1948. He noticed that his zealous Filipino predecessor had done an effective job of church planting and evangelism, but had been weak in teaching the converts the importance of the baptism with the Spirit.

He set about to improve this situation and in a glorious three-month period, about sixty-five converts were baptized with the Spirit. A flurry of evangelism and church planting followed, and the handful of churches blossomed into thirty-nine congregations by the end of 1967.

In November 1967, the Foursquare Church in the Philippines included nearly 11,000 communicant members in 194 established churches in five districts. These churches reported a total of 80,344 converts between 1955 and 1967. They also reported 179 outstations where Foursquare meetings were held regularly in 1967. Added to these statistics could be the 2,000 or so members of a dozen tribal churches.

The historical sketch and overall statistical outline raised many more questions than it answered. I still wanted a better understanding of the Foursquare Church's growth. I decided that I would get some answers by visiting each of the center churches of the five districts and at least two more churches in the outlying areas of each district. This would give a good cross-section from the northernmost part of Luzon to southern Mindanao, from large city churches to small rural, *barrio* churches. In each of the churches I would try to interview a good cross-section of the membership.

The Mindanao district was so much larger than the other districts that I visited four churches there and two churches in each of the smaller districts of Romblon and Iloilo. The Ilocano and Tagalog areas of Luzon were so dissimilar that I decided to visit two churches in each of these two sections of the Luzon district.

By the time I had taken these trips during a period of six months, I had visited fifteen churches and interviewed 217 converts, fifty of whom were full-time ministers or workers. I asked each interviewee a basic twenty-one questions, but the questions were expanded to thirty or more depending on the answers given.

As I began compiling the data from these interviews, it became evident that the interviews were weighted somewhat toward the more active members of the churches. When I tabulated answers to the question, "What position do you hold in the church?", only fifty-three of the 217 interviewees

said they were just members and held no office or special position.

If there was a bias toward the most active members, it was not intentional. Usually those selected to be interviewed were the ones most readily available. Occasionally I heard a missionary or pastor say, "Why don't you get so-and-so, he has an interesting testimony." But it often was simply a matter of enlisting those who could take the time. In one or two of the smaller churches, I interviewed every adult member present at the service I happened to be attending.

The net result is that the picture of the Foursquare Church reported in this book was gained from a cross-section of solid members of fifteen basic churches where I conducted interviews, and from talks with missionaries and pastors and members of about thirty other churches.

Statistics and percentages would do much to make clear what was happening in Foursquare churches. But I was more interested in observing the individual people involved. What were their experiences and reactions? What did they think and feel? What motivated them to accept the Lord as a result of the Foursquare witness?

With this in mind, I sifted through each testimony to find one Foursquare member who could give in narrative form some idea of what the Foursquare Church was like and why it was growing. I settled on Sister Evelyn.

SISTER EVELYN

Evelyn Quema, mid-twenties, short, stoutish, single, minister of the gospel. She might not have been noticed in a crowd of Filipinas. But in a handful of years she had experienced more of the drama of the Christian life than some experience in a lifetime.

To understand Sister Evelyn and the dynamics in her life and ministry is to better understand the Foursquare Church. For this reason I have let her describe her conversion and calling in this chapter and tell of the early years of her ministry in Chapter Eight.

I was brought up in an active Protestant home. My parents attended church regularly in Baguio until 1945 and then in Manila when we moved there. They were good members, professing Christians, but they were not saved. They drank beer and went to nightclubs, dances and movies. They

were still of the world. We read the Bible at home and gave to the church. But something, was missing from our lives.

One Sunday morning in 1958, I was on my way to the downtown church we attended when I noticed a church service going on in a new building. I stopped and asked some of the people if it were Protestant. When I learned that it was, I suggested to my family, nine brothers and sisters and my parents, that we attend there since it was so much closer.

With the exception of my father, we all began attending. We liked the way they taught Sunday school. It seemed so much more interesting. Before long, however, I realized there was something more than just good teaching methods. A few weeks after first attending, I raised my hand in Sunday school and then went forward to accept the Lord.

The change was so abrupt in my life that I could hardly believe it. "Why am I so changed?" I kept asking myself. After many years of being religious and knowing about the Lord, I came to know Him personally. I was then sixteen and a fourth-year student in high school.

Even this change, as sudden and striking as it was, could not match my baptism in the Holy Spirit, which was similar to the Acts 2:4 experience. I began to hear people talking about the baptism of the Holy Spirit after I started attending Calvary Foursquare Church.

"What's that?" I asked my friends. "I have not heard of that before." I also wondered why the people cried and praised the Lord when they had altar calls.

I went to my uncle and asked him about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He said that he had been baptized in an Assemblies of God church and that I ought to pray for the baptism. I also went to pastors from several Protestant denominations that I knew. "That happened in the book of Acts, but it is not for us today," most of them told me.

With these conflicting reports, I decided I would have to go to the Bible and find out for myself. I studied and prayed. The Lord revealed Himself to me. I saw that He did want to baptize me with the Holy Spirit and I began to seek this for myself.

One Sunday afternoon I met a Foursquare friend and told her to pray for me concerning the baptism. That afternoon I was praising the Lord out loud as they had taught me. I was conscious only that I wanted to know the Lord in a deeper way.

I didn't even realize it when I began to speak in tongues. It wasn't until

later that a friend told me that I spoke in tongues, though I have spoken in tongues many times since then, aware of what I was doing.

After this initial experience, I found that the greatest difference in my life was my compassion for the lost. Before, it had been my goal to save people according to what I could give them. Now all I wanted was to see spiritual changes in them. My love for the Lord became deeper, my prayer life blossomed. Before, it had always been a battle to read the Bible and pray. Now I loved it. Before, when I came to a passage I couldn't understand, I would simply stop reading. Now I stop and pray for illumination and immediately the portion becomes clear.

But as I said, the biggest outward change in my life was boldness in witnessing to others. I was no longer ashamed that I was a Christian. Altogether in those last four months of my final high school year, I led about thirty of my classmates to the Lord. My first convert was my closet friend. After she became a Christian, she brought another of hers to me, and I led her to the Lord also. From that time on I did not have to seek out any to witness to. They were all brought to me by the converts themselves. These new Christians would come to me for counseling and prayer, too.

After I became a Christian and was baptized with the Holy Spirit, it wasn't long before all nine of my brothers and sisters as well as my parents were born again. I'll never forget the message that was preached the night my parents went forward. It was on "fig leaves." This word-picture of the Lord was so true of my parents--they were religious but barren of fruit. They both went crying to the altar. I noticed a great change in their lives. They stopped their night-clubbing and worldly habits. They dedicated their children to the Lord. Bible reading and family devotions took on new meaning. Instead of a form or a duty, it became a part of life. They stopped their swearing and doing business on Sundays. Even when customers came, they could not sell them anything if it were Sunday. Instead they witnessed to them, especially after their baptism in the Holy Spirit. They became strict tithers and began to give to missions as well. They became conscious of the spiritual need of others, especially in their families. they wanted to testify to every member of their respective families. and did, in time, see several of their brothers and sisters accept Christ.

But, as it happened in my life, the biggest changes came later in my parents. These changes began the night of February 9, 1959. On that night my mother chaperoned me to the first and only public dance I ever attended.

We were required to attend these at the University of the Philippines High School, though later as I made my testimony known, I was excused from them.

It was the junior-senior prom. About halfway through, we heard an announcement on the loudspeaker that Mrs. Quema was to call home. There was an emergency.

Her sister answered the call and said that my father had been taken to the hospital. "I hope you can reach him alive," she said. "He has had a heart attack."

We rushed to Manila Doctor's Hospital where they had taken him. The doctor had diagnosed a brain hemorrhage and said that my father had about a fifty-fifty chance to live. An operation was out of the question. They gave my daddy the best medicine they could, put him in an oxygen tent, and told us to prepare for the worst. He lay there in a coma for three days and three nights.

We were with my father at three in the morning of the third night when he suddenly breathed his last. The doctor by his side examined him and declared him dead, and the nurse pulled the sheet up over his head.

What happened next startled us all. My mother rushed up to the mother superior of this Catholic hospital and asked for the key to the chapel. The mother superior could hardly have known that my mother was going there for more than solace. Later she told us what happened.

"while I was earnestly praying to God," she said, "I told Him that if He would bring back life to my husband, I would surrender his life to the Lord to serve Him for the rest of his days. At the same time I dedicated my own life to the Lord to be both mother and father to the children so that my husband would be free to serve the Lord.

"At that very moment I was filled with the Spirit. I felt something cold cover my whole body. I had the distinct feeling that God was assuring me that my husband would live. I received the Spirit as an electric shock in my hands. I ran immediately to my husband's room. I pulled back the sheet and laid my hands on his body. I claimed the promise through the Lord Jesus Christ that He would bring my husband back to life."

The doctors came to her side as she was praying. They thought she was crazy and talking to the dead. All of the sudden my father opened his eyes.

My mother shouted, "Daddy, speak to me. Open your mouth and say something."

"Mama," he answered as if he had a new body. "Why am I here?" he asked. He saw so many people in the room -members of his family, doctors, nuns, and priests. The priest had given extreme unction while mother was in the chapel.

My mother pulled his hands down from his chest where they had been lying in repose. My father sat up and said, "I don't anything. I feel all right.

The doctor examined him and blurted out. "It is a miracle from God."

At six o'clock that morning they took him to the x-ray room. Everything was perfect. The doctor said, "Mr. Quema, you were dead, but you are resurrected."

As I said, this experience was to change our family completely. While my mother was in the chapel praying, I also felt that I must give my life full-time to the Lord in exchange for the life of my father. "Lord, if you have really called me, show me by raising up my father from his deathbed," I had prayed.

Ten months before this I had heard a message on missions.

It was about the Lord of the harvest calling for workers in the fields white unto harvest. I had felt Someone saying, "I want you."

But I did not want to be a minister of the gospel. Besides the facts that I was a woman and that there was so little money for pastors, I was the oldest child in the family and had the responsibility of helping the rest of my brothers and sisters get through school. I wanted to be a doctor or lawyer. My parents also strongly urged me to take up one of these professions.

So I answered the Voice, "Lord, I will become a doctor or lawyer and support other workers with my tithe".

But the Voice wouldn't go away. "I want you." I even promised to give twenty percent of my earnings. But the Lord kept saying, "I want you."

So strongly was I resisting this call that I even stopped going to church for a while. But when my father lay already dead in the hospital, my own will did not seem important any more. I was eager to give up all my own ambitions if the Lord would bring my father back to life.

After this hospital experience I enrolled in Bible school. But it was not until just before graduation that I finally understood what I was to do with my life. There was a youth camp just before graduation and I took this opportunity to really seek the Lord's will for my life. I came forward in one of our meetings to pray and seek His will. Among Pentecostals a common experience is to be "slain of the Lord." This is what happened to me that

night. As I was praying, I lost all consciousness of my surroundings and a vision appeared. It was of a high, high mountain. I kept climbing and climbing. Finally, I reached the top and found a church there. I knew it was Baguio, the place of my birth, because of the pine trees.

From then on I knew that the Lord was calling me to go to Baguio as a pioneer. I didn't really want to go. Pioneering new churches is hard. Also, no one else in the Foursquare church had been called to Baguio, so I knew I would have to go alone, a young girl to a place already bristling with churches.

One other thing stood between my calling and me. This was a matter of health, perhaps a strange confession for a Pentecostal who believes in divine healing. But all through my childhood I was considered the weakling in the family. When I was a child, the doctor said I had an enlarged heart. This had greatly hindered my activities. As I grew older, other doctors diagnosed anemia and low blood pressure. I was very thin and weak. While in high school I fainted many times. These fainting spells were always accompanied by great pain and a severe headache.

Even though my calling was very definite I had determined that I could not become a preacher unless I was strong. I know some have been called of God to serve Him even though they are suffering poor health. Each one must determine for himself what God wants him to do. As for me, I believe it is important to take care of my body, and I knew I wasn't strong enough to carry on the ministries of pioneer church work unless I had good health.

After I had become a Christian I began to pray every time I had a fainting spell, which was usually whenever I got exciting news, either good or bad. An EKG and other tests by a Dr. Luat in the clinic in Cubao brought to light the anemia and low blood pressure problems.

I believe that it was through prayer that gradually the problem disappeared. I continued to pray. One night before I was to be examined by the doctor again, shortly before I was to go to Baguio, I asked the whole church to pray. They did. The next day Dr. Luat was amazed as he checked my heart and read the x-rays. There was no evidence of any heart condition at all. Over a period of three years I received gradual but complete healing. Now there is never any indication that I had these heart conditions. Living and working 5,000 feet above sea level in Baguio, I feel strong and am now stout and healthy. I believe that if it were not for God's healing of my body, I never would have become a minister, and certainly not one working in

pioneer church planting in the mountains of Baguio.

But the changes, as I said, were in the whole family. My father eventually gave up his job and went to Bible school. He is now the pastor of the Ilocano congregation in our Manila Calvary Foursquare Church. Mother kept her promise also, with the great blessing of the Lord. She is the wage earner in the family, and the Lord has tremendously blessed her business.

PIONEERING IN MOUNTAIN PROVINCE

With no place to live and no building for a church, twenty-two-year-old Evelyn headed for the pine-covered mountains of Baguio. Her assignment--start a church, make it self-supporting as soon as possible, start branch churches.

Evelyn, her mother and the house girl of a furloughed missionary arrived in Baguio on a Thursday after a hot, weary, madly racing bus run. On Friday afternoon the trio entered the rambling house of a spinster, and Evelyn knew immediately this was the spot. There was plenty of room for meetings and living. But rent for the whole second floor was 120 pesos -two and a half times her monthly salary. Where would the money come from? "This is where God wants us to meet," she told her mother. "If you are really convinced that this is where the Lord wants you," her mother answered, "I'll pay the rent until the church is established."

Evelyn rented the house. On Saturday, she three passed out tracts in the bustling market area not far away. They invited everyone they met to come to Sunday school and church the next day.

On Sunday morning, June 25, 1963, thirty people came for Sunday school; twenty-nine came for church. None were Christians, but four accepted the Lord that day. Within a few months the group became a self-supporting church, paying a twenty-five peso allowance to the minister and paying the rent for the apartment-church Sunday school.

Evelyn observed that the young people were responding significantly to the gospel. *Why not hold classes right in the school?* she asked herself. In August she went to the principal of City High to ask permission to hold a Bible class during the lunch break. The principal granted permission and an average of twenty-five students attended for a year. Fifteen became Christians--five of them became stalwart members of the Baguio church.

Others became regular attendants at churches nearest their homes.

The "instant church" begun in three days at the second floor apartment had problems with transience. Many of the young converts were students who had come to Baguio for their education. Several students and a few families would accept the Lord and begin to get established in the church. Then school would be out, or job opportunities would shift, and the church had to start over again.

The church also had problems with location. After meeting in the big house for a year, a move was necessary. After another year, a second shift was necessary.

There was a bright spot, however. The young converts took with them the seed of a new church.

For example, six of the young people who accepted the Lord in the original apartment church were eager for her to go to their homes. Evelyn accepted their invitation, and during the Christmas vacation, took the five-hour bus trip to Kilometer 102. Kilometer 102 was a camp for the Held Lumber Company- hardly a spot for a twenty-two-year-old girl to be holding evangelistic services. But ten responded to the invitation that first night. By the end of the week of meetings, seventy-five people in the lumber camp had come forward to make public confession of Christ.

For two years Evelyn followed up this outstation until a full-time worker came in August 1965. In Foursquare parlance, I had by now learned, "outstation" is only a relative term. Kilometer 102 immediately became home base for several other "outstations."

Evelyn found problems among the tribal people in the mountain areas as well as in the Baguio City church. Some older converts, reluctant to leave certain pagan ways, wanted to sacrifice to idols, even though they professed to believe in Christ.

"But the challenging part is when the young ones accept Christ," she said. "Their lives are really changed. There was one boy, for instance, who had been quite a drinker and gambler when I first went to his village. But when he came to know the Lord, he gave it all up. He is now studying in our Bible school in Manila, and will eventually come back as a pastor or pioneer in the mountain areas, Lord willing. He is one of the three now in the Bible school from Mountain Province."

Evelyn's problems were not all external, however. One problem was

being a woman in a vocation usually regarded as a man's province. She faced this issue one day when five ministers from another denomination visited her.

"Why does the Foursquare Church allow lady preachers when the Bible clearly says that women should keep silent in the church?" one of them asked.

"We believe that if the Lord calls we should follow," she said simply, "Foursquare never imposes on women to become ministers. God calls."

She related the life of Aimee Semple McPherson, the founder of the Foursquare Church, and how she had resisted vehemently before following the Lord's will for her life as an evangelist. Evelyn told of her own call. "In fact," she said, "I would never have been a Christian, much less a minister, if it were not that a woman brought the gospel to me."

The verse on "keeping silent" needed some explanation. "Biblical scholars have pointed out to us the cultural conditions in the time of Paul and even the Old Testament," she told the ministers. "In those days the women were untaught and unruly. They were separated from their husbands in the church service. Frequently they would call out to them to ask what the preacher was talking about. Paul was condemning this practice when he was telling them to keep silent. They were to ask their questions at home, and not disturb the service.

"If I'm disobeying, there should be no fruit. If you want to believe I am disobeying God's word, that is all right. Yet I will go on. It is not men or Foursquare that have called me, but God."

Preaching is the most obvious ministry of a pastor, but preaching wasn't Evelyn's strongest gift -it was the ministry of prayer. Her prayer ministry included prayer for the sick -specific asking for divine healing through the power of Christ apart from regular medical attention. She confessed that she was a bit afraid to pray for the sick, though she had had some dramatic answers to such prayer. A sixteen-year-old girl was bitten by a dog, and within two days began to run a fever. Evelyn went to her home and prayed - the girl was healed instantly. At another time, Evelyn prayed for a three-year-old boy whose body was covered with itching, pus-filled sores. The day after she prayed over him, there was improvement in his condition, and within a week he was completely free of the sores.

During my association with Evelyn Quema in 1967, I sensed that the

eventful, successful first three years of her ministry in Baguio were but the prelude to a ministry that would change the whole picture of the Protestant church in Mountain Province. That is what I meant by saying that if one understands Sister Evelyn, he understands the vitality of the Foursquare Church.

PART TWO WATER ON THE FIRE?

LOWER CLASS CHRISTIANS

"All the [Foursquare Church's] publicity and newspaper reports look wonderful, but that's about it," wrote one Filipino pastor. "When you try to find the lasting results from their campaigns and work, there just doesn't seem to be anything solid left."

During the two years (1966 and 1967) of my research and writing, I heard many such skeptical comments from Filipinos, missionaries, and visiting church dignitaries. I couldn't ignore their observations, nor could I skirt the issues. I made a list of the most-often-repeated objections to the rapid growth of the Foursquare Church or of Pentecostals in general, and determined to find the truth as it related to the Foursquare church in the Philippines. By the time I talked with the last of the 217 converts I interviewed, I felt I could give an objective, reliable picture of the denomination as a whole.

I was coming to the crux of my thesis. I had started out to study a rapidly growing denomination to demonstrate that the population was unusually responsive to the gospel and that any church could grow rapidly. But if their statistics could be explained to show that their real growth had been grossly exaggerated, my whole argument would fall apart.

Their statistics were frequently deprecated in these ways: (1) the Pentecostals reached only the lower classes, (2) their converts merely made an emotional response to emotional stimuli, (3) though there were multitudes of "decisions," little fruit remained in solid churches, (4) great numbers of their "converts" came as proselytes from other evangelical churches.

I approached the first objection from the viewpoint of the church growth school of thought and asked myself, *What is wrong with reaching the lower classes or masses?*

The commission that the Lord gave us was to literally "disciple the nations." To disciple the Philippines, where more than eighty percent of the people were in the lower classes, would by definition require that the "masses" be won. It is my impression that most missions have the goal of reaching the masses. We hear much about the population explosion, and we say the mass media--literature, radio, and television- are the only answers to reaching the great number of people now without the gospel. We also hear the strategy of many missions summed up with "we will win the leaders of a community or nation," or "we will reach the students who are the future leaders, and then the rest -the masses- will follow."

If it is true that the goal of missions is to "disciple the nations," and if the Pentecostals are seeing great numbers of the lower classes respond to the gospel, it is to their credit. They are skipping the slow and expensive step of contact work find institution-building to prove their good intentions and are going right to the heart of winning a population to the Lord.

A concept of church growth states that it is not necessarily true that the upper classes must be won before the lower classes can be won. The middle and upper classes, church growth research has shown, are usually the conservative element in a society. They have already achieved many of their goals in life and therefore have the most to lose by change.

It has yet to be shown that if the middle and upper classes respond to the gospel, they will be effective in reaching down to the others. A middle-class church will usually put all its energy into reaching middle-class people.

This undoubtedly happened to many of the historic churches in the Philippines. In the beginning they reached the masses. But as the gospel had its upgrading effect, and the converts' goals in life widened, the churches rose up through the social strata until their aura is now primarily middle class. They are, in many respects, sealed off from the lower classes, and that is one reason why they are not growing with the speed of the Pentecostal churches.

There is also a cultural overhang among the fundamental groups who have come to the Philippines since the war. The missionaries, brought up in middle class American churches, instinctively slanted their programs toward middle class people, perhaps without even realizing it. But the Pentecostals

avoided the snare of programs that, theoretically, should eventually result in the gospel sweeping through a nation. They were no longer experimenting with a theory that some day may prove right. They were involved in the most direct process of discipling a nation.

The goal of missions was to reach great numbers of the lower classes, I reasoned. That goal was to be praised. But was it true that the Pentecostals reached only the lower classes? I questioned one of the Foursquare pastors.

"Who are we to determine who is going to respond to the gospel?" he said. "We just clearly present the message to all and let God speak to hearts. All kinds of people respond."

The pastor was right.

My "interview charts" showed that about one-fourth of the Foursquare converts, at the time of their conversions, were farmers or farmers' wives. About half of these were landowners, the other half were tenant farmers or hired farm laborers. Nine percent of the converts worked as laborers. Sixteen percent I classified as skilled or semi-skilled –carpenters, bakers, cooks, tailors, photographers, printers, small manufacturers, and shop owners. Government clerks, salesmen, company managers, and other white-collar workers accounted for another six percent. Three percent were teachers, and another two percent were in such upper middle-class positions as lawyer, dentist, and wealthy businessman. Seventy-three converts, or about thirty-six percent of the total number of interviewees, were students ranging in educational levels from elementary school to college.

The evidence indicated that the Foursquare Church *was* reaching people from all strata of the society. If the converts were weighted heavily toward the masses, it was because the population itself was so weighted. To discard the Pentecostals because they appeal only to the masses is therefore unreasonable. It is like deprecating a conquering guerrilla band because they have only primitive weapons.

SQUASHES OR OAKS

The second argument went like this: The poorly educated masses are treated to an emotional experience; therefore their conversion is shallow and there is no real spiritual depth and strength.

In the beginning, I think I expected to meet a series of over-emotional,

uncomfortably oppressive types that would make me want to squirm away. But with one or two exceptions, I was disappointed in my expectations. The Foursquare people I met in the Philippines--simple farmers, missionaries, athletes, lady ministers -were normal, natural, pleasant human beings who were at peace with God and at peace with the world.

I enjoyed being with them. They were friendly and relaxed. They included me in their warmth and love of life, and I found myself drawn to them.

One day three nationals, Don McGregor and I crowded into a jeep, and for three days we traveled over the dustiest, bumpiest roads, I thought, in the whole world. We slept on bare bamboo floors, ate cold rice and crackers and cheese, bathed in icy streams. We interviewed pastors and church members, took our turns speaking in a missionary conference at one church, and held services in tribal churches far back in the mountains.

Anyone who has traveled under similar circumstances knows well the kind of personality conflicts that can develop. Yet this was one of the most pleasant trips I had ever taken. I heard no complaints during the trip, though this is not to say that the nationals acted as if they were suffering for the Lord and somehow enduring it. Their fun and comradeship was zesty and bubbling with joy. At the beginning of the trip Veronico Suan, the Mindanao District supervisor, had graciously insisted that McGregor and I share the more comfortable front seat of the jeep. Then he spent the trip laughing at us from the bed he had fashioned from the baggage in the back.

When we returned to the city of Davao, Suan took us to dinner at the Insular Hotel, one of the swankiest hotels in the Philippines. He was as much at home in these plush surroundings with a combo playing the background as he was in a jungle hut in Bukidnon.

Of course, I did find noise and emotion in the Foursquare church services, but not to the extent I had expected. And even these displays varied from the more sophisticated city churches which were hardly unlike my own Baptist background to some of the rural churches where there was a great deal of public display.

One of the favorite Scripture verses in our middle-class American churches concerning worship is 1Corinthians 14:40: "Let all things be done decently and in order" (KJV). I found the Foursquares quoting the same verse. But they took "all things" literally, including the Old Testament

exhortations to praise the Lord with clapping, shouting, and making a joyful noise.

Usually their services were "in order." There was a time for audibly praising the Lord, frequently before a pastoral prayer, or at some other time when the leader would say, "let us praise the Lord together." They clapped with most of their congregational songs and shouted "amen," especially when prompted by some point in the pastor's message. Then at the close of many of their services there was an opportunity for members of the congregation to come forward and pour out their hearts to the Lord in audible praise and petition.

Such activities could have been disconcerting, but on many occasions I found it very stirring. I was frequently reminded of my Christian education training at Wheaton College. If there was any great impression a C.E. grad took away with him, it is that true worship must be restored to the man in the pew. The preachers seem to have taken over the right to worship in church--they do the praying, the reading of the Bible, the meditating and the giving forth of the Word. The Pentecostals simply and effectively restored that right to the man in the pew. He prayed and entered into the prayer of the leader. He entered into the sermon. Occasionally he ministered directly to the whole congregation with a word of prophecy, or a word from the Lord in tongues which was then interpreted by another layman.

I was not personally offended by such public participation in the services. Perhaps I suffered some culture shock because it was different from what I had previously experienced, but I could not come to the conclusion that it was less than Christian. I did not feel that I observed any excesses, though this does not mean there are none in Pentecostal circles.

I talked with some of the Foursquare missionaries about this one night. "What many people don't realize," said Jack Richey, a missionary in Romblon, "is that we are opposed to excesses as much as anybody. Nothing gives us more grief than to see nothing but exhibitions of the flesh passed off as the work of the Spirit."

"And what's more," said Don McGregor, "we are probably in a much better position than most to recognize what is of the flesh and what is truly of the Spirit. We can therefore teach our people to see the difference."

Richey told me of the time when, early in his ministry, a great outpouring of the Spirit on the island of Romblon resulted in a host of people coming to the Lord and in many new churches. "But there were excesses that some of

the people got into that almost completely destroyed the work," he said. "It was more than a year before we were able to teach the people to control the flesh and really let the Spirit do His ministry."

"Oh, we know there are plenty of excesses," said McGregor. "But what most people don't realize is that we are opposed to these more than others are. But, as in the case of almost any other movement, we are frequently judged only by the excesses people hear about. Yet these are the very things we constantly try to overcome. Sure there will be excesses. Look at Simon in the book of Acts. As soon as he saw the remarkable results of the filling of the Spirit, he wanted the power for his own personal profit. Wherever there is the true work of the Spirit the devil will be quick to raise up the counterfeit. Look at the Corinthian churches. These were planted and taught by Paul himself, but this was no guarantee that there would be no misuse of the gifts of the Spirit. We feel that we want to be just as zealous as Paul in condemning and correcting any excesses that occur in our churches. We know that excesses will never win converts or plant churches."

The Foursquares *were* planting many churches and winning many converts. Was there any relationship between their emotion and the number of converts and churches? There was no question in my mind, after observing the Foursquare churches for many months, but that their overruling passion was to win converts.

The question still remained, however, whether their converts were being impressed by an emotional experience, or whether they were responding to the person of Jesus Christ and going on to serve Him. For the answer, I referred again to the testimonies of the converts. I had asked them, one by one, why they had become Foursquare Christians. None gave a response indicating some ecstatic experience.

The greatest number of responses related to the message of the gospel that they heard, rather than its presentation or their personal experiences. Digging into my file of interviews, I discovered that fifty-nine percent of those who had come to the Foursquare Church from Roman and Philippine Catholic churches referred to some specific Bible teaching as a significant factor in their conversions.

The comment of Elizabeth Concepcion, an Ilocana, was typical of many I heard. "The first time I went to a Foursquare church I was enlightened by the teaching. Through the Sunday school class and the morning sermon, I came to know that Christ died for my sins and for the sins of everyone," she said.

Others revealed the mental process they went through while becoming Foursquare. Mrs. Emilia Romero, a former Roman Catholic from Iloilo, gave this testimony:

"As a teenager I lived very near a Foursquare church, but I never went for fear of the priest. Whenever I went to confession he would warn me never to read Protestant literature and never to enter a Protestant church. Many years later, however, I was forced into close contact with the Foursquare people. One night I began to hemorrhage.

"Since the Foursquare people were having prayer meeting that night, my mother went to them for help. They took me immediately to the hospital. Later some of them visited me in the hospital and told me the church was praying for me. This touched my heart.

"After I came home, the pastor came and talked with me about the Lord. He invited me to the parsonage where he gave me a booklet about the errors of the priests and the doctrine of the Virgin Mary and others. Then a group of people surrounded me and prayed for me. This touched my heart also. I cried and cried without knowing why.

"That Sunday I went to their church for the first time. I felt the power of God. At the invitation at the end I raised my hand.

"I had so many questions that they sent an elder to my house to fully explain the way of salvation. Besides my Roman Catholic background, I had been taught by the Iglesia ni Cristo for three years. I was so confused, for they had taught that Manalo was an angel, They also made me believe that Christ was not God, only a man. I also asked them about the Catholic doctrines, especially about getting to heaven after I die. They had taught me that after I die someone must pray for me and make many payments to the priest, and that eventually I would get to heaven.

"I was so surprised to learn from the Bible that this was not true. I had already paid so much. But now I was enlightened. I really understood. I saw for the first time how really true the Bible was."

A number of people said they had checked with the Bible to see for themselves if the Foursquare messages were true.

Mr. Asuncion, 65, said he saw a poster saying "Christ is The Answer", and attended the Foursquare meeting. "The message sounded thrilling," he told me. "It touched my heart. It was different from anything I had ever heard before." On the second visit he tried to buy a Bible, but they gave him one instead. "I read the Bible and found the truth of what they were

preaching about," he said.

Mr. Baligat, 45, of Odiongan, tells of how he was confronted with the Adventists and the Foursquare people at the same time. "Rev. Diaz came to visit our home every Sunday. Then some came from the Adventists and asked if they could hold instruction classes on Saturday. This went on for some time as we studied which one we would go into. I let both groups come, but told them that once I had made up my mind the group that lost out would not bother me again. We finally decided on the Pentecostals because they answered all our questions from the Bible and not just from logic."

One young man, after struggling with the doctrines of the Iglesia ni Cristo, Aglipayans and Pentecostals, finally bought a Bible of his own. After holding the first Bible of my own, I cried in the jeep on the way home. At home I prayed that the Lord would open my understanding. This was the first time I read the Bible with all my heart. Tears flowed down my face. I read the whole New Testament in the first week and Christ planted it in my heart."

Artemio Ferriol was one of the last of his family to accept the Lord. "My brother insisted that I not just follow the family," he told me, "but that I decide for myself. So I studied the Scriptures before I accepted the Lord and found that nothing in the Foursquare Church contradicted the Bible."

A former Aglipayan in Odiongan related how he had studied different religions while he was a student. There were Aglipayans, Roman Catholics, and Protestants in his family so he studied the Bible for himself to see which church was right. "After hearing Rev. McGregor speak at a Foursquare meeting," he said, "I was touched and knew that the Holy Spirit was speaking to me. I realized I was getting older and still did not know Christ. That night I accepted Him and for the first time I realized that I had found the real truth. I realized that the others did not know what they were talking about."

A middle-aged neighbor of Jack Richey said that he talked with Richey about the Scriptures for months until he finally realized that "Jesus Christ must be superhuman."

Domingo Familiar, presently superintendent of the central division of the Romblon-Mindoro District, says that he was quite religious as a youth. "I never missed Mass in the Oglipayan church," he said. "I hungered for salvation, and sought the will of God. When I heard Rev. Diaz speak in a plaza meeting, I was troubled, so I began reading my Bible. I read until I

was sure I ought to accept Christ. Then I found real assurance of salvation."

The Biblical message of sin, redemption through the death of Christ, and the soon return of Christ was preached, and people bred and reared in the Catholic tradition recognized it as the truth. The largest single response to why they accepted the gospel was on this Bible doctrine level. The people compared the gospel with their previous teachings and experiences, and concluded that it must be the truth.

This indicated to me that the people responded with their minds as well as with their emotions and wills. Their response was not a blind following of the authority figure in the family: it was not merely an emotional experience that withers in the light of reality. It was not a mass reaction circumventing individual understanding and decision. That these people responded to a positive, straightforward presentation of the Scriptures also indicated to me that this was not a time for a subtle, low-key, "soft-sell" approach to presenting the gospel in the Philippines.

I found that the church on Bohol more or less typified the effect of the gospel. There the converts had come from a Roman Catholic background where they had been untaught, confused, bound by sin and vices. They now expressed buoyant confidence and joy in their Christian experience. The entire membership was active, attending services twice on Sunday, Tuesday night prayer meeting, Friday night Bible study, 4:00 A.M. prayer meeting once a week, and all night prayer meeting once a month. They fasted every Tuesday, praying especially for revival. They tithed their meager incomes; they supported a full-time pastor. They had donated land for the church; they had erected and paid for two church buildings and a parsonage. All of them persevered through ridicule from the strong Roman Catholic community; many of them faithfully stood through real persecution from their own families. They believed and understood the historic fundamentals of the Scriptures. Many of them, since their conversion, found continuing physical health when before they had been plagued by constant illnesses. They evangelized.

It would be difficult to call this congregation immature- growing "as fast as squashes" because there was no real substance to their Christian experiences. That their worship services were not strict patterns of middle-class American services was obvious. But it was also obvious that these people knew Jesus as Lord, were zealously and effectively living for and serving Him, and that they will be among the saints when we all meet to worship at

the feet of Jesus.

EXAGGERATIONS

Now what about those statistics'? Was it true that the reports greatly exaggerated the actual number who became solid, productive, attending church members? If the Pentecostals were gaining thirty-six converts, but were losing thirty-five out the back door, what was the point?

I'll confess that I was a bit startled when I first looked at their annual reports. In church after church, district after district, the reports indicated that the number of converts listed for the year far exceeded the number of new church members. Eighty to ninety percent of the converts were not joining the churches.

Was this a good record or a bad one'? I listened to the explanations of these figures, but I reserved my conclusions until I could check the explanations against what I could observe in the churches.

The answer came on a morning when I least expected it. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Richey, Don McGregor and I had arisen at about five-thirty in the Odiongan, Tablas Island Foursquare headquarters for the Romblon-Mindanao district. The plan for the day was to visit Borocay Island, also known as Treasure Island for its overwhelming beauty.

After breakfast there was an hour's delay as Richey gave instructions to the carpenters working on a new Sunday school unit of the church. Then a thirty-minute drive over a dusty, rutted road brought us to the tiny fishing village or' Looc. Our *banca* was ready, but the tide was out; it would be two hours before we could leave.

We hiked to the parsonage of the local Foursquare church. This parsonage, I learned, had been built by the church for about 200 pesos. It was a *nipa* hut, so close to its neighbor that one could easily lean out the window and shake hands with people next door. The hut, about twelve feet square, was divided into an entryway and a kitchen, with a grass-woven wall setting apart a small bedroom. It was neat and clean and homey, the new straw walls and roof giving the hut a sweet smell. Underneath this hut, which was built on four posts, was the "tithe coop." When members brought their tithe of chickens, the birds were put in the wired-off pen under the house to await sale or the dinner table.

Don McGregor suggested I interview the pastor, but I wasn't interested. This was to be a day off, and the church was not one of those I had planned to visit. But one doesn't easily discourage Don McGregor. So on this drowsy day, when I was already dulled by the mid-morning heat and the short sleep the night before, I didn't have the energy to resist.

Wearily I adjusted the stool offered me, resting the legs on the more sturdy slats of the bamboo floor. I felt as limp and moist as the notepaper sticking to my arm. I began interviewing Miss Emma Militar who headed the two-girl team pastoring the Looc Foursquare Church. Emma was a slender young woman with a bright smile and twinkling eyes. It occurred to me that if I had seen her on some university campus, she would have blended perfectly into the scene. At least the morning wouldn't be a total loss

....

The interview was interesting, though fairly routine, until I asked her about the results of her ministry in the seven months she had been in Looc. When I asked her how many converts she had had in this time, she disappeared into the bedroom and emerged shortly with a little black notebook. She studied it for a few moments, then announced that there had been fourteen converts. Not bad, I thought, for a coed type just seven months out of Bible school. A glance at the page, however, revealed what appeared to be many more than fourteen names.

"Who are all the others you have listed?" I asked.

Emma told me there were ninety-three names in the book, each name representing a person who had made a public profession of Christ, had shown at least some evidence of a changed life, and had attended some meetings after conversion. Of the ninety-three, however, only thirteen regularly attended the little church.

This seemed interesting. Fourteen regular church attendants out of ninety-three conversions roughly compared with the ten to twenty percent I had seen on the Foursquare Church's statistical sheets. Maybe the little black notebook would give a graphic illustration of what was happening to the other eighty percent.

I was wide-awake now as I asked Pastor Emma to take me through the book, person by person, and tell me what she knew about those converts. She did, and when she was through the book, I understood what had happened to the seventy-nine converts who didn't attend the Looc church.

Fifty-one of those seventy-nine were actively attending Foursquare

outstations. Most of those who didn't attend regularly lived long distances from any church, and some were prevented from attending by their families. Only nine percent of the ninety-three were listed as simply "inactive."

How would these statistics be recorded in the district and eventually in the Foursquare national headquarters? I learned from pastors, supervisors and missionaries that only those converts who became minimally active in an organized church were even counted as "converts."

So in the Looc church, only the fourteen regular attendants would have been listed in any statistics as "converts." And of the converts, only those who were baptized and had officially joined the church would be listed as "new members" for the year. It was this category that included the national average of ten to twenty percent of all converts becoming members.

If this national average were projected to the Looc church, only three of the ninety-three converts would be counted as members. The fifty-one who had accepted Christ and were actively attending outstation services would be listed nowhere outside the local church. Those who made profession of faith in Christ but were not attending a church or outstation would also not be listed anywhere.

As I visited the fifteen churches and interviewed the pastors from a few dozen other churches, I found that the Looc picture was fairly uniform. At the end of 1967, the Foursquare Church reported about 11,000 communicant members and about 80,000 converts in the organized churches. We can add a conservative 100,000 converts, who at least once actively attended Foursquare meetings, when we take into consideration that there were nearly as many outstations as there were churches, and that consistently more converts attended the outstations than attended the mother churches.

For a church with 180,000 converts -those who made a public profession of Christ, were counseled with personally and who attended for awhile -a stated communicant membership of 11,000 does anything but suggest that their statistics were inflated. The figure of 11,000 was used in computing the thirty-six to one ratio of growth per foreign missionary (Chapter 2). So the rapid growth of the Foursquare Church in the Philippines could not be discredited by saying that their statistics were exaggerated and meaningless.

Another way to check the statistics was to compare the average church attendance with the stated communicant membership. In many of the churches, the attendance on the Sunday I was there exceeded the number on

the church rolls. The Luzon District of the Foursquare Church in 1965, for example, reported a total communicant membership of 650 in eighteen churches. Total average attendance was 586 in morning worship services, and 684 in the Sunday school.

On top of this, the eighteen churches reported thirty-seven outstations and extension classes with an average attendance of 639, and four jail chapels with an average attendance of 290. The average attendance at morning worship services then, was ninety percent of the total membership and the outstation average attendance an additional ninety-eight percent of the membership.

A denomination with an average attendance in morning worship that almost equals its membership, and more than doubles that number in its outstation ministry, is a phenomenon indeed. But I found that the Foursquare people rebel against the idea of seeing how large they can make their church membership rolls. "The philosophy among most of our pastors seems to be," McGregor told me, "that as long as our good workers are members, it doesn't matter if the others are members or not. Our ministers don't work as hard to get the converts who are attending church to become members as they do to get new converts to the Lord."

SHEEP STEALERS

After an article concerning a Foursquare activity appeared in the Overseas Crusade *Crusader* magazine, one evangelical pastor wrote a letter to the editor complaining about a Pentecostal (though not Foursquare) minister in his area. "He goes around telling people that the Pentecostals are better because they are baptized with the Spirit and have a healing ministry," he wrote. "He is just trying to get our people to his church."

I mentioned this complaint to some Foursquare leaders, and they deplored the action.

But what were the facts? Did the Foursquare Church grow in the Philippines largely by "stealing" from other evangelical churches? Since I had asked each interviewee about his religious affiliation before becoming Foursquare and why he had changed, it was not hard to find the answer.

Seventy percent of the converts I talked with were from non-evangelical backgrounds; most of them were former Roman or Philippine Catholics. In

every case, these converts said they were certain they had not been believers. No transformation had taken place. They had copied the world with its habits, materialism and hopelessness.

The Foursquare Church at the end of 1967 listed its official membership as 10,961. If seventy percent of these came from the non-evangelical groups, it meant that 7,672 members were not transfers from other evangelical churches. Even if this were its total membership, the figure is still far above other comparable (in arrival in the Philippines) evangelical groups. It cannot, then, be stated categorically that their rapid growth came simply from proselytizing.

What about the thirty percent who came from evangelical churches? This statistic, it seemed to me, became significant only when compared with other evangelical churches.

One brief study was made in 1965. Eli Yasi of Philippine Crusades visited six churches (Christian and Missionary Alliance, United Church of Christ, Methodist, Brethren, Disciples of Christ, and Southern Baptist) in Manila and asked to see the lists of converts for the previous two years. He went over the lists with the pastors and determined, among other things, the former religious affiliation of each convert. The churches reported a total of 126 youth and adult converts. Thirty-eight (thirty percent) of them claimed Protestant affiliation before their conversion.

One theological professor from the States, visiting the Philippines for a three-month study, gave me his observation that "almost all" of his large, historic denomination's growth in the Philippines was a result of transfers.

A further and probably more significant consideration was why the thirty percent transferred. As I looked at the interviews, I found that of the sixty-five interviewees who came from an evangelical background, thirty-nine were convinced that they were not converted before becoming Foursquare, and ten were not sure of their salvation. Therefore, forty-nine of the sixty-five, or eighty percent of the transfers, were either unconverted or unsure of their salvation in their previous evangelical experience. Only twelve of the 217 interviewees, then, could be classed as "proselytes" -less than six percent of the total Foursquare membership.

The clearest evidence of "sheep stealing" I found was in the Batuan church on Bohol, early in the research. Seven of the sixteen Foursquare members I talked with said they had been members of the only evangelical church in the town before the Foursquare Church came along. In each case,

they had been reared in Roman Catholic homes. One old woman said, "In 1939, I left idol worship to join the evangelical church. But there was no satisfaction in my soul until I attended the Foursquare church and accepted the Lord in an evangelistic service."

Others that I interviewed throughout the time of research mentioned the pressures put on them by their former churches. One young man gave this testimony:

"I was forced to leave my Baptist church after I was baptized with the Spirit. My pastor publicly preached that the work of the Pentecostals was of the devil. But I had personally witnessed the unbelievable miracles of healing and I had found the missionaries true to their word. There was no evil in them. And I had a transforming experience when I was baptized with the Spirit. I know I was a Christian before, but this was a new depth of experience that I could not deny. So when our pastor said it was of the devil, the only thing I could do was leave the church. I might have remained in the Baptist church and kept my Pentecostal experience to myself if he had not insisted on ascribing to the devil what I knew had come from the Lord."

A young minister in Davao pointed out that he had been an active member of another evangelical church when one of their ministers joined a Foursquare church. He began preaching the Foursquare doctrines from Baptist pulpits, and the man I was interviewing was assigned to follow him around and preach against him. But the messages were good. He spoke nothing against the Baptists, but gave a positive message of Christ as the Savior, Healer, Baptizer and coming King. The Baptist church had attacked other groups, but this minister did not. Finally my interviewee attended a Foursquare prayer meeting to judge for himself.

"I felt something different," he said. "For some reason I started crying. Finally I went forward and for the first time in my life; I really repented of my sins. This was the first time that I had truly accepted Christ into my life."

The testimonies throughout the interviewing emphasized repentance and a change of life-style that converts had not experienced in their other Protestant experience. Pataledo Tabin, a 64-year-old man from Ilocos Norte, spoke for many when he gave his testimony.

"I was brought up a Roman Catholic, but it didn't satisfy me. So when I migrated to Mindanao I was looking for the truth. I found it in an evangelical church. This I consider the second stage of my spiritual experience. Being

Roman Catholic was first. But I did not find complete salvation in this church. I was saved but not delivered. I still smoked, drank, went to cock fights and dances. In this church I was still in the wilderness. I had been delivered from Egypt, but I was not yet in the promised land."

A number of those with a background in other evangelical churches were influenced markedly by a change in the life of some member of the family. Antonio Lagasca of Manila says that he was not saved in his former evangelical church. Then his children began attending Foursquare. He noticed the great change in their lives, and, when invited, attended an evangelistic meeting. He went forward the first night to accept Christ.

Another common denominator among transfers from evangelical churches was the realization that they were untaught in the truths of the Bible.

Miss Nora Hermosura of Manila said, "In the other church I had mental confusion. I misunderstood everything. I had many disappointments. I lost rest. I prayed and prayed but never found the peace of the Lord." It was not until her formerly Roman Catholic sister invited her to a Foursquare meeting that she began to understand the Bible. "The message enlightened me," she said of the first meeting she attended. "I kept coming back and became very engrossed in reading the Bible. Finally I saw that I had to accept Christ as my personal Savior, and at last found peace of mind."

A few transfers (eight) were greatly influenced by one of the more distinguishing marks of Pentecostalism--divine healing.

Mr. Pizarro of Davao related how he and his family were on the way to the hospital one morning with their ten-year-old daughter. They happened to be listening to a radio program on which a Foursquare missionary was praying for the sick. "The fever of our daughter was instantly gone," he said, "and we attended the Foursquare church from then on."

Mrs. Villamor was an active member of an evangelical church, before her baby was healed. "One day in 1961," she says, "we were caring for our 18-month-old daughter who had a very severe boil. Suddenly she stopped breathing. We could find no pulse, and she turned very pale. We knew the faith of one of our Foursquare neighbors, so we called him for prayer. The baby came back to life immediately and the boil began to heal. After this we believed and began attending the Foursquare church."

Another member of the same church says a boil on his father-in-law's

back was healed within a day through prayer. "Because of this," he says, "I came to the church. I went forward at the altar call and felt the touch of the Lord for the first time in my life."

One young man I talked with testified that his father, a lay evangelist in another evangelical church, had been sick with advanced tuberculosis. He was invited to attend a Foursquare church meeting. He went, he said, because he was curious and because he thought he might have the chance to argue against a false cult. He remained skeptical throughout the meeting, but at the end the speaker asked for those who wanted prayer for healing. He raised his hand, was prayed for and instantly healed.

The next day his family was completely surprised. He told them he was joining the Foursquare church and began witnessing to the neighbors. He gathered some of them in the boarding house and held services. During the following year, he pioneered and planted three churches with over 100 converts in active attendance. He had never done anything like this as a lay evangelist in his former church.

Nearly all the sixty-five evangelicals who became Foursquare members, then, transferred because they found a new, dynamic, living experience with Christ. It was interesting to observe that only five of the transfers mentioned the teaching of the Holy Spirit as one reason why they were attracted to the Foursquare Church. No one mentioned speaking in tongues as a reason.

A significant observation can be made concerning these Foursquare members who came from other evangelical churches: Virtually none came from churches where they had a satisfactory Christian experience. So those evangelical churches in the Philippines who stress a conversion through Jesus Christ and who adequately teach their converts the basic doctrines of the Bible are apparently in no danger of losing members to the Foursquare Church. My experience with the Foursquare leaders is that they are not interested in getting the active members from other churches. Their outstations, home Bible studies, evangelistic meetings, and church services are open to everyone. If other evangelicals attend and later decide to join the Foursquare church, they are not turned away.

Dr. Donald McGavran frequently stresses this point in his book, *Multiplying Churches in the Philippines*. There is a great need for what he calls "Protestant certainty." When church members know the difference between a Roman Catholic "Christian" and a true believer, when they have assurance of their own salvation in Jesus Christ, when they have a good

foundation of Bible teaching, they will be a strong, evangelizing and multiplying body. The experience of the Foursquare Church in the Philippines indicated that there were probably many Protestant churches that could not be so described.

Was the Foursquare Church growing by proselytizing? The question could be turned around to ask if it was not adding new members to other churches. A number of times during my research I heard of new converts and, in some cases, entire churches being turned over to others because the Foursquare Church had no workers to send. There were also 180,000 people who made public professions of faith in Christ and showed true conversion by a change in life. Only 11,000 of these became official members of Foursquare churches. Surely many of the remaining 169,000 found their way into other churches.

For many months during the writing of this book, I weighed the idea of considering an objection to the theology of the Foursquare Church. My basic thesis of the research would collapse, of course, if it could be shown that the theology of the Pentecostals was less than Christian. But as the months of research passed, I found it increasingly difficult to doubt the genuineness of their biblical Christianity.

Several things reassured me. One was the fact that they were members in good standing of the National Association of Evangelicals. If this group, so zealous in protecting sound conservative theology, had welcomed them into fellowship, how could I hope to add or detract from their conclusions? A second reassurance was a statement in McGavran's *Church Growth in Mexico* (page 113):

Bishop Newbigin of the United Church of South India has said somewhere, "If any church believes in the deity of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible and manifests the fruits of the Spirit, we are on dangerous grounds to question its validity. By that standard each Pentecostal growth forces old-line denominations to consider whether Pentecostals may not have a valuable contribution to make. Should we not recognize in the Pentecostal denominations one of God's rich gifts to His Universal Church?"

With this in mind, I decided not to take up the theology of the

Pentecostals as a separate objection. I was ready, then, to take a careful look at *why* they grow.



**PART THREE
WOOD FOR THE FIRE**

PRESENCE OF THE CHURCH

During the six months that I conducted the interviews, a brief dialogue

passed on to us at the Institute of Church Growth repeatedly flashed into my mind.

"How do you account for the fact that your church is growing in this area?" Dr. McGavran had asked a missionary.

"Because it's there," came the laconic reply.

In some places and at some times a population is so ripe that if a church only holds meetings, people will be attracted to them and become members of the church. The experiences of person after person led me to conclude that a general responsiveness to the gospel was one of the big factors in the Foursquare growth in the Philippines.

One man, for example, said that loudspeakers in a nearby Foursquare church sent the message right into his bedroom. Others mentioned that they lived in areas where buildings were so jammed together that they heard whole church services even without loudspeakers.

Thirty-seven of the interviewees said they had walked by a church, outstation meeting, or plaza evangelistic service and were attracted to the church. A number of the interviewees mentioned that they were contacted by the church or heard about the church because they lived nearby. (Many of the pastors, in telling me how they started their churches, said the immediate neighborhood provided many of the converts.) One interviewee said he accepted the Lord and became a member of a Foursquare church after working as a carpenter on the church building. A few said that their children played in the yard of the missionary or national pastor and through this were exposed to the gospel.

Twenty-two mentioned that they had first heard the gospel in their own homes or in homes of relatives or neighbors. Forty percent of all the converts mentioned they had been invited to church by a friend, relative, neighbor, missionary, or national pastor. Three people mentioned that they had accepted the Lord because a pastor or a missionary had temporarily boarded in their homes. Two said they were hired as musicians for the congregation before accepting Christ.

Altogether, eighty percent mentioned -they were not asked specifically about this -that they first encountered the Foursquare church "because it was there." It was significant that expensive mass media, exhausting promotional work, or huge city churches were not needed to bring in the converts. The church grew rapidly, and it seemed to grow almost effortlessly.

The presence of one growing denomination in a country proves that any

denomination can grow. A sportsman pulling fish out of the stream demonstrates at least one thing--the fish are there. He might be successful because of his skill or bait or special knowledge of this fishing hole, but he cannot catch fish if there aren't any fish in the pond. So, if some churches or denominations in the Philippines are not growing rapidly, it is not because there is not a large number of people who are ready to respond to the gospel.

Missions often give many reasons for their growth or lack of growth. They give theological reasons, reasons dealing with methods, skill and effectiveness of certain missionaries, paying or not paying ministers, use or nonuse of institutions to break down prejudices, learning the language or not learning the language, and so on. But church growth research reveals that two mission stations of the same denomination, using the same approach and methods and displaying equal spiritual zeal and correct theology, can grow with widely differing results. One is working in a responsive area, the other is not.

Besides the fact that the Foursquare Church was growing "because it was there," my research in 1967 brought to light other evidences tending to support the idea that the Filipino people at this time were responsive people.

One evidence was the age at which the converts were brought to Christ. We have been carefully taught in the United States that unless we reach people for Christ while they are young, we have very little chance of reaching them later in life. The theory is that impressionable children and youth are more ready to learn, accept, and believe than are adults who have already made up their minds and set their life patterns.

This was not true of the Foursquare converts in the Philippines. Sixty-six percent of the converts had accepted Christ after they had passed their teenage years. Almost two-thirds of them became Christians after their twentieth birthdays. The median age for conversion was twenty-four (half the converts were twenty-four or older and half were twenty-four or younger). The average age at the time of conversion was almost twenty-eight. More twenty-two-year-olds accepted Christ than people of any other age. The statistics also showed a relatively large number who had accepted Christ in their thirties and forties. Seven percent were fifty years old or older.

The Foursquare Church, then, usually found its converts among the thinking, maturing adults whose life patterns should have been well established, and whose resistance to change and new ideas should have been

firmly developed. But obviously something in their personal, religious, political, and economical environment was breaking down these normal patterns and making a new religious idea a live option.

These same forces, naturally, were playing on other Filipinos. This encouraged us to believe that at least some of the homogeneous units of the population were ripe for innovation.

FAMILIES

The story of how the gospel spread through the family of Crispin Gondales, a farmer in Kidapawan, Cotabato, Mindanao, illustrates the experience of many Foursquare families. In 1957, he was given a number of gospel tracts by Foursquare people, and through reading these, he "just felt saved." A year later his wife accepted Christ and then his four children accepted Him. They all became regularly attending members of the Foursquare church in Kidapawan. His example was then followed by his two brothers and three sisters, who were all married, and their wives and husbands. Twenty-three children in the five homes also accepted Christ.

As a result of the conversion of Gondales, thirty-eight others attended regularly at the local Foursquare church and all the adults made a personal commitment to Christ. The Gondales family conversion appeared to be typical in the Philippines.

Japan, another Asian nation with strong family relationships, provides a contrast. While I was at the Institute of Church Growth, George Martindale, a missionary in Japan, was also studying there. He had observed that in Japan the gospel did not flow along family lines unless the patriarch of the family accepted Christ. Only then the rest of the family could be expected to follow his leadership. The more common experience was that a Christian was ostracized by his family. Indeed, the pressures were so great that some statistics indicated that for every one hundred converts, only one became a church member.

In the United States, where individualism is a virtue, we also find that the gospel does not typically spread through family groups. When I mentioned the family response pattern in the Philippines to a visiting theologian from the States, his immediate reply was, "That's bad, isn't it?" he probably pictured the authority figure in the family accepting Christ and then

pronouncing the rest of the family "converted." This was perhaps a legitimate fear, but it was not happening among the Foursquare people in the Philippines.

The interviews clearly showed a pattern of each person making a personal, individual commitment to Jesus Christ. Not once did I have the feeling that I was talking with someone who had had only a secondhand spiritual experience. Most of the interviewees could tell me the exact date on which they had personally accepted Christ. These were not family group decisions. Rather, the pattern was one of the gospel leaping from one member of the family to another over a period of days or weeks or years.

The research also showed that the gospel did not consistently flow from the authority figure in the family. A son or daughter, husband or wife, mother or father was the first to accept Christ, and from them the gospel spread to other members of the family. Sometimes aunts and uncles, cousins or in-laws, were the first Christians in a family.

In further answer to the theologian's question, Dr. McGavran has pointed out that when converts come to Christ as families, they become stronger Christians. Families help each other to grow. They attend church together; they have family devotions; they tithe the family income; parents dedicate their children for the ministry; they suffer no social dislocation. Each member can carry on a normal life pattern without undue pressure.

The statistics showed that after one member of the family accepted Christ, an average of ten other family members followed. The ten included only those who made a personal and public profession of Christ, and began to regularly attend a Foursquare church.

Al Chaves and his wife were first introduced to the Lescano family in Naga, Cebu, by an aunt who had gone to Mindanao and become a Foursquare Christian. The Chaves' visited the home and Mrs. Chaves brought the message. (They later learned that while she was speaking, one of the sons was trying to borrow a gun so he could kill the American woman.) But the old father and mother, whose lives had been ravaged by excessive drinking, accepted Christ. The change in their lives at first startled and then encouraged other members of the family. When I visited the Naga church some eight years later, the gospel had been accepted by the Lescano's nine married sons and daughters who had led their wives and husbands and children to Christ. Three single children of the old Lescanos also accepted Christ which brought the total number of converts in the Lescano family to

fifty-seven. The church they established was made up of this one extended family.

My research included interviews with only 217 converts, but by the time I had finished questioning them, they had told me about another 1,907 family members who had accepted Christ. This represented about 190 different households. But they also told me about other family members who had not accepted Christ. The total number of people about whom I got direct or indirect information was 2,124 converts and 542 unconverted family members -a total of 2,657 Filipinos who had encountered the gospel through the Foursquare Church.

A study of the still unconverted family members was as enlightening as the study of the converts themselves. (More than one-fourth of those interviewed reported that there was no one in their families who remained an unbeliever. When the gospel came, it literally spread through the whole household and left none outside the fold.) Two hundred and one (thirty-seven percent) of the unconverted family members lived in a distant city or province. Sixty-seven (twelve percent) of the unconverted family members were spoken of as sympathizers-many regularly attended church though they had not yet made a personal commitment.

Though many converts said that at first their families were opposed to their becoming evangelical Christians, only sixteen (three percent) of the unconverted family members were still violently opposed to them. These were often referred to as "die-hard" Catholics or Aglipayans or Iglesia ni Cristos. A number of other hard-to-classify reasons could help explain why the gospel had not reached all members of the families.

But the basic pattern of these nonbelievers emerged clearly. They either had little contact with the converted members of their families, or were already softening their resistance to the gospel.

The basic pattern of the believers also emerged—the Filipino's responsiveness to the gospel followed the lines of family relationships.

BREAKS WITH THE PAST

If its methods, Pentecostal emphasis, or evangelical doctrines were solely responsible for the Foursquare Church's great growth, we would have

expected its growth to be relatively even throughout the nation. This was not true. About half of its growth took place on Mindanao where there was only one Foursquare missionary family, and where the history of the Foursquare church goes back only to 1956.

Whenever I mentioned this to Foursquare people, they inevitably said, "Yes, but we have our greatest evangelist there." While the presence of the Thompsons in Mindanao was one factor in the tremendous growth here, the great wave of migrations to Mindanao was another.

Church growth studies, as well as research in cultural anthropology, show that when people make a break with the past, they more readily adapt other new ideas. When thousands of Filipinos pulled up roots in Luzon and the Visayas and flocked to the homestead lands of Mindanao, they were opening the door to further change in their lives. Many of the migrants came from the Ilocano area, the fountainhead of the Aglipayan revolt against papal Catholicism, where the break with Rome had already been made. Many of them had been tenant farmers at the mercy of conservative Roman Catholic landowners.

By checking my notes on Mindanao, I was able to determine exactly who had responded to the gospel in that particular region. Of the forty converts interviewed, thirty-two had migrated from the Visayas and Luzon; six had been born on Mindanao of migrant parents. Only two of the converts had roots in the native soil of Mindanao—one was an Aeta tribesman studying in the Bible school. The migration had created a whole new people who were at greater liberty to become evangelical Christians. (It should perhaps be noted that the forty interviewed represented nearly forty different families, or a large percentage of the families in the four Foursquare churches I visited in Mindanao.)

If the effectiveness of Mrs. Evelyn Thompson alone accounted for the greater growth in Mindanao, we could expect a greater number of Mindanao natives among the converts, even in this relatively small sample. A comparative study of other denominations would probably confirm this conclusion. It was not within the scope of this project to make such a study in detail, but I gathered bits of evidence from several sources.

Rev. Wayne Wright, of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, told me that his denomination, in a relatively short time, planted some forty churches on Mindanao with the help of two missionary couples. In Luzon, in a greater length of time and with more missionaries, they planted only twenty

churches. The rapidly growing Southern Baptists saw much of their growth take place in Mindanao. The Anchor Bay Evangelistic Association, a rapidly growing Pentecostal denomination with only seven missionaries, reported more than 3,000 communicant members in 1967.

If the number of people accepting Christ related only to external factors--the gospel message itself, the bearers of the message, the methods used, the strategy followed -we could have expected relative uniformity in the number of those who accepted Christ under similar external conditions. But evidence is accumulating that a number of internal factors -economic standing, religious background, ethnic and language backgrounds, education, age--make a people more or less ready to accept the gospel message personally. The greater response to the gospel among one homogeneous unit in the Philippines, those who migrated to Mindanao, draws attention to that concept.

Nearly every time I mentioned to Don McGregor that Mindanao was the greatest harvest field in the Philippines, he countered with something like this, "But the same is true in Ilocandia in the north. I guarantee that you could preach every night in a different *barrio* among Ilocano-speaking people and get ten to twenty converts each time. It is wide open to the gospel."

In 1967, there were a number of theories why the Ilocano areas in northern Luzon should be particularly receptive to the gospel.

The Ilocano province provided the seat of the rebellion against the Roman Church more than sixty years ago. As a result of Aglipay's revolt and subsequent founding of an independent Catholic church, great Roman Catholic churches have stood empty for decades—a constant reminder of one break with the past.

The Ilocanos have a tradition of independence, self-sufficiency, industry and adventure. When they became crowded for land, they traveled to Hawaii, the United States mainland, and other places where land was available. Some of these adventurers became Christians while they were abroad, and then returned to their homeland where they established independent evangelical churches. Hundreds of Ilocanos who struck out for free land in Mindanao and other frontier areas in the Philippines also found a new life in evangelical Christianity. They kept in contact with other family members back in the north. Many of them returned home for visits and took their new-found faith with them.

There are a number of other theories why Filipinos should respond to new ideas. The sweeping changes and liberalizations allowed by Vatican II made it easier for Filipinos to express their interest in the Bible and to learn for themselves the logic behind their religious practices.

The Philippine independence, after four hundred years of colonization, had fallen short of fulfilling personal and national desires. Many were disillusioned and perhaps there was an underlying feeling among the Filipinos that answers to their needs would have to be met in some other way.

The animistic background of the Filipinos, still just under the surface, was another factor in the responsiveness of the nation. Where a people already have a strong belief in a spirit world, it is often less difficult to lead them to believe in God, the holy and all-powerful Spirit.

The Roman Catholic Church itself paved the way for responsiveness to the gospel. All the people were familiar with Christ and Christian terminology, but the Roman Catholic religion had not really satisfied the needs of their hearts. When a form of Christianity that satisfies is demonstrated there is a readiness to respond to it.

The religious, cultural, historic, political, and economic factors in Philippine life could all be separate studies in church growth. But all the reasons why the evangelical church *should grow* mean little unless there is actual evidence of growth. Therefore, the fact that the Pentecostal churches were growing, sometimes spectacularly, in the Philippines pointed most convincingly to the belief that the country represented a great harvest ready to be gathered.

We may conclude, then, that a primary reason for Foursquare growth in the Philippines was simply that large numbers of Filipinos were ready to accept Christ as their personal Savior, and that the Foursquare Church was taking Him to them.

FLORENCIA EUROPA

I had passed hundreds of middle-aged women in marketplaces, in squatters' huts, by streams where women washed their clothes. Any one of these could have been a Florencia Europa. She stood less than five feet tall; she weighed less than ninety pounds. She talked so quietly I had trouble

hearing her, and she nervously twisted a hanky most of the time. She was the last person I would have thought of as the planter of eleven churches in eight years with a total of over 500 converts regularly attending. But even that was only part of her story.

In 1936, Florencia left Ormoc, Leyte, to live with her aunt in Mindanao. She married a mechanic there, but in several years he died, leaving her with four children to rear. She supported herself and her family by selling vegetables in the market. One day in January 1956, she noticed a foreigner preaching on a street corner, which she passed every day on the way to work. She heard that someone was praying for the sick.

Florencia was a Roman Catholic, but she was not afraid to attend this Protestant meeting. Her uncle had become a Baptist and she had attended his church where she had been favorably impressed with the singing. But for three months she had been suffering from a severe pain in her lungs, and her mother also had been quite ill for some time.

At the end of the message, the foreigner, who was Mrs. Evelyn Thompson, invited those who wanted prayer for healing to come forward. Mrs. Thompson talked with them and led them to express their faith in Christ. She then laid her hands on them and commanded the sicknesses to be cast out in Jesus' name.

"Instantly the pain was gone," Florencia told me. "I could stand straight for the first time in months. Then I saw my mother and realized that she was healed also." Both Florencia and her mother accepted Christ that night, and eventually Florencia's four children also became Christians.

Florencia encouraged her oldest daughter to attend Bible school, but she wanted to go too. "I did not know much about God and was so eager to learn," she said.

While in Bible school in Davao, she attended the weekly United Foursquare Women's prayer meeting. At one of these meetings when she was praying, she experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues.

"What difference did this make in your Christian life?" I asked her.

"A great difference," she explained. "I began to be able to discern much more clearly the difference between good and bad. I felt so much closer to God, and the things of the world lost all their attraction to me. But most of all I had a great desire to serve the Lord."

And serve the Lord she did, even while she was in Bible school. Her first

experience was in the town of Coronon, about eighteen kilometers from the school.

The missionary, Mrs. Thompson, had been traveling in the area with a companion when they entered a house where a demon-possessed woman lived. They found her chained, trying to tear off her clothes, and dancing around the room as far as the chain would allow. Mrs. Thompson tried to talk to her through an interpreter, but she did not understand Visayah.

"Why don't you try speaking to her in tongues?" her companion said. Mrs. Thompson began speaking, and the demon-possessed woman recognized her native mountain language. Mrs. Thompson told the woman she needed Christ. The woman accepted Him, and immediately she was quiet and normal.

This sign opened the way for the beginning of the outstation in Coronon. Florencia worked there for six months during which time seventy-six accepted Christ and became faithful members. When Florencia and her companion left, a full-time worker was sent, and in 1967 the Coronon church was still thriving.

Her next assignment, an established extension class in Tibungco, lasted only one month. Florencia particularly remembered one woman who drank heavily, but attended the service—primarily to disturb it. She was converted and delivered from drink that month.

Florencia spent the next four months, until her graduation in 1959, pastoring an established church. During this time about thirty converts were added to the membership rolls.

Florencia's zeal in serving the Lord, even while she was in school, seems even more remarkable when it is remembered that she was a thirty-six-year-old widow with four children to rear. To support herself and the children, she would arise at two o'clock in the morning to prepare vegetables to sell in the market that day. Yet she took care of her children, attended classes in the evenings, studied in the afternoons, and traveled once a week to her outstations and churches.

Just before she was to graduate, a Christian from another evangelical church came to Davao for prayer and the healing of a fast-spreading eczema. After prayer, the disease disappeared, and the healed man went back home to witness to his family.

That same week Florencia visited his home in Bansalan, a long bus ride from Davao. She found three families, related to the man, ready to accept

Christ as personal Savior. Six months later, after graduation, Florencia went to this area as a full-time church pioneer. She rented a little house on the main road to the mountains for four pesos a month. But she did not content herself with ministering only to the eight converts. She immediately began house-to-house visitation in the area, leaving tracts wherever she went. God's seal upon this ministry--and an indication of the responsiveness of the people in this area--was that she led three people to Christ in the first house she visited.

During Florencia's first five months in Bansalan, fifty-six people personally accepted the Lord and became regular attendants of the church. With fifty-six converts to train in the Word, to train as teachers, and to organize and lead into important church responsibilities, she would have plenty to do. But that was neither her training nor her instinct. There was the next *barrio*, the next town, others calling for help.

God led her to another responsive spot, the community of Paco. A woman suffering from severe headaches had dropped into a Bansalan service and heard of the healing of others. She had traveled one and a half hours by bus to be prayed for. Florencia led her to the Lord and prayed for healing. The headache vanished and the woman returned to tell her family and neighbors. Florencia followed up this convert and began weekly services in her home. Within a year they organized a church with seventy-two converts attending, and a full-time worker came to take over Florencia's responsibilities.

The Paco church reproduced within two months as the young people, all new converts, were immediately sent out to witness house to house. One day the young people visited a home in San Mateo. The man of the house was sick with a stomach ulcer—he could not even retain water. Florencia prayed for him and immediately he felt healing--his wife gave him water and he kept it down. His recovery began from that hour, though it was thirteen months before he was strong enough to work his farm again. By that time, however, there were forty-six converts in the church supporting a full-time worker.

In the two years since the first healing of a man from Bansalan, until the man in San Mateo was completely healed, three new generations of churches had been born. More than 170 people had put their personal trust in Christ and were regularly worshipping Him.

Between 1958 and 1964, Florencia and a co-worker started ten more

outstations within a radius of sixteen kilometers from the Bansalan church. The total number of converts in these outstations, until they became self-supporting churches, was 514.

The pattern for each of these ten was much the same. Typical was a church sixteen kilometers from Bansalan where a member lived. He found it difficult to travel the distance every Sunday, so he opened his home for meetings. Within two years there were twenty-seven converts, a church organized, and a building erected.

And so it went with the other nine outstations as the church continued to expand in ever-widening circles.

BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Was Florencia's effectiveness in evangelism and church planting dependent on her experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Or would her work be worthy of mention at all if she had not had this experience? Whatever the answers, Florencia had a tremendous and unquenchable desire to win others to Christ. She was quite spectacularly effective in this, and she attributed her power to the continued infilling of the Holy Spirit after an initial crisis experience of being baptized in the Spirit.

Florencia, of course, was not alone. Seventy-three percent of the interviewees testified that they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues. I had not anticipated that this experience would play such an important part in the phenomenal growth of the Foursquare Church, so I had interviewed a number of people before I began to ask specific questions about it. Of the 159 interviewees who said they had experienced the baptism, I questioned only 120 about the difference this experience had made in their Christian lives.

I avoided asking any leading questions such as, "Did it make you a better witness for the Lord?" The respondents were on their own. I wanted to hear from them what was uppermost in their minds concerning this experience. But thirty-three of them volunteered immediately that the experience had brought about great changes in their lives. As I later put fourteen typewritten pages of their testimonies side by side, it was clear that they were not overstating the facts.

None of the 120 interviewees indicated that they had considered

themselves unbelievers before their baptism experience. But the experience itself was, in many cases, more dramatic and memorable than the conversion experience.

Frances Rodac Sambire had become a Christian in February 1956 at the age of twenty-one. She had felt convicted of sin when she first attended a Protestant meeting. She stayed after that meeting to ask questions, and later she went forward to accept Christ. Her conversion was genuine, and she spoke to her family about it. When her Roman Catholic parents learned of her conversion, they drove her out of the house. "It is not good for two religions to live together," they said. So she went to live with the missionary under whose ministry she had been converted.

In the weeks that followed, Frances saw many Foursquare Christians being baptized with the Holy Spirit. "I was hungry for this too," she told me, "I asked Mrs. Thompson why I had not been baptized with the Spirit yet, and she told me to fast and pray. I was really scared. Some of those being baptized were laughed at. They would hold up their hands and shout. Tears would come to their eyes and some would have runny noses. I decided I could not go through with it if I would look like that."

Mrs. Thompson said that perhaps her pride kept her from being baptized. One night about three months after her conversion, Frances was on her way to the regular Friday service, determined that this night she would give up her pride.

"I was praying at the altar when I felt God moving," she related. "I tried to hold back what was happening to me, but I couldn't. All of the sudden I saw a vision. The Lord was holding two hearts in His hands. My heart was in His right hand and it was black. A new heart was in His left hand. It was plain that the Lord wanted to substitute the new heart for my black one."

She did not want to be distracted from this vivid experience, so she left the building and went out by a coconut tree and knelt down beside it. "I was not unconscious," she said, "but my mind was taken out of my body. I looked down at my body kneeling beside the tree. I began speaking in tongues. When the others heard this, they all came to me. We were laughing and singing and praising the Lord. My body was trembling and I felt a hot force inside me. I kept on speaking in tongues even as we left, and I continued speaking all the way home."

Such experiences of the Foursquare people left many questions in my mind. But uppermost and most pertinent to the research was the question,

What were the results in the days, weeks, months, and years that followed? How did the experiences relate to the rapid church growth? I found a tremendous correlation.

Seventy-five of the 120 spoke of their baptism experience as a turning point in serving the Lord and telling others about Him. Most of them used the terms "boldness," "courage," or "power" to describe their new experience in witnessing.

"After being baptized with the Spirit I became bold to testify. I had led none to the Lord before, but right after I led two cousins and three friends to the Lord."

"Before I had no compassion for people. Now I have a new power in witnessing. People cry when I talk to them about the Lord."

"As I go into homes as a salesman I have a boldness to witness that I did not have before. I give tracts to the people and usually have five to six converts a month."

"Before I was afraid to bring my Bible to work. Now I have a boldness to witness both at work and to people on the street."

"In the evangelical church that I went to before everything was so dry and I had no burden for souls. I was not concerned one way or the other about the church activities. Now I have a burden and a boldness, peace and joy." (This person told me of ten people she had led to Christ and into active church fellowship within ten months after her baptism in the Holy Spirit. In most cases the whole family of each convert also became Christians.)

"Since the experience my shyness and bashfulness are gone. Now I can face people. I have extra boldness."

How did the baptism of the Spirit affect the ministry of the full-time workers?

Since the baptism of the Spirit with the accompanying evidence of speaking in tongues is a prerequisite for Foursquare ministers, it was difficult to compare their ministries before and after their experiences. But a few ministers, who were pastors before their affiliation with the Foursquare Church, did not have the experience until later in their ministries. Several students were also ministering and preaching before their baptism and before they were ordained. They related a great change in their effectiveness.

One of the ministers said, "When I was baptized with the Spirit after being a Christian for nine years, I felt something different in my life. I

became successful in my ministry. Before, people were not influenced by my preaching. Now they respond and are happy in their Christian lives."

Another minister realized some practical changes. "I became more devoted to the work," he told me. "I forgot myself and thought of serving the Lord only. I went to the forests and gathered posts for our church. Then I dug holes for the posts and put them in. After that the members came and we finished the church."

Pastor Pascual, the pioneer church-builder of Ilocos Norte, had been a Christian for fifteen years and a minister for several years before his experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"I had taught others about the baptism of the Spirit, and some had experienced it," he told me. "I was not discouraged for myself, because I really believed that it would come, even after I had been seeking it for five years. Afterwards, I immediately had a great power to serve the Lord. Now I was able to give altar calls with success, whereas before it was very hard to pin down decisions for Christ. I had many more converts. The church I was pioneering at that time was made up of people who were not my converts. But since then, I have had more than 250 converts in this one church alone, and I have pioneered other churches since then.

"It helped me personally as well. Before, I went out to preach because of a sense of duty. Now it is because I love it. I have no doubt that I am called to preach, I have a greater power over sin and a better assurance of heaven. But the greatest part of the new life is in winning souls to Christ."

The young man who was minister of the center church in Manila said that the experience made a great difference in his life and ministry. He had been serving the Lord in many capacities and was in his last year in Bible school. "I felt the presence of the Lord before, but now it was more intense and I had a greater reality of Christ. There came a marked difference in my preaching. I found a great freedom in the pulpit. Before, I was very shy but I now found what seems to me to be a release, like a dam has been broken. The message pours forth in great power."

The remaining (of the 120) interviewees' responses referred primarily to Christian virtues indirectly encouraging church growth--personal changes that could be grouped under "victory in the Christian life." These Foursquare members mentioned specific changes in behavior, habits, and attitudes. The changes in habits included dropping "vices" such as dances, movies, worldly

drama, comics, associating with an unsaved gang, drinking beer, cigarette addiction, popularity with the wrong crowd, etc.

Others mentioned personal changes such as:

"I became a better father."

"I am no longer selfish in any matters."

"I don't worry anymore."

"I got rid of a bad temper."

"I overcame the problem of lying."

"I learned patience."

"I was cruel before but now I love very much."

"I no longer quarrel with my brother."

"Now I know how to forgive."

"I quit gossiping with the neighbors."

These are the kinds of changes that counselors of new Christians have always said would be most effective in drawing relatives and friends to Christ. Among these Foursquare people the changes were no doubt a factor in bringing people to Christ. Most of the converts said their lives changed dramatically when they first accepted Christ, but they also said that the baptism of the Holy Spirit brought greater, more lasting changes.

Forty-one of these Filipino converts said they found a sustaining victory and joy through a day-by-day fellowship with the Lord that they had not known before the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. To at least nine of these forty-one, the Bible suddenly became an open book. One young minister in Davao said that when he was in Bible school, a veil seemed to hang between him and the Bible. He couldn't understand it. "After I was baptized with the Spirit, however, the Bible became clear," he said. "I could easily understand the deep things of the Word."

Nineteen singled out a vast improvement in their prayer lives. Among these people the *duty* of prayer had seemed to be a common experience. Before the baptism they prayed for ten or fifteen minutes a day or they didn't pray at all. They didn't feel the presence of the Lord or see any specific answers to prayer.

Some specified the changes in their prayer lives after the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"Now God answers my prayers."

"I easily feel the presence of the Lord when I pray."

"I have seen the power of answered prayer in the Lord helping me

overcome persecution from my family."

"My prayer life has been changed. Before, I prayed just to be having my devotions. Now I can easily pray for just one person for as long as thirty minutes."

Amplifying on their prayer lives, thirteen mentioned that praying in tongues was a thrilling part of their devotional lives. One old woman, the wife of a successful shoe merchant, said, "Praying in tongues is so different. It is like being in heaven and near to God. I feel the Holy Spirit with me when I am waiting alone, and then I have a wonderful time of prayer. Most of my prayer life is now in tongues."

Others said praying in tongues made them feel at one with the Lord or drew them closer to God. "It's like floating to heaven," said one widow in Iloilo. A young teacher in Davao said, "When I have doubts about my faith, I speak in tongues and I am reminded of the reality of Christ. This makes me strong when my spirits are low." Others related how it was possible for them to spend an hour or two or more in prayer when they were praying in tongues.

This experience of speaking in tongues was not to be confused, they told me, with initial speaking in tongues as evidence of the baptism of the Spirit. This experience also was not to be confused with speaking in tongues in public as a sign to unbelievers, or as edification to the saints when interpreted. Some said that they had not spoken in tongues since their initial experience and others said they did only rarely.

Eighty-three percent of all those interviewed testified that they had experienced divine healing sometime during their Christian lives, but fifteen of them experienced healing with the baptism of the Spirit.

One woman said that the continual tiredness she had experienced before the baptism was gone.

A man, forced to retire from the army because of rheumatism, had tried to kill himself with excessive drinking and smoking. One morning he was in the town plaza with his wife when he noticed a poster that read, "Christ is the Answer". "What is that?" he asked his wife. "The Foursquare Church."

"What does it mean that 'Christ is the Answer'?"

"We better go and find out," she said.

They attended the service, a new Foursquare work at the time. "My heart was touched," the man told me, "It was different from anything I had ever

heard." He and his wife continued to attend. Finally he went forward at the altar call.

"I was saved, baptized with the Spirit and healed all at once," he exclaimed. After three days, he said, he was completely cured. Within six months he "became fat" and reported to the army.

Nine of those who were healed with the baptism of the Spirit said that God then used them to pray for the healing of others.

"Before, I had no compassion for the sick, but now I pray for them and they are healed," the wife of a barber told me in Iloilo. She mentioned a woman who had had high blood pressure-so high that her dentist had refused to pull some badly decayed teeth. After prayer, she was instantly healed. I interviewed this woman, toothless after the dental surgery. She was eagerly waiting for her new teeth so she could go back to teaching her Sunday school class.

Others related dramatic and instantaneous healings of illnesses such as tuberculosis, asthma, and heart disease.

Persecution was the lot of some who became Christians. One young woman in Iloilo said the baptism in the Spirit kept her from returning to the Aglipayan Church. Her parents put so much pressure on her that she wavered until she found a new steadfastness through her experience. A mature businessman said that without the Spirit's visitation, the pressures of business certainly would have drawn him away from the church. A young man said he loved to be mocked when participating in street evangelistic meetings, a marked contrast to his former fear of witnessing.

Two believers mentioned that after the baptism they saw God miraculously supply their needs.

Sprinkled throughout the testimonies was the word "love". I don't suppose I wrote the word down each time I heard it, but it appeared often enough in my notes to catch my attention. These folks said that after their baptism in the Spirit they were filled with love for their neighbors, their enemies, their younger brothers. They loved the Lord more; they loved to go to church. They loved to read their Bibles; they loved to serve the Lord and witness for Him. No one mentioned it, but I noticed a remarkable love for other groups. They cooperated with other groups freely, and frequently took the leadership and work in joint church affairs.

These testimonies gave considerable evidence that an experience that they referred to as the baptism in the Holy Spirit was a prime reason for

outdistancing other evangelical churches.

I categorized these testimonies by geographical location and found another correlation between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the growth of the Foursquare Church. In Mindanao, the fastest growing Foursquare district, eighty-nine of those I interviewed said they had been baptized with the Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues. Seventy-eight percent in the East Visayas, the second fastest growing district, reported this same relationship. In contrast, only sixty-one percent of the interviewees in the three slower-growing districts reported being baptized with the Spirit.

I have noted that there were many reasons for the rapid growth in Mindanao, and that this statistic alone cannot account for the rate of church growth. On the other hand, Cebu City and the surrounding East Visayas areas were conservative Roman Catholic, and Protestant missionaries found difficulty in working in these areas. So the statistics do point to a positive correlation between a crisis experience with the Holy Spirit and effective evangelism.

Perhaps a clarification should be made concerning tongues and evangelism. Earlier I made the observation that I found little evidence that speaking in tongues, in itself, led directly or indirectly to evangelism and church growth. The evidence in this chapter shows that continual filling with the Spirit after the initial baptism experience of speaking in tongues resulted in a great amount of evangelism. But to accuse the Foursquares of saying that speaking in tongues results in church growth is probably unfair when we understand their view on the matter. From their viewpoint, speaking in tongues is evidence of the baptism in the Spirit in the same way that water baptism is evidence that a person has accepted Christ. It is a sign, not the substance, of something that has happened.

Whether the baptism or filling of the Spirit is a second and separate experience of salvation, and whether the initial evidence of it is the speaking in tongues, will continue to be debated. But this much can be said about the Foursquare Church in the Philippines: however one describes or labels this crisis experience, it has had a direct and significant part in the Church's dramatic growth.

DIVINE HEALING

One day I asked Don McGregor what kind of medical plan the Foursquare Church had for its pastors and workers. "We don't have any medical insurance," he said immediately. "We pray for our sick."

Then I remembered the lesson I had learned on that first trip to Cebu and Bohol: Divine healing is a way of life for these Christians.

At the beginning of the study, I thought I could find one or two examples of professed divine healing, so I included a question about it in each interview. I didn't expect to learn much about church growth with this question, but I thought it might be interesting, at least. I found, however, that almost all the interviewees firmly believed it is still part of Christ's ministry to heal the physical man. But more significantly, eighty-three percent of the interviewees reported that they themselves had experienced some dramatic physical healing. These ailments ranged from cancer to tonsillitis.

Mrs. Elyira Carbajosa, a minister in Davao, reported a long list of illnesses. "Before I was saved," she said, "I had anemia, astigmatism, a goiter, enlargement of the heart, an ulcer and asthma. I was nothing but skin and bones. For years I had insomnia and little appetite. I went to a special doctor in Manila, but got no help. After I was prayed for, I slept through the night for the first time in years. My appetite returned. Gradually I was healed of all the rest, including the goiter that finally disappeared after seven months." When I saw Mrs. Carbajosa, she was a bundle of enthusiasm leading the singing for a Sunday night service at the large Davao church.

I visited the Foursquare churches in Laoag, Ilocos Norte, at the northern tip of the Philippines for the last series of interviews.

It was almost unbearably hot in one of the Sunday evening services--so hot I couldn't force myself to take notes on the message. I should have. For this was the night Rev. Maghirang was to preach his first public sermon on divine healing.

His manner was light-years away from the "holy roller" stereotype, but there was no question of his sincerity and the intensity of his belief. He traced Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ who would come to bear sins and who through His stripes would provide healing. Then he went through the healing ministry of Christ and others in the New Testament. He included an analysis of one of the favorite verses of Foursquare churches: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day and forever." (Heb. 13:18, KJV).

At the conclusion of his message he invited those who desired prayer to

come forward and be healed that night. There were four who went to the altar. Maghirang asked each one about his illness, laid hands on him, and implored God to touch the body and bring healing.

Later that evening and the next day I talked with those who had been prayed for. Juliana de la Cruz said that for six months she had had constant hip pain. "The pain left immediately when I was prayed for," she said. Juliana's daughter also came forward. She said she had had a skin disease for six years, the inflammation sometimes keeping her awake at night. Doctors hadn't been able to help her. But as she was being prayed for, she said, the itchiness disappeared.

Elizabeth Concepcion said that she had gone to a doctor who diagnosed her ailment as an inflammation of the gall bladder, but the medicine he prescribed did not help. "Before coming to church," she said, "I was pressing the area with my hands to relieve the pain. The pain was gone immediately after prayer."

The last person to be prayed for was Marcian Pastor, an old man of eighty-five in whose home I had been staying. I had watched him take shuffling, six-inch steps around the house, steering his course so he could brace himself on the posts that supported his typical Ilocano house. For three years he had been suffering from stiff knees; a doctor's prescription had made the stiffness worse. After Pastor Maghirang had laid his hands on him and prayed, Mr. Pastor began flexing his legs as a substitute football player does before being sent into a game. Immediately after the service he strode out of the church, somewhat unsteadily but in great contrast to his previous shuffling locomotion.

Twenty-two percent of the converts mentioned that healing had a significant part in their conversions. Antonia Lukban, pastor of the Odiongan Foursquare Church in Romblon and a former active Roman Catholic, gave me a graphic account of her experience.

"It was my last year of high school in Quezon City. I was on my way to school when I noticed an outdoor evangelistic meeting in Cubao [the market area of the city]. Out of curiosity I stopped and listened. There were so many people there. I wanted to find out what attracted them.

"This was the first time I ever heard the Word of God being preached that way. It was inspiring. But I didn't believe it. I thought they were fooling the people. The preaching about healing was like magic--it was hocus-pocus. I didn't believe in prayer for healing and reasoned that this must be of the

devil. If someone is to be healed, he must receive medical attention.

"Yet something kept me attending. I skipped school for three nights in a row just to attend the meeting. On the third night I was standing next to a woman who had a huge goiter on her neck. I determined to watch her so I could tell if she got healed. The evangelist was saying, 'I believe God has not changed. The Bible says that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Jesus wants to heal you tonight the same as He healed twenty centuries ago.' The evangelist then asked all those who wanted to be healed by God to place their hands on the afflicted parts of their bodies and believe God as she prayed.

"I became so engrossed in what the evangelist was saying that I took my eyes off the woman with a goiter for a minute. But as the evangelist was praying, this woman began screaming and shouting and praising the Lord. I was so amazed to see that the goiter was gone that I stepped over and probed her neck where the goiter had been. The skin that had been stretched tight over the goiter was now wrinkled and loose.

"Now I began to really listen to the message of the evening. The text was 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' I had always had great ambition and believed that if one didn't work hard he would not get far. But I was convicted by the message. I knew then that I was without Christ and that I must accept Him as my personal Savior. So that night at the invitation I did."

Only five of the thirty-three who mentioned healing in their testimonies of salvation said they saw a miracle happen, heard about miracles, or attended a service because they were curious about divine healing. But nine mentioned that a miracle in the immediate family was instrumental in their salvation. Mrs. Gacko, of the Cebu Church, said her little boy's frequent illnesses were accompanied by convulsions. "A friend told me that he could be healed through prayer, so I brought him to the Foursquare church. The pastor prayed and I believe he was healed because he has had no problems for over five years." Four or five months after her son's healing Mrs. Gacko accepted the Lord. "The fact that my son was healed impressed me," she said, "but it was the teaching that really rang true. I had never heard the gospel before."

Rosaura Villejo testified that her aunt had been suffering from tuberculosis. She had been to various specialists and had spent all her

money--all without help. When she saw an announcement reading, "Healing for the Sick, Christ the Answer," she attended the meeting, and was instantly healed after prayer. "After this our auntie wanted all her relatives to accept the Lord and she encouraged us to attend the Foursquare Church," Rosaura said. "I went on one occasion and it was Mrs. Thompson's message on 'Where Will You Spend Eternity' that finally convicted me. I went forward and accepted Christ."

Tom Garley, a young man in the Davao church said, "I was impressed by the healing of my mother. After this I knew that the Lord was really in this church."

But most of those who mentioned healing as a significant part of their conversions, referred to healing in their own bodies. Nineteen gave a testimony similar to the testimony of Mrs. Helen Quibete of Davao.

"A friend visited me when I was sick. She told me how she had been healed of tuberculosis. I had symptoms of tuberculosis and had an enlarged heart or rheumatic heart, according to the doctor. I had been treated for seventeen years but not healed. On a Friday evening I went to the storefront where Mrs. Thompson was praying for the sick. I did not feel healed right away, so came back two or three times. I have had no trouble since that time. After this I wavered for many months. In the morning I would attend the five o'clock mass and in the evening I would go to the Foursquare meetings. I was convicted by the verse that says that you can't serve two masters. I prayed for guidance and was finally saved after about four months and became a Foursquare member."

Whether these and other healings I encountered could be proved as miracles in a court of law or could be explained as something less than miracles of God is not the question.

The fact remains that a large percentage of the Foursquare members did experience dramatic healing of their bodies either simultaneously with a prayer of faith or in the hours and days after prayer. Their testimonies revealed that healing usually increased their faith and resulted in spontaneous and enthusiastic witnessing to the unconverted. The naturalness and enthusiasm of the Foursquare member telling another person what the Lord had done for him was part of the reason why the Foursquare Church grew a great deal faster than non-Pentecostal churches.

NOISY SERVICES AND WOMEN PREACHERS

I'll confess that I began the research of the Foursquare Church with an inadequate theory: The growth of the Pentecostals in the Philippines was quite by accident. I believed that their form of worship just happened to attract these boisterous, out-going, Latin-temperamented peoples. But only a few interviewees even mentioned the form of services. It would seem, then, that the form was relatively insignificant compared to the hearing of the gospel message and the demonstration of the power of God in miracles and changed lives.

One woman said that she did not appreciate the services after her conversion until she was taught from the Scriptures the passages about praising the Lord and clapping hands and so on. My own tentative conclusion was that the worship services had little to do with growth, and that as in this case, this form of worship had to be taught to be appreciated.

The women ministers in the Foursquare Church, however, were another story. The set of circumstances fed into my own mind over a lifetime of middle-class American evangelical Christianity led me to reject automatically the idea of women preachers. Not that I rejected the Foursquare lady pastors themselves as a whole -I found them feminine, charming, and personable. They were a far cry from the image I had of boisterous, masculine, overbearing women preachers. They were respected by their people. (In Filipino culture, women are readily accepted in places of leadership both in the home and in society.) They were capable, effective leaders in every aspect of church life. They were energetic and they were spiritual. Their messages warmed me, challenged me, and inspired me. Their modest uniforms worn in the pulpit were not distracting.

But the very *idea* of women preachers offended me. So as I had done with all my observations, I tried to see this in the best possible light. The women were immensely successful. In only one of the missionary families was the wife the real leader and evangelist, yet Mrs. Thompson's ministry accounted for at least half the converts of the whole denomination. Though only about one-third of the churches were pastored by women, women accounted for some of the most effective work of the church. Evelyn Quema pioneered in Baguio; Florencia Europa planted churches all over her area of

Mindanao; Antonia Lukban pastored the large district church in Odiongan. Evelyn's explanation for women preachers emphasized her own deep and unshakable conviction that it was God who had called her and that God had unquestionably used her and other women in a tremendous way.

Those who object to Pentecostal women ministers, saying that women should keep silent in the churches and not have authority over men, have not really taken this to its logical conclusion. In our own churches women serve as Sunday school superintendents and teachers; they serve as paid Christian education directors and Youth leaders; they serve as deaconesses, committee members of a great variety of church ministries. In many churches in the Philippines and in other parts of the world women serve as "Bible women" which in most cases is a euphemism for "pastor."

In Joel 2:28-32, the prophet predicts the coming of the Holy Spirit. This coming was confirmed by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21). If the Pentecostal movement is an evidence of the outpouring of the Spirit in the latter days, should we not expect that women as well as men will prophesy as verse 28 suggests?

The record of church growth and women ministers in the Foursquare Church cannot be taken lightly. If every denomination could double its rate of growth simply by developing the potential among their women, it would take on the proportions of a revolution.



SUMMARY OF A STRATEGY

"The Foursquare Church simply spread over the islands. We did not come with any predetermined strategy, we had no outlined program of evangelism. The home mission board told us how to get here, said that they would support us as missionaries and that we ought to start a Bible school. We were told that we could not expect a single major appropriation from the home office for the first five years—not even for an automobile."

This informal statement of strategy made by Don McGregor in a taped interview may seem haphazard. But it is not really misleading. The basic outline of the Foursquare strategy for evangelizing the Philippines is simple. Under the leading and power of the Holy Spirit a handful of foreign missionaries go to some of the central cities of the Philippines, the missionaries begin evangelistic work, immediately build a strong central church with the converts, and open a Bible school in which leaders are trained to pioneer indigenous churches,

To further understand their phenomenal growth, a comparison of their strategy to part of the Wheaton Declaration of April 1966 may be helpful. Under the title of "The Underlying Issues," the framers of the Declaration expressed the basic goal of the Church, and then pointed out the strategic deficiencies in our efforts to reach that goal. They wrote:

The Church's work is to preach the Gospel and plant congregations in every community. The implementation of this mission is being retarded by:

- Too little sensitivity to the authority
and strategy of the Holy Spirit;
- Too much missionary control;
- Too much dependence on paid workers;
- Too little training and use of the great
body of laymen;
- Complacency with small results long after
a larger response could have been the norm;
- Failure to take full advantage of the response
of receptive peoples;
- Overemphasis on institutionalism at the
expense of multiplying churches.

The goal: *the Church's work is to preach the gospel and plant congregations in every community.* Is there any doubt that this is the supreme goal of the Foursquare Church? Everything the Foursquare people do in their churches, and much of what they do in their private lives, is slanted toward evangelism. At the 1968 National Foursquare Convention in Manila, Don McGregor listed twenty-three standard activities for local churches that were evangelistic in nature: Sunday school, house-to-house

visitation, literature distribution, men's and women's organizations, and a score more.

The overriding theme in their planning sessions, national and regional conventions, messages from the pulpit and Bible school classes was always evangelism, always the next town, the next *barrio*, more people won to the Lord. With a goal so clearly defined and so forcefully pursued, was it any wonder that they grew?

According to the Wheaton Declaration, the implementation of the evangelical church's goal is retarded by seven deficiencies.

The first deficiency is: *too little sensitivity to the authority and strategy of the Holy Spirit*. Perhaps the main finding of this research was simply a new appreciation of Acts 1:8: "but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses...." While the power of God is absolute, our experience of it is very relative. Perhaps we non-Pentecostals have been content with too small a portion of His power.

The Pentecostals have been busy teaching God's power, seeking His power, expecting His power, and experiencing His power. After studying the Foursquares for two and a half years, I came to the conclusion that their emphasis on being filled with the Holy Spirit is at the heart of their power in proclaiming the gospel so successfully. (It seems to me that as long as one refuses to accept the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal churches, he will misunderstand them. It is as if one wants to understand television, but refuses to acknowledge the picture tube.)

Their strategy is a natural result of the filling of the Holy Spirit. They have developed an effective missionary strategy, not because they have studied church growth principles, but because they have followed the leading of the Holy Spirit. Where there was weak Pentecostal work, they had either overemphasized or misdirected the work of the Spirit.

The second deficiency regarding the growth of the Church is: *too much missionary control*. One of the reasons I selected the Foursquare Church was that it had so few missionaries. The missionaries told me again and again that since they were scattered over five areas of the Philippines and were growing rapidly in most of these areas, they were forced to depend on local leadership. On the one hand, the missionaries were taking positive, effective leadership that was resulting in dynamic growth. But on the other hand, their leadership was what the word implies: they were *leading* others into doing the work.

The missionary of the Foursquare church was not in the frustrating position of "fraternal worker." The sentiment that we are co-workers and that the national should be free to build the Church as he sees fit may be noble. But such an attitude can easily reduce the foreign missionary to the role of an encouraging bystander.

The indigenous principles of the Foursquare church did not take this stifling route. The Foursquare missionaries were not trapped at the opposite end of the pendulum's swing where many other missionaries found themselves. This kind of situation was observed by the Filipina Christian education editor of Overseas Crusades' *Crusader* magazine. She found a thriving Sunday school that she wanted to feature as an ideal to be copied by others. Closer inspection, however, revealed that about half of the nineteen classes were taught by foreign missionaries. Finding the nationals unable to produce as effectively as the well-trained missionary, the missionaries simply took over, hoping that some day the national would be equipped to do as well. The editor quickly dropped the story.

Between the extremes of all-national and all-missionary personnel, the Foursquare Church has charted a course that could be followed by all missions concerned with evangelism and church planting. The history and research of the Foursquare Church makes it clear that the handful of missionaries was the dynamic behind what had been accomplished. Without the foreign missionary, the church would have been a collection of good, sound churches steadily expanding. But with the missionaries, the Church was like a forest fire, leaping barriers and producing its own ideal conditions for expansion.

The oldest Foursquare work in the Philippines, begun forty-two years ago by a Filipino, did not come under the direct influence of the foreigner until about 1964. It had a brilliant beginning and a fruitful history. But just before my research began, the congregation was no bigger than it had been twenty-five years earlier. The Ilocano area had been touched by a foreign missionary for three years, but the abiding fruit was primarily one man who persisted and planted ten churches in the next three decades. It was solid but not phenomenal growth. The work begun in the Romblon area by the one Filipino convert who returned from the United States was also very commendable, with seven churches planted by one man in a dozen years. But when a missionary began working with him, there were thirty-five congregations within a few years.

The centers pioneered by the foreign missionaries produced dramatic results, but the Foursquare's 200 planted churches are not tied to the presence and ability of the missionary. The conclusion, then, is that the handful of missionaries sent out by the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel provided the leadership that resulted in the growth. But with only one foreign missionary in each of five areas, the missionaries achieved results *through* the nationals, and not in what they were able to accomplish themselves. Leadership was turned over to nationals as soon as the circumstances dictated, which proved to be much sooner than most evangelical groups thought possible.

The third deficiency is: *too much dependence on paid workers*. If the Wheaton Declaration had in mind the dependence on workers paid by the mission itself, we can say that the Foursquare Church completely avoided this problem. The source of all salaries for nationals was indigenous. Pastors were paid by the local church; area and district workers were paid through a tithe that was sent from the local churches to the district offices.

The fourth deficiency is: *too little training and use of the great body of laymen*. We have seen how the Foursquare laymen witness and evangelize, especially in relation to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives. We also noted how the gospel spreads through the families.

The fifth deficiency is: *complacency with small numbers long after a larger response could have been the norm*. Foursquare workers, if anything, tend to expect a great deal. Al Chaves was planning his Bible school and getting ready his church building before there was the first convert in Cebu City. Mrs. Thompson in Davao didn't take time to learn a word of dialect before beginning nightly street meetings. She believed a harvest could be gathered simply by preaching the gospel--without any of the supposedly necessary preparatory steps being taken. Rev. Mahusay in Bohol went to a town only because the Lord led him there; he preached in the market with the expectation of planting a church. Evelyn Quema in Baguio held her first church service three days after arriving in town. In all these cases and in dozens more, there was the belief that an immediate harvest was to be gathered and that the church planters needed simply to begin reaping. Their hope was not that converts would come some day, but that a church would begin immediately.

The sixth deficiency is: *failure to take advantage of the response of receptive peoples*. When I mentioned the growth of the Foursquare Church

to one missionary, his explanation was that they had gone to Mindanao where the people were more responsive. His own denomination, he explained, was growing more slowly because they were working in a harder Tagalog area where the people were not responding as rapidly. This may help to explain their slower growth, yet it doesn't explain why they were content to work only in a slowly growing area when other areas were ripe for a larger harvest. The Foursquare Church did not sit down to determine the rapidly growing areas and then send missionaries. It thought of a whole nation needing the gospel, so it sent missionaries to the slowly growing and the rapidly growing areas.

The last deficiency retarding church growth is: *overemphasis on institutionalism at the expense of multiplying churches*. This criticism could not be laid at the feet of the Foursquare Filipinos. Their only institutions were Bible schools, and Christian day schools connected with a few of the Bible schools.

During the research, I heard a number of missionaries and national workers refer to the low standards of these Foursquare Bible schools. There was a notable absence of M.A.s and Ph.D.s on their faculties, and their libraries seemed woefully inadequate. Certainly the Bible school started in Mindanao six months after the church was planted would suffer from makeshift quarters, a patchwork faculty, and a lack of general academic excellence.

But a realistic appraisal of the schools should be made in terms of their goals. (You don't judge an agricultural school by the number of poets it turns out.) From the beginning, the goal of each of the three Foursquare Bible schools was to train the best leaders to plant growing and reproducing local churches. In that they were undeniably successful. Their goal was not to set up a school that necessarily could compare favorably, on an academic level, with secular schools.

So their Bible schools, in the beginning, admitted some students with less than a high school diploma and gave them only two years of training. Other folks shook their heads and said that they would not start a Bible school or seminary until they were equipped to develop a first-rate school that could hold its head high in the academic community. But by 1968, a dozen years after opening their doors, the three Bible schools had graduated 425 students, thirty-eight percent of whom went into full-time ministry. These served in the 200 churches, most of which were planted by the graduates

themselves, and these graduates were on the front lines in a denomination growing more than ten times faster than similar evangelical groups.

The academic standards of the Bible schools have been raised. The entrance requirements have been upgraded; the libraries have been stocked; the courses have been standardized; the faculties have been improved with some of their sharpest men taking teaching positions. Their facilities have grown; the length of the course has been increased to three years, and there is constant planning for upgrading and improving.

But the Bible schools never became an end in themselves. American missionaries weren't bogged down in administrative and institutional work, but were able to continue to lead the young church into forceful evangelism and church planting. They trained and challenged the national workers to go back into the *barrios*, the basic and most productive unit for evangelism, and pioneer on small salaries and under hardship conditions.

In comparing the strategy of the Foursquare Church with the Wheaton Declaration of 1966, we find the Foursquare Church on solid ground indeed.



MORE REFLECTIONS

When I came to the end of the two and a half years of interviewing, studying, and summarizing my impressions in a long written report, I found that my attitude towards the Foursquare Church in the Philippines had changed from guarded interest to enthusiastic endorsement. My hope of finding a "model" denomination that could serve as a challenge and catalyst to others was, in my opinion, amply fulfilled.

On the other hand, it was obvious that they were still a small band in a

nation whose people seemed ready to respond to the gospel in impressive numbers. Would they continue to mushroom? Could a nation really be disciplined? Was it too much to hope that apostolic Christianity could indeed flower lot more than brief periods? Indeed, was it an apostolic church'?

As I write this chapter in late 1974, I observe that their growth during the past decade has not been quite so impressive. There is mature, solid expansion; miracles are still taking place. Their foreign and national ministers are some of the most respected in the Church in the Philippines. They cooperate harmoniously with other groups in citywide evangelism, in Sunday school conventions and in a host of boards, organizations, and committees.

A hot, blazing life they are. But they are no longer a dazzling comet streaking across the sky. What they are accomplishing, others are also accomplishing albeit with much more foreign manpower and money.

What can we conclude? That it wasn't genuinely charismatic? That it wasn't apostolic? That my pragmatic nature takes me right back to where I began? That we must, after all, go back to depending on Yankee ingenuity, American style theological education, Western logic, modern principles of management, and tomorrow's technology'?

If that's the case, count me out. Having once tasted New Testament fire in the twentieth century, I'll never be satisfied with anything less. I believe there *was* fantastic growth, the miracles *did* happen, people filled with the Holy Spirit *were* used in the way it appeared in this book.

But the Holy Spirit can't be institutionalized. He doesn't belong to the Foursquare Church, or even the Pentecostal movement of the world. The Pentecostals don't possess Him: He--obviously in many cases--possesses them. To the degree He possessed them, He was able to reproduce apostolic Christianity in the Philippines. God fills, touches, empowers *people*. He gives His gifts to whom He chooses find who meet His conditions. That is what "charismatic" is all about.

Mrs. Evelyn Thompson was such a person. She had apostolic gifts in such measure that phenomenal church growth resulted. When she left the Philippines, she did not turn in these gifts to the Foursquare national headquarters in Manila. She took them with her, and when she eventually ended up on Korea, the Holy Spirit again used her in an impressive way. Thousands of students met the Lord and formed a huge and vibrant church during the first few months of her ministry- -even before she learned the

Korean language.

Don McGregor left the Philippines and took his charismatic gifts with him too. God gave him the special ability to envision great goals and to lead his Filipino and American co-workers in striving energetically and cooperatively towards those goals. In my opinion, the charismatic gift he held in greatest measure was that of administration--a charismatic gift no less than those of healing and speaking in tongues.

These two charismatic leaders have left the Philippines. God the Holy Spirit has not. Perhaps He hasn't given His gifts in the same measure to all those who were left behind. Perhaps the apostolic dynamic of the Foursquare Church in the Philippines has been in the process of being sealed off.

This is essentially what I suggested when my study was completed in 1968. I observed that a dramatic event would occur very rapidly for awhile. Someone would be filled with the Spirit and then lead many of his relatives and close friends to the Lord in the next few months. This happened, and then there were no more close personal contacts. They lost contact with the world. If a body of believers becomes sealed off from the vast world of unbelievers, will the Holy Spirit continue to pour out His *charismata* to the same extent?

The Foursquare church in the little community of Naga, an hour and a half south of Cebu City, provides an answer. A miracle occurred when a grandmother and grandfather came to know the Lord after a life of drunkenness. The change was so great in their lives that the gospel quickly spread to their sons and daughters, and then to their grandchildren. Within a few weeks a church with a congregation of around 100 had emerged.

But this rapid growth didn't continue. The family patriarchs had for years farmed a hillside above Naga. When the many children grew up and married, they built their *nipa* huts and continued to farm the family hill. The gospel had come to this tightly knit clan, and soon there were hardly any unbelievers on the hillside. The church stopped growing.

If the Foursquare Church in Naga is to grow again the church members must again establish contact with unbelievers in the world.

This, I believe, is the need for the whole denomination. Instead of a national average of one or two evangelistic outstations per church, there should be ten or fifteen or twenty. There must be more of Mrs. Thompson's kind of public encounter where, night after night in communities all over the nation, multitudes of Filipinos are confronted with an apostolic Christianity

they cannot ignore.

Five to ten percent of the Foursquare laymen must be recruited, trained, and sent into homes to share the Word with unbelievers instead of letting the pastors carry the heavy end of this ministry. National and foreign workers must be freed from other responsibilities and sent to pioneer in many areas of the country still awaiting the gospel.

When I review what I've read and observed of this work of church renewal in the past decade, I conclude that the wind of the Holy Spirit is blowing according to the promise for the last days. God the Holy Spirit is touching and recreating His Church as He did in the days of its inception in times and places of His choosing around the world.

He is irrepressible.